



AONL Quick Hit

Virtual Care

February 2026





American Organization for Nursing Leadership

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Transform health care through expert and influential nursing leadership.

Vision

Nursing leadership—one voice advancing health for all.

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Whether you're a seasoned executive, an established director or a new manager, AONL helps you create your path to leadership through an extensive portfolio of offerings. This report is one small example of the many insights AONL provides to membership and American Health Care

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Chartis Center for Burnout Solutions Led the Virtual Care Quick Hit For AONL

Who We Are

What we do



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Partner



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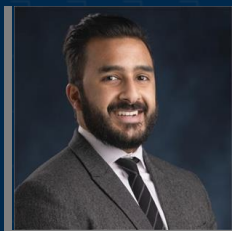
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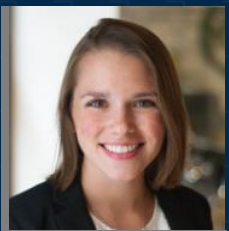
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Engagement Manager



Nurse Satisfaction
Studies for Magnet



Well-being
Engagements



Hospital Safety and
Safe to Speak Studies



Leadership
360s



Nursing and
Interprofessional Civility
and Respect
Interventions



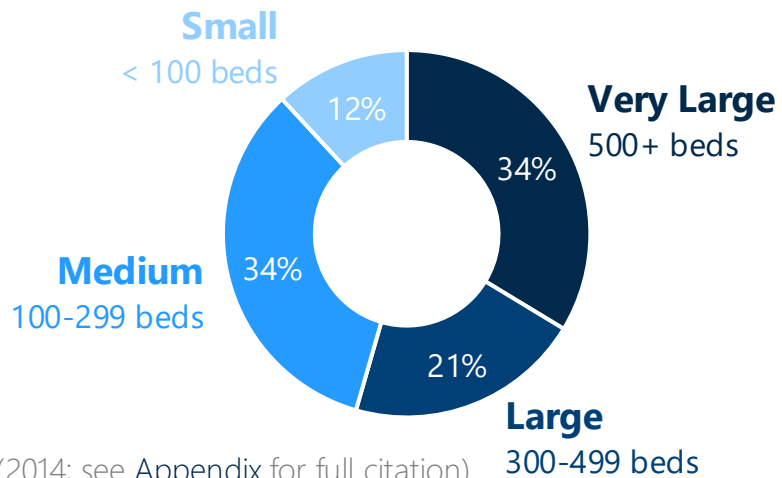
Speaking
Engagements
and Workshops

AONL Member Respondents

867 Nurse Leaders representing:



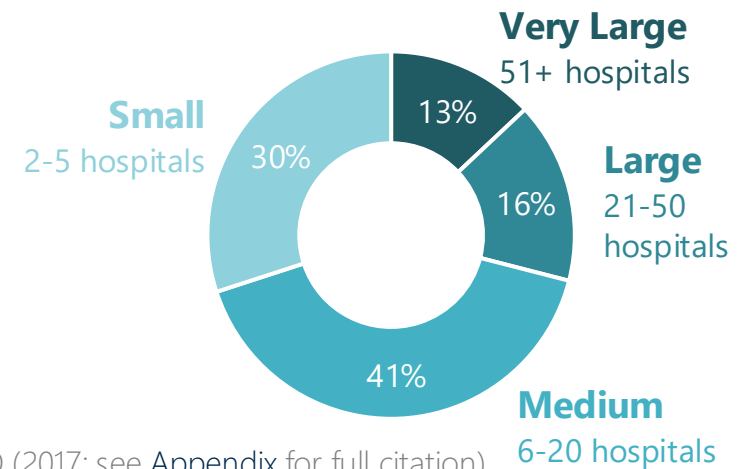
Size of Hospital^a



70%
of hospitals are
Magnet designated



Size of System^b



^bAHRQ (2017; see [Appendix](#) for full citation)

^aAHRQ (2014; see [Appendix](#) for full citation)

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Executive Summary: AONL 2026 Quick Hit – Virtual Care

***The AONL 2026 Quick Hit: Virtual Care* provides a focused national perspective on virtual care, gathering input from 867 nursing leaders (from nurse managers to CNEs) representing 363 hospitals and 204 health systems** including a diverse array of community, academic, and specialty healthcare organizations.

