



# HEALTHCARE WORKER SAFETY SURVEY



# INTRODUCTION

Without question, healthcare professionals have been extremely impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Three years after the emergence of COVID-19, surges of the virus persist across the globe. Whether it is the most recent strain or the enduring, long-term impacts of the original outbreak, the pandemic has taken its toll on the healthcare industry and its dedicated workforce. At the same time, today's healthcare professionals are grappling with safety issues including patient violence, job burnout and active assailants, all while trying to figure out how new home healthcare dynamics may affect their level of personal safety.

Media stories of patients or visitors becoming violent or active assailants wreaking havoc in the healthcare environment have become an unfortunate part of today's news cycle—and statistics reinforce what we are seeing in our newsfeed or on social media. According to [a report](#) by the International Association for Healthcare Security and Safety Foundation, there was a 47% increase in hospital violent crime between 2020 and 2021 alone.

To better understand healthcare worker concerns, [Motorola Solutions](#) conducted the Healthcare Worker Safety Survey. The study, which was fielded between December 2022-January 2023, features responses from 500 respondents working in the healthcare field, including doctors, nurses, technicians and administrators across the United States. Questions center around issues such as personal safety, mental health, the impact of staffing shortages, home healthcare and workers' preferred communication methods when emergencies arise.

The good news is that hospital and healthcare system employees generally feel safe going to work each day, with 68% of healthcare workers stating they feel extremely or very safe while at work and 89% saying that they trust their workplaces to keep them safe in the event of an emergency. But personal safety remains a top-of-mind concern for many workers across the industry—so much so that last year the American Hospital Association [wrote a letter](#) to the U.S. Attorney General asking for legislation to better protect healthcare workers from violent attacks.

This timely report was undertaken to gain perspective on hospital and healthcare system worker safety opinions and their preferred communication methods during emergency events. Understanding concerns and messaging preferences can help the industry adapt and provide workers with the peace of mind needed to perform at a high level and deliver optimal patient care.

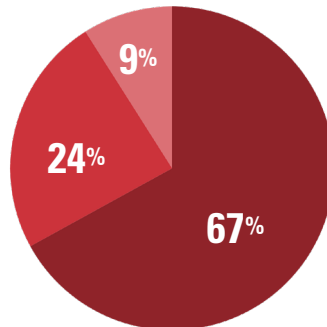
# SURVEY RESPONDENTS

## HEALTH ORGANIZATION SIZE

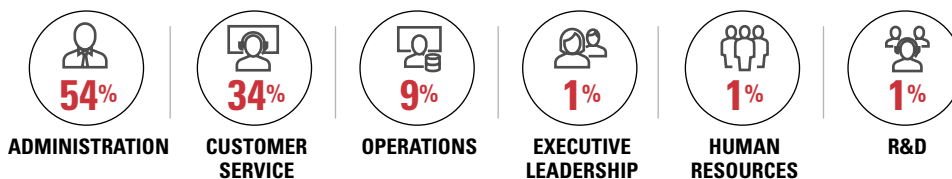
22%	28%	30%	20%	0%	0%
10,000+	1,000 - 9,999	100 - 999	10 - 99	1 - 9	0

## ARE YOU ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE SIDE OR ARE YOU A HEALTHCARE PRACTITIONER?

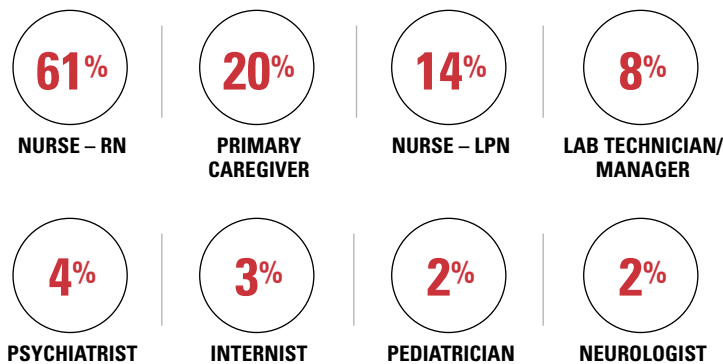
- HEALTHCARE PRACTITIONER
- ADMINISTRATION
- OTHER



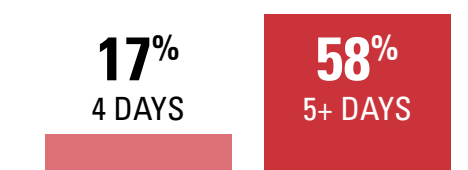
## ADMINISTRATION ROLES



## HEALTHCARE PRACTITIONER ROLES



## IN A TYPICAL WORK WEEK, HOW MANY DAYS DO YOU WORK AT A LOCATION FREQUENTED BY PATIENTS, AS OPPOSED TO WORKING FROM HOME OR A BACK OFFICE?

