

## Love a Nurse ,À and They'll Love You Back

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According to various sources, there are about 3 million registered nurses in the U.S., and according to the American Nurses Association, they are under serious pressure in today's health care reality. As the [ANA website](#) notes:<sup>1</sup>

- 50 percent of nurses report they have insufficient time with patients.
- 54 percent say they are managing excessive workloads.
- 43 percent report experiencing an increase in overtime.
- 77 percent report that they work 12-hour shifts.
- 33 percent say current staffing levels are inadequate.
- 40 percent of nursing units are reportedly shortstaffed.
- 96 percent say they experience fatigue even at the start of a shift.

A recent study<sup>2</sup> found that a large percentage of nurses suffer from "musculoskeletal symptoms (MSS)." In their survey, the investigators discovered that "the low back (57%), shoulder (52%), and neck (48%) were identified as the most affected regions." The study concludes that the nursing workers who were evaluated reflected a high prevalence of MSS; previous history of sick leave was strongly associated with the presence of symptoms in various body regions; and that these results indicate the need for preventive programs in the hospital environment to control more severe MSS in nursing professionals.

Many other studies support these findings. The authors note that "WRMDs (work-related musculoskeletal disorders) are highly prevalent among nursing professionals<sup>3-5</sup> and the most frequent complaints are low back pain, with a prevalence rate of 30 to 60%,<sup>3,4,6-10</sup> followed by the neck and shoulder symptoms, with prevalence rates of 30 to 48% and 43 to 53%, respectively."<sup>6,8-11</sup>

Obviously, nurses desperately need chiropractic care. If we reached out and took care of the 3 million nurses in this country, every DC would need to care for at least 50 nurses just to meet that need. Seems like a great opportunity.

If I were a DC looking for new patients, I would declare next week "Nurses Appreciation Week" and offer every nurse in my local hospital / medical center a free 3-minute massage as a way of expressing my appreciation for all they do. (If you don't have a massage therapist, hire one for the week. You may even find they are a valuable long-term addition to your staff.) I would pass around fliers, send emails and post announcements on my website, [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) to ensure the word got around.

As my massage therapists provided care for the nurses, they would encourage them to let me conduct a free spinal exam as appropriate. This would give me the opportunity to provide further care, as well as educate lots of nurses about the power of chiropractic.

Some of these nurses would likely become some of my best patients. They have a great need and are sensitive to their health. But that's only the beginning. At the end of the week, I would have a "compassionate pipeline" of appreciated nurses who understand the value of chiropractic and feel comfortable referring their patients to me.

Hmmm; rather than hold a "Nurses Appreciation Week" only once a year, maybe I should do it quarterly...

### References

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