

Caring at a cost: Abuse is now part of the job for Ontario's hospital nurses, and many say they are weighing an exit.

Member Survey | Summary | Draft
Field: November 4th to 15th, 2026
Submission 2026-3157

OCHU·CUPE
ONTARIO COUNCIL OF HOSPITAL UNIONS
CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

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METHODOLOGY

Nanos was retained by CUPE to conduct a survey of nurses practicing in a hospital in Ontario who are members of OCHU to gauge their views on working conditions.

Nanos conducted a telephone survey using live agents of 551 nurses that are members of OCHU-CUPE, that work in a hospital in Ontario, November 4th to 15th, 2026, from a list provided by the client.

The research was commissioned by OCHU-CUPE and was conducted by Nanos Research using live agents.

Note: Charts may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Full data tables with number of interviews by region, ethnicity and gender are here [LINK]. Tables in the tabulations that have significant differences are highlighted in yellow.

Response Rate		TOTAL
A	Number of Contacts Provided by Client	8362
B	Number of Completed Interviews	551
C	**Response Rate (Completed Interviews)(C=B/A)**	**6.6%**

Key findings

1. **Close to one in two nurses are considering or somewhat considering leaving their job –** Just under half of nurses interviewed say they are considering (28%) or somewhat considering (21%) leaving their job in the next year because of their working conditions.
2. **A strong majority of nurses report experiencing violence and abuse at work –** Among nurses who work in Ontario hospitals, four in five report experiencing verbal violence or abuse at work (80%). Close to three in five report experiencing physical violence or abuse (59%) and one in five report experiencing sexual assault (21%) at least once in the past year.
3. **Nearly nine in ten nurses feel exhaustion and high stress because of their job –** Nearly nine in ten nurses (88%) say that they feel exhaustion as a result of their job. Similarly, eighty-five per cent report feeling high stress.
4. **Nurses fear their patients being harmed because of high demands of their job –** Three in four nurses agree or somewhat agree that they are fearful their patients might be harmed because they have so many demands that they are not always able to provide timely care.

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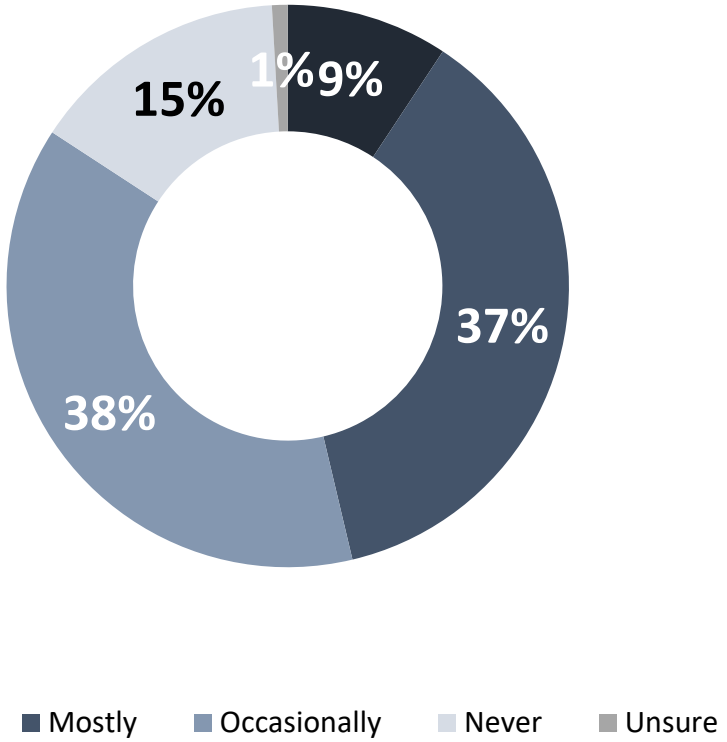
Majority of nurses report their unit is only occasionally or never staffed well enough to provide required patient care



Q – Is your unit always, mostly, occasionally or never staffed well enough to provide the care patients require?



Over **1 in 10** nurses

report that their unit is never staffed well enough to provide the care patients require. An additional two in five say this happens only occasionally.

*Charts may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Nanos Research, telephone survey, November 4th to 15th, 2026, n=551 nurses practicing in a hospital in Ontario.