About 40% of the respondents are from hospitals who have implemented virtual care, with another 14% investing to grow virtual care and 15% in an earlier piloting phase. It is notable that virtual care is viewed positively by those who have implemented, but there is variability in what nurse leaders feel Virtual Care is useful for.

Roughly two thirds of nurse leaders who have implemented virtual care note its positive impact on administrative workload, hospital operations, and clinical workload, and about half report a positive impact on nurse turnover intention. Virtual care is reported to have the most positive impact on discharge education and planning, admissions and intake, and patient monitoring. Notably, given the relative youth of some nursing staffs, when virtual care is available, leaders say they have increased confidence in their less experienced nurse teams. In short, nurse leaders at institutions who have implemented virtual care do believe that the benefits outweigh the costs.

Some additional findings worth noting: Only 21% of nurse leaders feel that virtual care improves length of stay and 29% felt it improves patient throughput.

Executive Summary: Virtual Care – Title and Size of Organization

Those who have yet to implement tend to overestimate the positives that result from virtual care. This disparity is particularly true in the recruitment of new nurses. While over 60% of non-implementers expect that virtual care will impact recruitment, only one-third of implementers find it effective for this purpose.

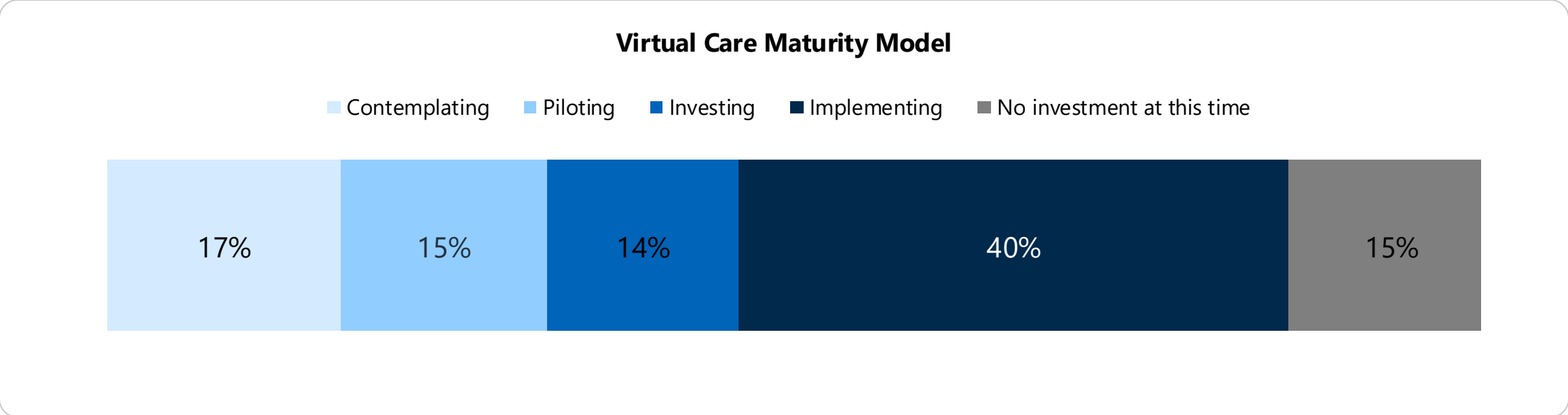
Nurse leaders from smaller organizations report a more significant positive impact from virtual care compared to leaders at medium and large/very large organizations across important outcomes including nurse turnover, administrative and clinical workloads, and overtime hours. Probably because costs are harder for smaller facilities to bear, larger organizations are more likely to be adopting virtual care.