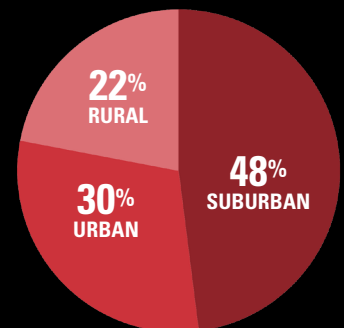


# 500+

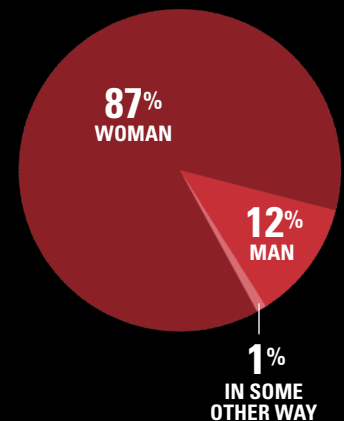
## RESPONDENTS

WORKING IN THE HEALTHCARE FIELD ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

## HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE AREA YOU WORK IN?



## DO YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF AS A WOMAN, MAN OR IN SOME OTHER WAY?



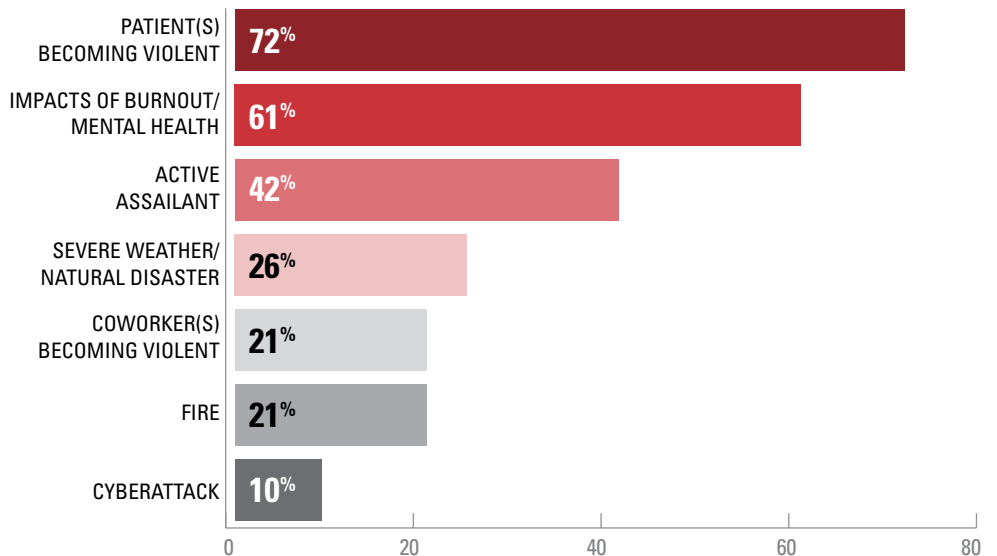


# PATIENT VIOLENCE IS THE TOP SAFETY CONCERN FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Almost half of all respondents (46%) say that a violent incident has occurred in their hospital/healthcare system over the past year. Some of the biggest safety concerns healthcare workers have include patient(s) becoming violent (72%), the impacts of burnout/mental health (61%) and active assailants (42%).

Most respondents feel their workplaces are extremely or very well prepared to handle an incident like a fire (75%) or a severe weather/natural disaster emergency (64%). Newer threats, however, weigh heavily on the minds of healthcare workers. Active assailants, for example, are among the top three safety concerns for those that work in hospitals or health systems. Only 40% of respondents believe their workplace is extremely or very well prepared to manage an active assailant scenario.