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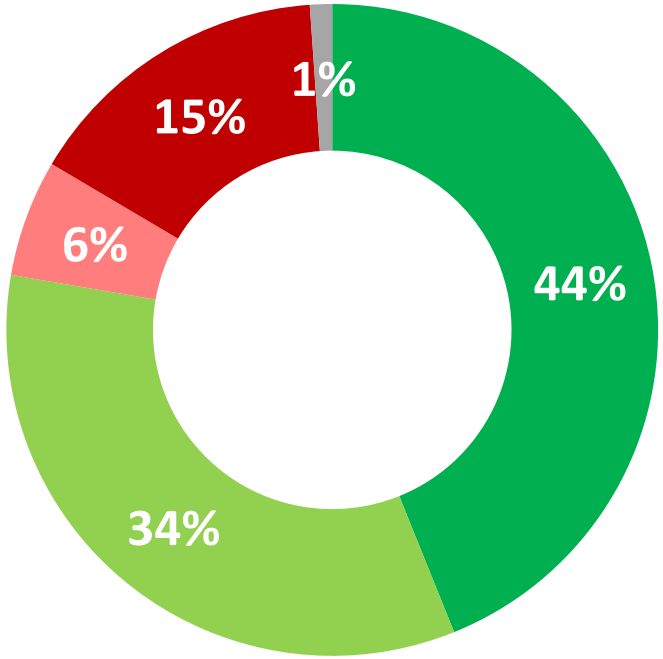
Q – Do you agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or disagree with the following statement: I am fearful one of my patients might be harmed because I have so many demands that I am not always able to provide timely care?



Agree Somewhat agree Somewhat disagree Disagree Unsure

*Charts may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Nurses are fearful their patients might be harmed because of the amount of demands

3 in 4 nurses

agree to one extent or another one of their patients might be harmed because they have so many demands that they are not always able to provide timely care.

Source: Nanos Research, telephone survey, November 4th to 15th, 2026, n=551 nurses practicing in a hospital in Ontario.

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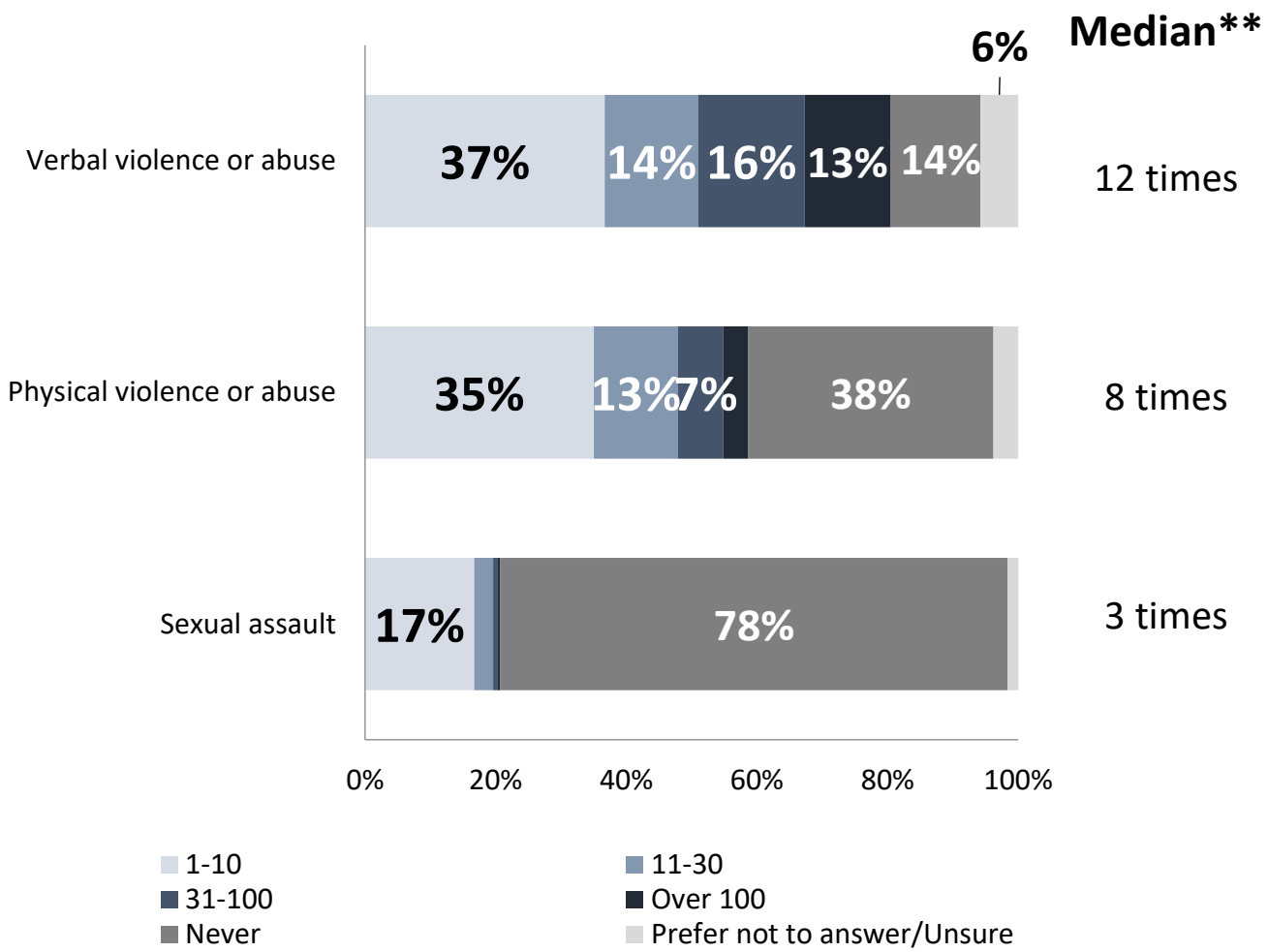
Q – How often in the past year have you experienced the following at work: [RANDOMIZE]



*Charts may not add up to 100 due to rounding.
**Median based on those who reported experiencing abuse.
***Responses under 5% have been removed for clarity.