Additionally, CNEs and CNOs report a more significant positive impact across all areas compared to directors and nurse managers, which could indicate that virtual care has a more pronounced impact on system or hospital outcomes (like throughput) and is less impactful on the workload of individual nurses.

As virtual care matures, we expect we will grow more sophisticated at understanding its most effective purposes. Hopefully, we will also see improvements in costs that allow additional smaller facilities to utilize virtual care.

Some Degree of Virtual Care Adoption Exists at Most Organizations, with 40% of Respondents Reporting Their Organization is Implementing Virtual Care

How would you characterize your organization's current level of adoption of virtual care (i.e., virtual nursing) in terms of a maturity model?

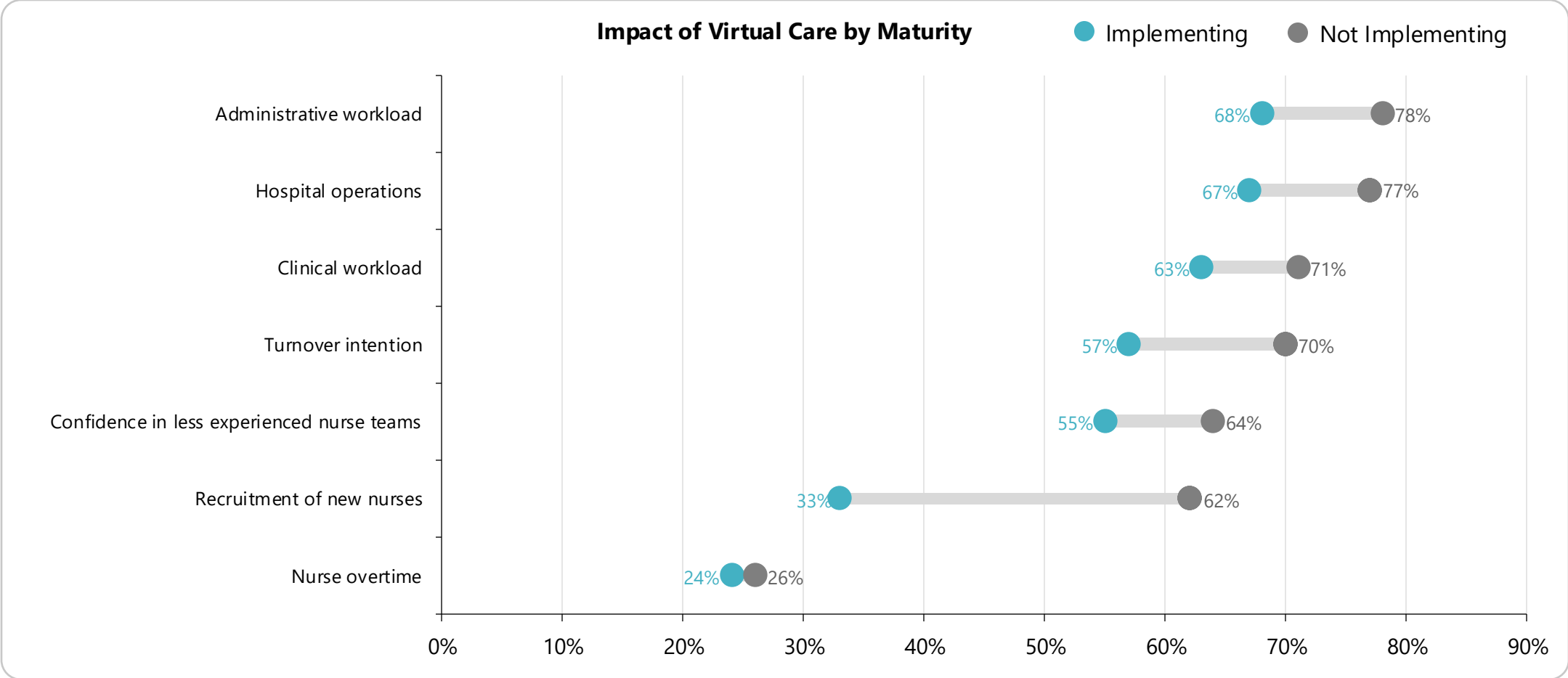


Large and very large organizations (21+ hospitals) were slightly more likely to be implementing virtual care (48%) compared to medium-sized organizations (43%).