## WHAT ARE YOUR BIGGEST SAFETY CONCERNS WHILE AT WORK?



# 81%

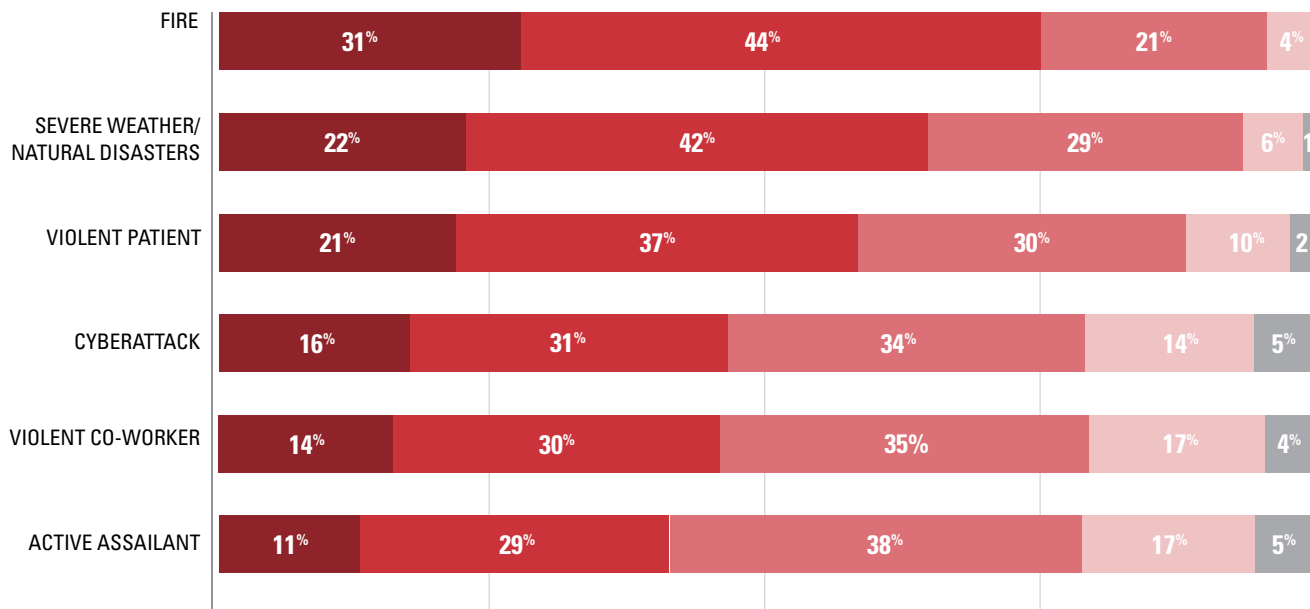
**OUT OF ALL OF THE HEALTHCARE PRACTITIONERS SURVEYED, NURSES ARE MOST CONCERNED ABOUT PATIENTS BECOMING VIOLENT (81%).**

Emergency plans, training, exercises and procedures require updates so that modern-day safety realities are addressed, and healthcare employee concerns are allayed.



## HOW PREPARED DO YOU FEEL YOUR HOSPITAL/HEALTHCARE SYSTEM IS FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING EMERGENCY EVENTS?

EXTREMELY PREPARED
  VERY PREPARED
  SOMEWHAT PREPARED
  HARDLY PREPARED
  NOT AT ALL PREPARED





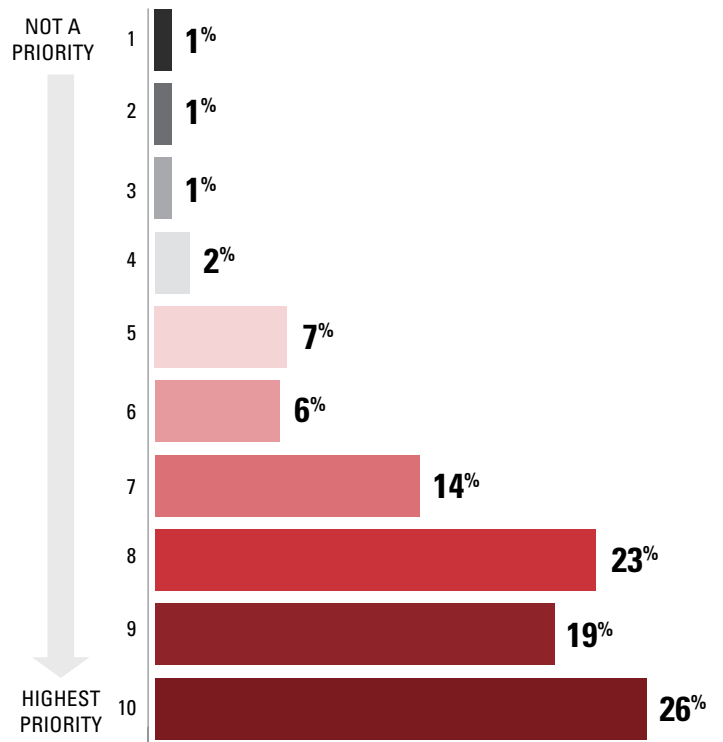
## PERSONAL SAFETY IS A TOP PRIORITY FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS AND FACTORS INTO WHETHER THEY CONTINUE WORKING IN THE INDUSTRY

When asked about their top employment priorities during a job search, 26% of respondents said that workplace safety is among their highest priorities.

