

Understanding Workplace Experiences Among PAs Who Have Changed Employers

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Background



Turnover rates in healthcare (20.4%) are second only to turnover rates in hospitality (31.8%).¹



PAs have been estimated to have a turnover rate of 14.2%.² The cost of turnover in healthcare is not only expensive but may also impact patient care.³



Almost half of all PAs have quit a job at least once due to stress, burnout, or a toxic workplace, with another 12.8% considering quitting for these reasons.⁴



Burnout is a growing issue within healthcare and recent research has shed light on the problem.⁵

1 Compdata. 2018 turnover report. Salary.com. <https://www.salary.com/resources/white-papers/2018-turnover-report/>. Accessed September 6, 2019.

2 NSI Nursing Solutions, Inc. 2019 national health care retention & RN staffing report.

<http://www.nsinursingsolutions.com/administrators/admin-research/RetentionInstitute.aspx>. Accessed September 6, 2019.

3 Bae SH, Mark B, Fried B. Impact of nursing unit turnover on patient outcomes in hospitals. *J Nurs Scholarsh.*2010;42(1): 40-49.

4 Coplan B, McCall TC, Smith N, Gellert VL, Essary AC. Burnout, job satisfaction, and stress levels of PAs. *JAAPA.* 2018;31(9):42-46.

5 Essary, A. C., et al. (2018) Burnout and Job and Career Satisfaction in the Physician Assistant Profession: A Review of the Literature.

1-23 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31478/201812b>

Methods

Sample: 2018 AAPA Salary Survey. Fielded to all PAs in the US, for whom AAPA Research could email and for whom there was a valid email address. The survey was also available through social media channels. A total of 9,140 PAs completed the survey.

Variables examined:

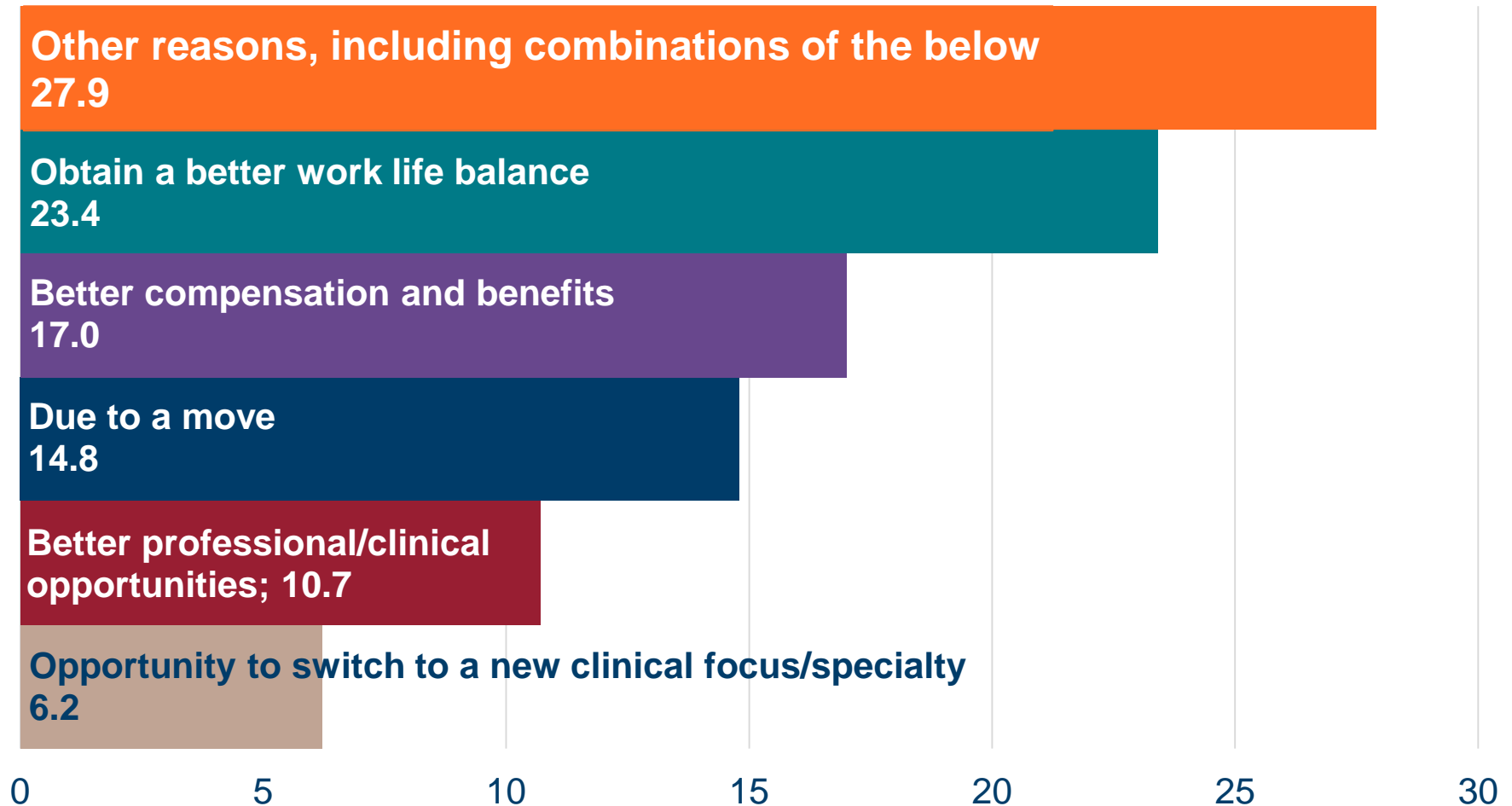
- Overall Career Satisfaction (*5 point scale*)
- Overall Employer Satisfaction (*5 point scale*)
- Fair Compensation Agreement (*5 point scale*)
- Likelihood to Recommend Employer (*5 point scale*)
- Evaluation of Burnout Symptoms (*professional fulfillment, physical exhaustion, interpersonal disengagement*)
- Career Change measure (*if they made a change, type of change, reason for change*)