Only 33% of small organizations (2-5 hospitals) reporting implementing virtual care.

Generally, Those Not Implementing Virtual Care Overestimate the Impact, Particularly for Impact on Nurse Recruitment

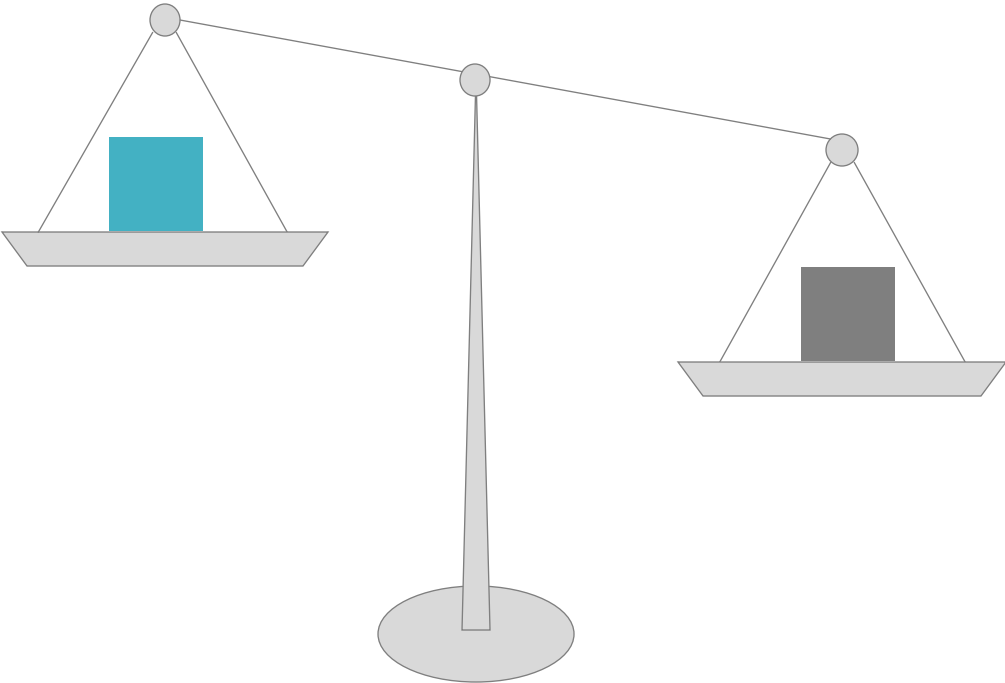
How much do you agree that virtual care would positively impact the following?



Respondents in Organizations Implementing Virtual Care Report Higher Agreement that the Benefits Outweigh the Costs

How much do you agree that the benefits of virtual care outweigh the costs?

74%
of respondents in organizations **implementing virtual care** report the benefits outweigh the costs.



59%
of respondents in organizations **not implementing virtual care** report the benefits outweigh the costs.