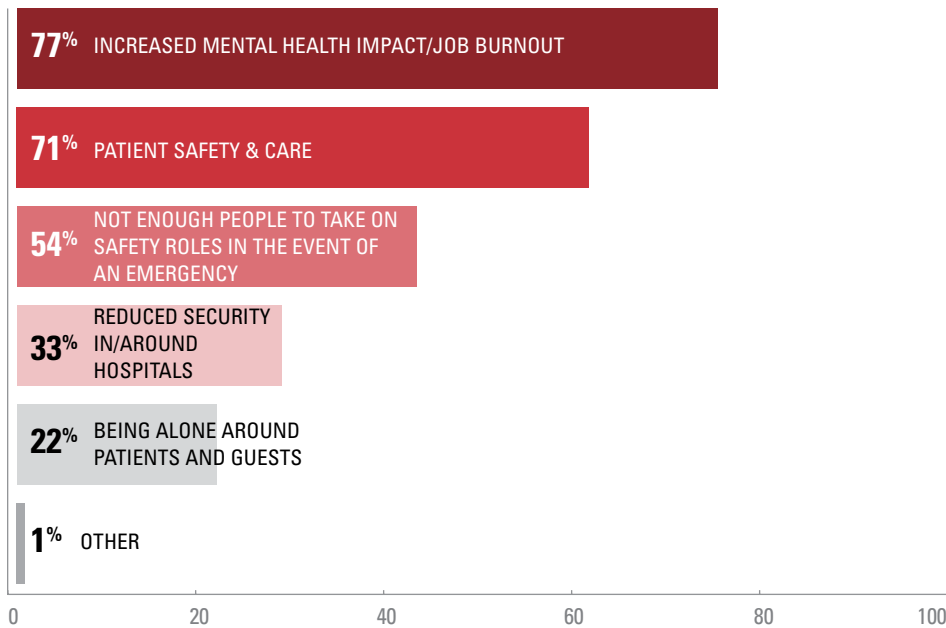
More than half (54%) of healthcare workers noted that they would be at least somewhat likely to quit if a violent incident unfolded in their workplace.

Persistent staff attrition and shortages create a vicious cycle that can ultimately cause more staff safety concerns. Healthcare workers perceive staffing shortages to be one of the biggest safety concerns because they believe that loss of personnel will negatively affect the mental health of remaining workers and lead to job burnout (77%).

### ON A SCALE OF 1-10, HOW MUCH DO YOU PRIORITIZE WORKPLACE SAFETY WHEN LOOKING FOR A JOB?



## WHAT ARE YOUR MAIN SAFETY CONCERNS BASED ON STAFFING SHORTAGES?



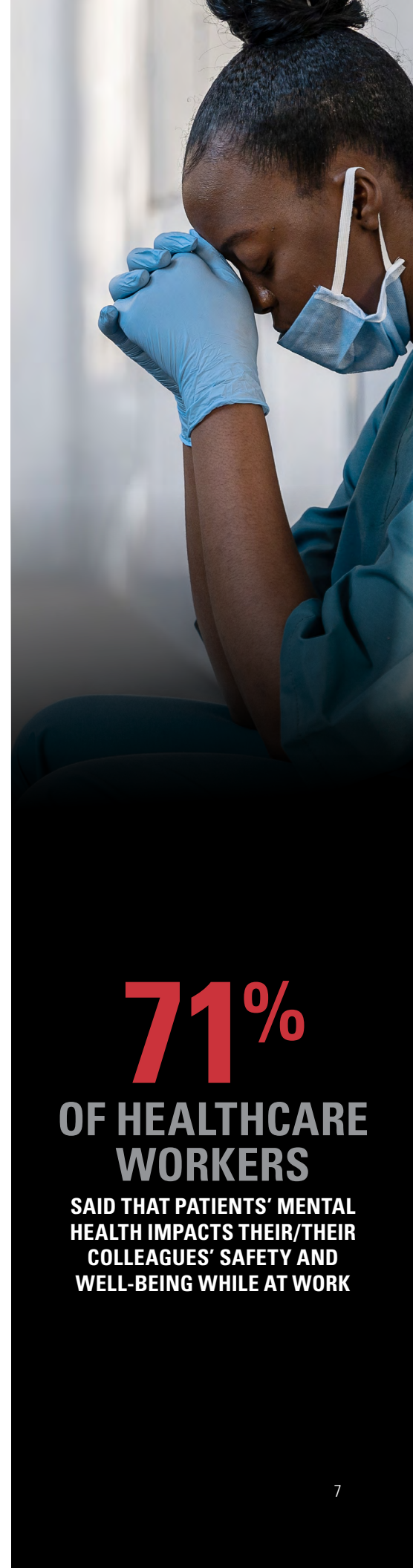
## MENTAL HEALTH IS NOT GETTING BETTER—IT'S GETTING WORSE AND COMPOUNDING SAFETY CONCERNS

In addition to concerns about staffing shortages, widespread mental health challenges and job burnout are dominating industry conversations.