How common was it for PAs to make a career change?

18.7% made a career change (employer, specialty, setting) in 2017

12.4% changed their employer in 2017

Why did PAs change employers in 2017?



Percent of Respondents Who Indicated This Reason For Changing Employers in 2017

Who changed employers?

Women were more likely to have changed their employer in 2017.

13.0% of women changed employers

11.1% of men changed employers

($X^2 = 5.61$, $p = .018$)

PAs with less experience were more likely to have changed their employer in 2017.

13.6% of PAs in the early career phase (0 to 5 years) changed employers

12.7% of PAs in the mid-career phase (6 to 20 years) changed employers

8.5% of PAs in the late-career phase (21 or more years) changed employers

($X^2 = 21.91$, $p < .001$)

Why did they change employers?

Early Career	Mid Career	Late Career
Better work/life balance 19.5%	Better work/life balance 25.6%	Better work/life balance 26.4%
Better compensation/benefits 18.1%	Better compensation/benefits 16.5%	Other 23.6%
Moved 18.1%	Other 16.3%	Better compensation/benefits 16.0%

Were those who changed employers happier with their new employer?

77.5% *Highly Recommend Employer*

Most will **highly recommend their employer**, regardless of whether they changed employers.

(M = 3.94 v M=4.03, changed v did not change employer)

77.0% *High Employer Satisfaction*

Most have **high satisfaction with their employer**, regardless of whether they changed employers.