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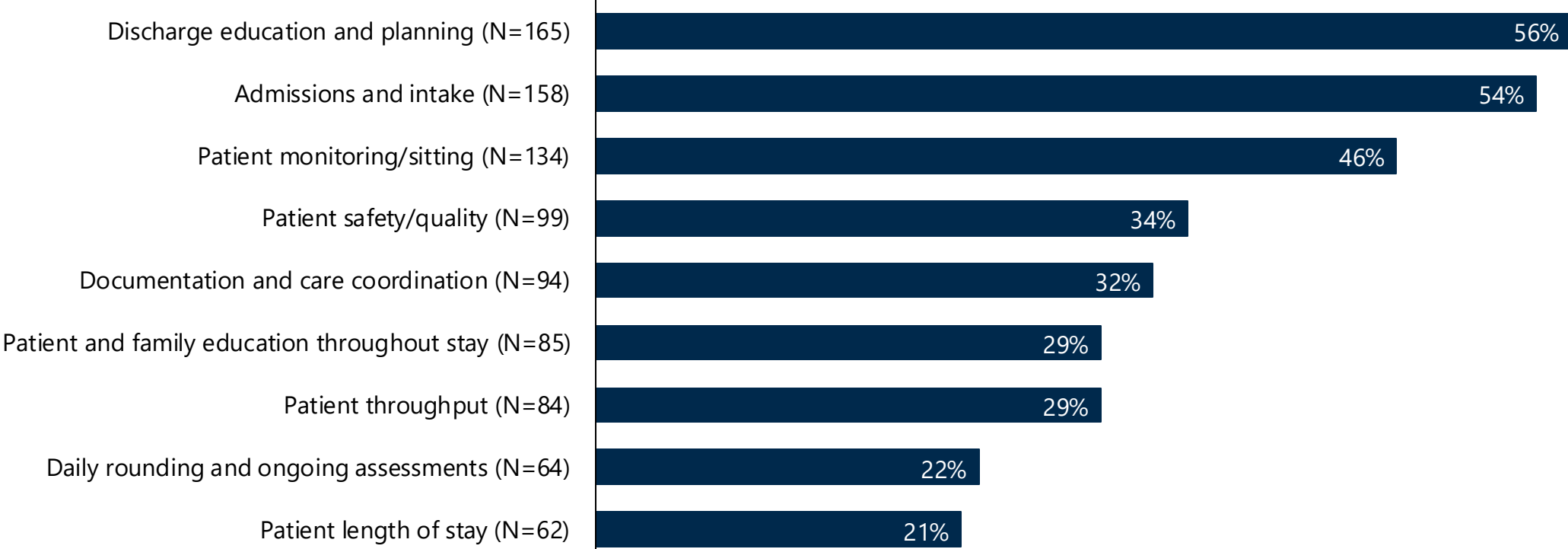
Results from Those Implementing Virtual Care at Their Organizations

Over 50% of Those Implementing Virtual Care Report Positive Impacts on Discharge Education/Planning and Admissions/Intake

Select the following aspects of nursing that virtual care has meaningfully and positively impacted your organization.

Aspect of Nursing Positively Impacted by Virtual Care

N=294



In Their Own Words...

Select the following aspects of nursing that virtual care has meaningfully and positively impacted your organization – **Other**

Documentation and Care Coordination. *"Ambient listening reduces cognitive load on clinical nurses." "Critical lab reporting, care plan compliance, expert nurse consultation for less experienced RNs." "RN co-signing medications." "ED critical care support." "Hand-off reporting using Pieces on Epic." "Multidisciplinary, coordinated care." "Nurse communication." "Ambulatory care delivery and follow-up." "Outpatient follow-up." "Post-op follow-up." "Primary and specialty care outpatient visits and care coordination."*