Over half of respondents (56%) said that their/their colleagues' mental health is generally worse now than during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, with nurses responding that mental health is extremely worse now (24%). Comparatively, physicians said that mental health is at the same level now that it was during the height of the pandemic (31%).

Beyond having concerns about their own mental health, healthcare employees are also increasingly concerned about their patients' mental health and the impact this may have on worker safety. Almost three-quarters (71%) of healthcare workers said that patients' mental health impacts their/their colleagues' safety and well-being while at work.

Mental health—for both patients and the people who care for them—is a valid concern these days. Providing key preventative and response resources for healthcare workers—be it digitally via a mobile application or by making onsite counselors available to talk—will help to stem the tide that is rising due to understaffing and job burnout. A focus on mental health in the healthcare environment will result in a safer workplace for all.



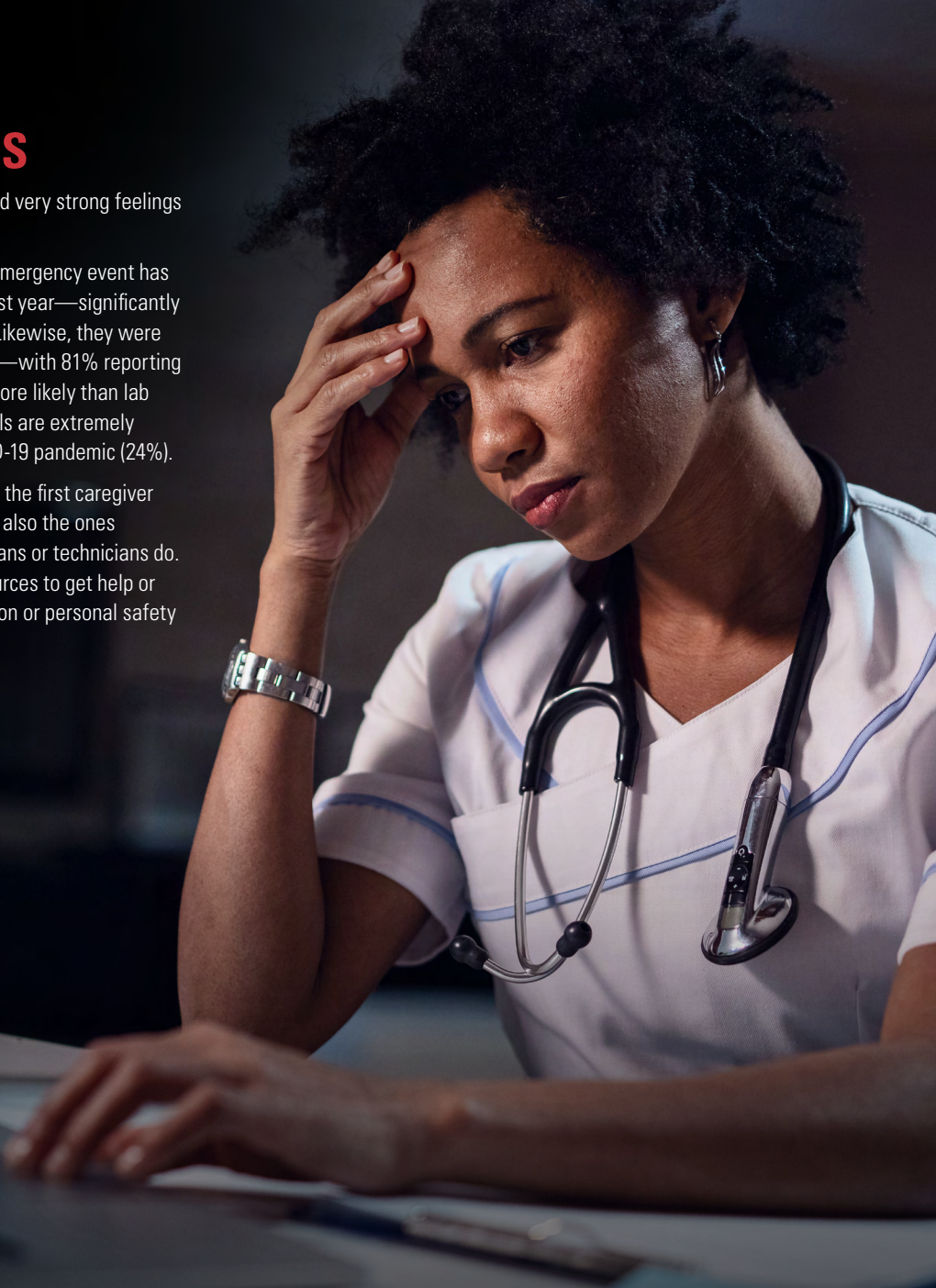
**71%**  
**OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS**  
**SAID THAT PATIENTS' MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS THEIR/THEIR COLLEAGUES' SAFETY AND WELL-BEING WHILE AT WORK**