Majority of nurses report experiencing verbal and physical violence or abuse at work

4 in 5 nurses

report experiencing verbal violence or abuse at work (80%). Close to three in five report experiencing physical violence or abuse (59%). One in five report experiencing sexual assault (21%).

Source: Nanos Research, telephone survey, November 4th to 15th, 2026, n=551 nurses practicing in a hospital in Ontario.

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Over four in five nurses report experiencing exhaustion and high stress

Q – Do you experience any of the following as a result of your job? [RANDOMIZE] (Select all that apply)

	Aggregate 2026-11 (n=551)*
Exhaustion	88.0%
High stress	84.6%
Anxiety	72.6%
Dread going to work	62.6%
Trouble sleeping	61.7%
Sadness	61.3%
Depression	40.3%
None of the above [EXCLUSIVE]	4.0%

*Multifrequency tab based on multiple responses, total adds up to more than 100%.

Source: Nanos Research, telephone survey, November 4th to 15th, 2026, n=551 nurses practicing in a hospital in Ontario.

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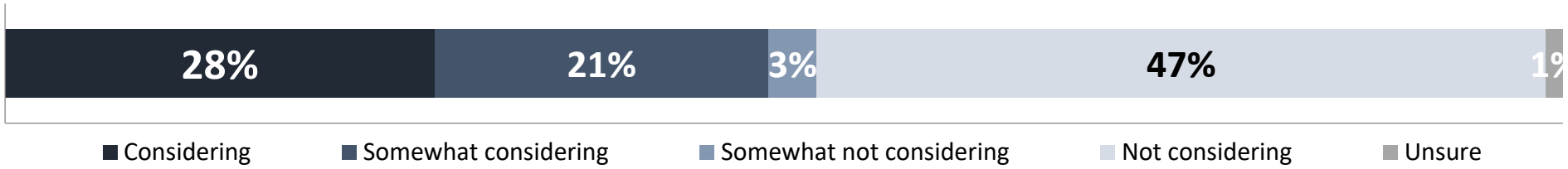
Nurses split on considering leaving their job because of working conditions

Q – Are you considering, somewhat considering, somewhat not considering or not considering leaving your job in the next year because of your working conditions?



Just under half of nurses interviewed say they are considering or somewhat considering leaving their job in the next year because of their working conditions. Nurses who identify as Black are more likely to say they are considering leaving their job because of their working conditions than the average (44%, compared to 28% overall).

*Charts may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Nanos Research, telephone survey, November 4th to 15th, 2026, n=551 nurses practicing in a hospital in Ontario.

TECHNICAL NOTE

Element	Description
Research sponsor	OCHU-CUPE
Population and Final Sample Size	551 nurses that work in a hospital in Ontario and are members of OCHU.
Source of Sample	List from client
Margin of Error (for a comparative probability sample)	No margin of error applies to this research. For comparison purposes, a probability sample of 551 respondents would have a margin of error of ±4.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.
Mode of Survey	Telephone survey using live agents
Sampling Method Base	Telephone
Demographics (Captured)	Ontario; Men and Women, ethnicity. Three-digit postal code was used to validate geography.
Field Dates	November 4th to 15th, 2026
Language of Survey	The survey was conducted in English.
Standards	Nanos Research is a member of the Canadian Research Insights Council (CRIC) and confirms that this research fully complies with all CRIC Standards including the CRIC Public Opinion Research Standards and Disclosure Requirements. https://canadianresearchinsightscouncil.ca/standards/

Element	Description
Screening	Screening ensured potential respondents were nurses that work in a hospital in Ontario.
Excluded Demographics	Individuals who are not OCHU members and are not nurses that work in a hospital in Ontario.
Estimated Response Rate	Seven per cent
Question Order	Question order in the preceding report reflects the order in which they appeared in the original questionnaire.
Question Content	All questions asked are contained in the report.
Question Wording	The questions in the preceding report are written exactly as they were asked to individuals.
Research/Data Collection Supplier	Nanos Research
Contact	Contact Nanos Research for more information or with any concerns or questions. http://www.nanos.co Telephone:(613) 234-4666 ext. 237 Email: info@nanosresearch.com.
Data Tables	By region, gender and ethnicity

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Any questions?



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