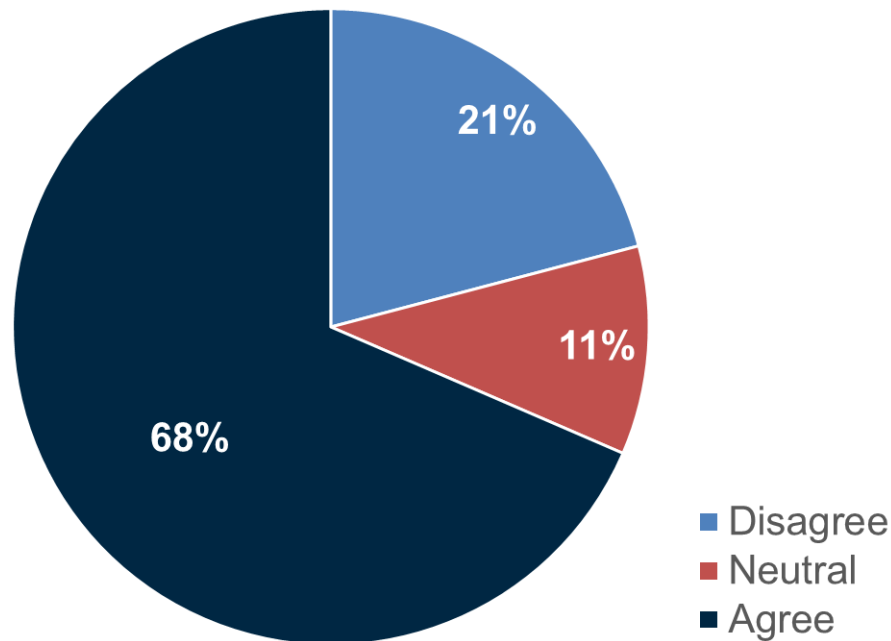
(M=3.82 v M=3.90, changed v did not change employer)

83.1% *High Career Satisfaction*

Most have **high career satisfaction**, regardless of whether they changed employers.

(M=4.20 v M=4.30, changed v did not change employer)

Were those who changed employers happier with their compensation?



2 out of 3 PAs **felt that they were fairly compensated** the previous year, regardless of whether they changed employers.

(M = 3.67 v M=3.64, changed v did not change employer)

Did those who changed employers report less burnout?

96.9%

Professionally
Fulfilled

83.8%

Low Interpersonal
Disengagement

46.2%

High Work
Exhaustion

Those who **changed employers for a better work life balance indicated lower work exhaustion** than those who changed employers for any other reason.

(M=1.259 v M=1.394, changed for work-life balance v changed employer for any other reason)

The caveats:

Those that changed employers **had less** general PTO or sick and vacation time!

It is unknown if work exhaustion predicts intent to leave to seek better work life balance.

Summary

- Turnover is a problem within healthcare; 12.4% of PAs changed their employer in 2017 alone.
- PAs are leaving their employer for a variety of reasons, the most common of which is work-life balance.
- Those who changed employers did not necessarily have any difference in many practice characteristics (e.g., hours worked, patients per week, or salary received).
- Compensation does not appear to drive change.
- The first year with a new employer does not necessarily mean greater work satisfaction for PAs.
- **BUT.** Those who changed employers for a better work life balance indicated lower work exhaustion than those who changed employers for any other reason.

Application to PA Education

The PA education model provides a broad generalist training.

- Allows PAs to make the career changes when needed.
- PAs are making use of the flexibility their generalist training provides.

While almost half of all PAs have quit a job at least once due to stress, burnout, or a toxic workplace, changing employers may have a limited relationship to burnout when looking at a point in time. **BUT,**

- PAs are at risk for burnout.¹
- PA students are at risk for burnout.²
- Burnout, and well being, should be addressed during training to strengthen the clinician's resilience over the long term.

¹ Essary AC, et al. (2018) Burnout and Job and Career Satisfaction in the Physician Assistant Profession: A Review of the Literature. 1-23 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31478/201812b>.

² Orozco JM, Furman J, McAndrews KK, et al. Assessing Burnout Among Advanced Practice Providers (APPs) Compared with APP Trainees. Medical Science Educator. 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40670-019-00799-x>.

Questions?

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