# SPOTLIGHT ON NURSES

Among the different groups of respondents, nurses had very strong feelings when it came to safety and mental health.

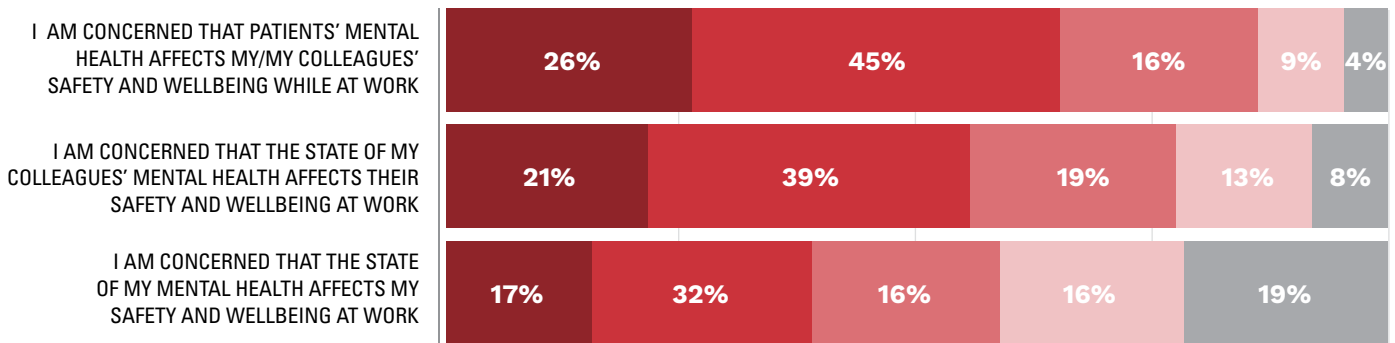
Notably, 59% reported that a violent incident and/or emergency event has occurred at their hospital/healthcare system in the past year—significantly higher than the 46% average across all respondents. Likewise, they were also more concerned about patients becoming violent—with 81% reporting it’s a top safety concern for them. Nurses were also more likely than lab technicians and doctors to say that mental health levels are extremely worse now when compared to the height of the COVID-19 pandemic (24%).

Aside from front desk administration, nurses are often the first caregiver to interact with patients. In hospital settings, they are also the ones interacting with patients more frequently than physicians or technicians do. Giving healthcare professionals proper tools and resources to get help or report incidents, whether that be through a panic button or personal safety application, can quell workplace safety concerns.



## HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE/DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?

■ STRONGLY AGREE  
 ■ SOMEWHAT AGREE  
 ■ INDIFFERENT  
 ■ SOMEWHAT DISAGREE  
 ■ STRONGLY DISAGREE

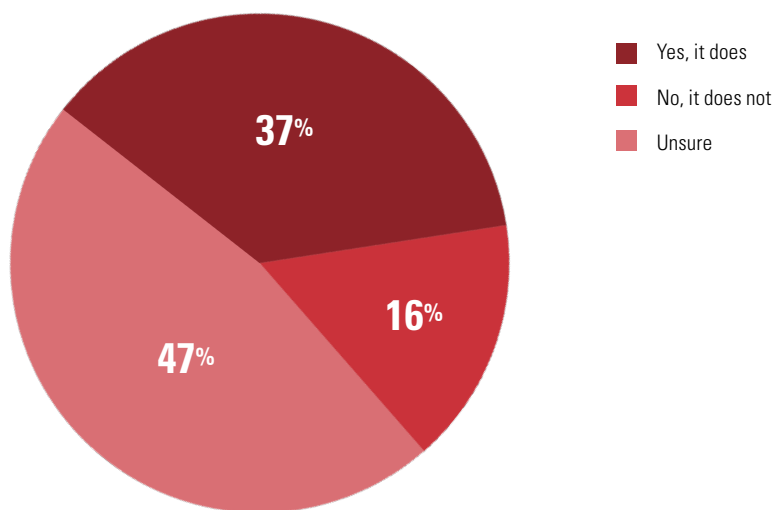




# HOME HEALTHCARE SERVICES ARE THROWING A WRENCH INTO SAFETY PLANS

Several years before the pandemic, a healthcare paradigm shift had already begun. Healthcare providers began to utilize technology and expanded care teams so that treatment could be administered outside of the traditional healthcare setting. During COVID, at-home healthcare services and the number of agencies providing treatment in the home or via telemedicine appointments became more commonplace. And today, patients are increasingly choosing to recover or receive care at home. This shift, however, has created additional personal safety vulnerabilities for caregivers entering the home. Nearly half (47%) of respondents to this survey were unsure if their hospital/healthcare system had different safety protocols for at-home care delivery vs. in a traditional hospital setting.

## DOES YOUR HOSPITAL/HEALTHCARE SYSTEM HAVE DIFFERENT EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS FOR THOSE PROVIDING AT-HOME CARE IN A PATIENT'S HOME VS. IN THE HOSPITAL?

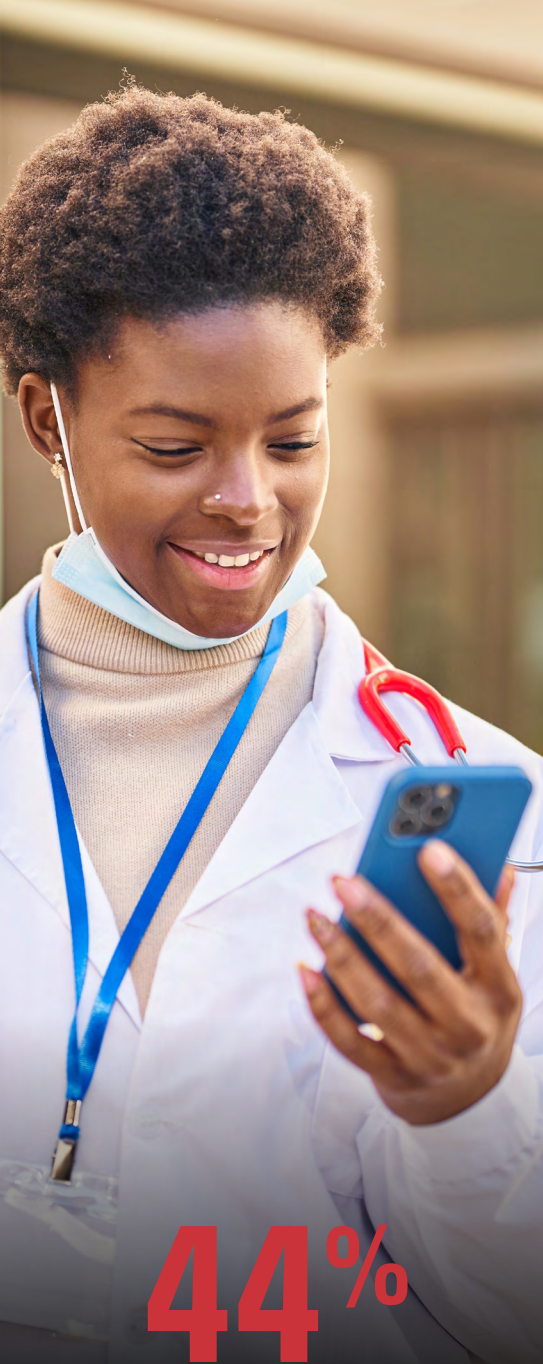


Given this, it is not surprising that 41% of respondents say they would be more concerned about their safety if they were to deliver at-home care in a patient's residence vs. in a hospital/healthcare system setting, with lab technicians (67%) appearing the most concerned about their safety in patients' residences.

With more and more healthcare organizations offering home care services, now is the time to revisit emergency response and safety plans for employees to ensure that strategies address the needs of personnel traveling to patient homes and providing care in private residences.

**41%**  
**OF RESPONDENTS**  
**SAY THEY WOULD BE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR SAFETY IF THEY WERE TO DELIVER AT-HOME CARE IN A PATIENT'S RESIDENCE VS. IN A HOSPITAL/HEALTHCARE SYSTEM SETTING**





**44%**

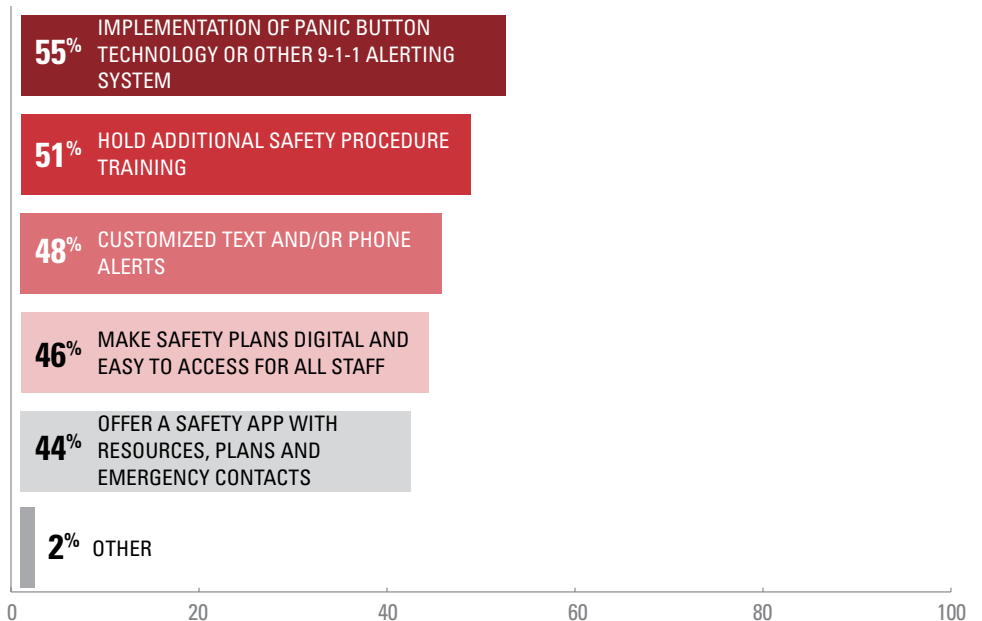
**OF RESPONDENTS**

**SAY A PERSONAL SAFETY APP  
WOULD MAKE THEM FEEL MORE  
PREPARED FOR EMERGENCY  
EVENTS AT WORK**

## HEALTHCARE EMPLOYEES BELIEVE THE RIGHT SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS AND TRAINING WILL HELP THEM FEEL MORE PREPARED FOR WORKPLACE SAFETY SCENARIOS

To help manage personal safety during different types of emergencies, today's hospitals and healthcare systems use a variety of technologies, including intercom communication systems (63%), mass notification technologies (57%), panic button technology (48%) and personal safety applications (20%).

### WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU FEEL MORE PREPARED FOR EMERGENCY EVENTS AT WORK?



Respondents, however, indicate that they would feel safer if more interconnected communication platforms were used for emergency notification, training was prioritized and there was a centralized repository for safety guidance. Specifically, respondents shared that they would feel more prepared if their workplace utilized panic button technology or another 9-1-1 alerting system (55%); conducted safety procedure training (51%); used customized text and/or phone alerts (48%); made safety plans digital and easy to access for all staff (46%); and offered a safety app with resources, plans, and emergency contacts (44%).



## CONCLUSION

During the height of the pandemic, and in the days since, healthcare workers have consistently shown that they are willing to put their own lives on the line. They are regarded as unsung heroes and are one of a healthcare system's greatest assets. As such, those that work in hospitals or health systems must feel confident in their level of personal safety, despite new considerations and emerging threats. By understanding today's healthcare employee safety concerns, conducting safety training on a consistent basis, maximizing the use of new technology and adjusting communication methods to be in sync with current worker preferences, health systems can ensure that their staff is able to render the best possible patient care without unnecessary, unnerving distractions.

Motorola Solutions can help by offering a [unified technology ecosystem](#) that allows hospitals to proactively manage safety and security, including access control, video security, body-worn cameras, critical communications, command center software and weapons detection solutions. Its [Rave Mobile Safety](#) platform can help address some of the key considerations outlined in this report including emergency communication to 9-1-1, connecting on-site personnel and first responders, improving operational efficiencies and informing community members via mobile safety apps and other modalities.

### METHODOLOGY

The independent research firm Researchscape conducted this survey. Respondents were 500 healthcare workers aged 18+ in the United States.

### ABOUT MOTOROLA SOLUTIONS

Motorola Solutions is a global leader in public safety and enterprise security. Our solutions in land mobile radio communications, video security & access control and command center software, bolstered by managed & support services, create an integrated technology ecosystem to help make communities safer and businesses stay productive and secure. At Motorola Solutions, we're ushering in a new era in public safety and security. [Learn more about Motorola Solutions.](#)



Motorola Solutions, Inc. 500 West Monroe Street, Chicago, IL 60661 U.S.A. [motorolasolutions.com](https://www.motorolasolutions.com)

MOTOROLA, MOTO, MOTOROLA SOLUTIONS and the Stylized M Logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Motorola Trademark Holdings, LLC and are used under license. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. © 2023 Motorola Solutions, Inc. All rights reserved.