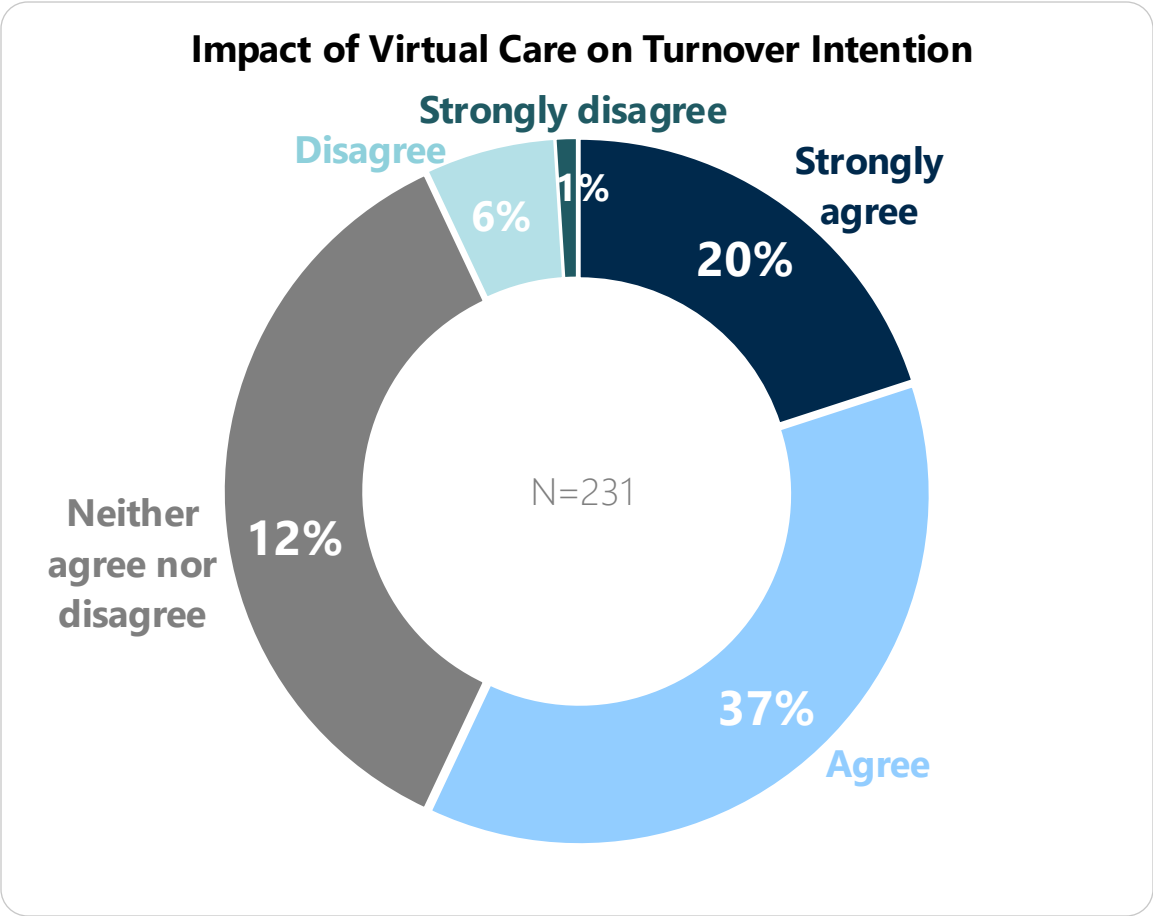
Patient Safety and Quality. *"Dual sign off on critical medications/blood." "Creation of the best possible medication history and medication review." "Neuroevals for stroke codes." "Double check for medications like insulin, heparin, etc." "Quality surveillance and early patient deterioration identification." "Remote patient monitoring."*

Patient and Family Education through Stay. *"Family/Care Team Meetings." "Pharmacy education."*

Other. *"I work in a FQHC. Telehealth/Virtual Care has extremely helped our patients living in rural areas and those with transportation issues. We also use it for our specialty clinics and diabetes education." "Staff education and quality improvement." "Nurse efficiency." "Reduces nurse burnout."*

57% of Respondents Agree that the Implementation of Virtual Care Reduces Likelihood of Nurse Turnover

How much do you agree that virtual care has positively influenced the desire for nurses in your organization to remain in their role?



Title

CNE/CNO (N=105)	Director (N=100)	N Manager (N=61)
66%	55%	54%

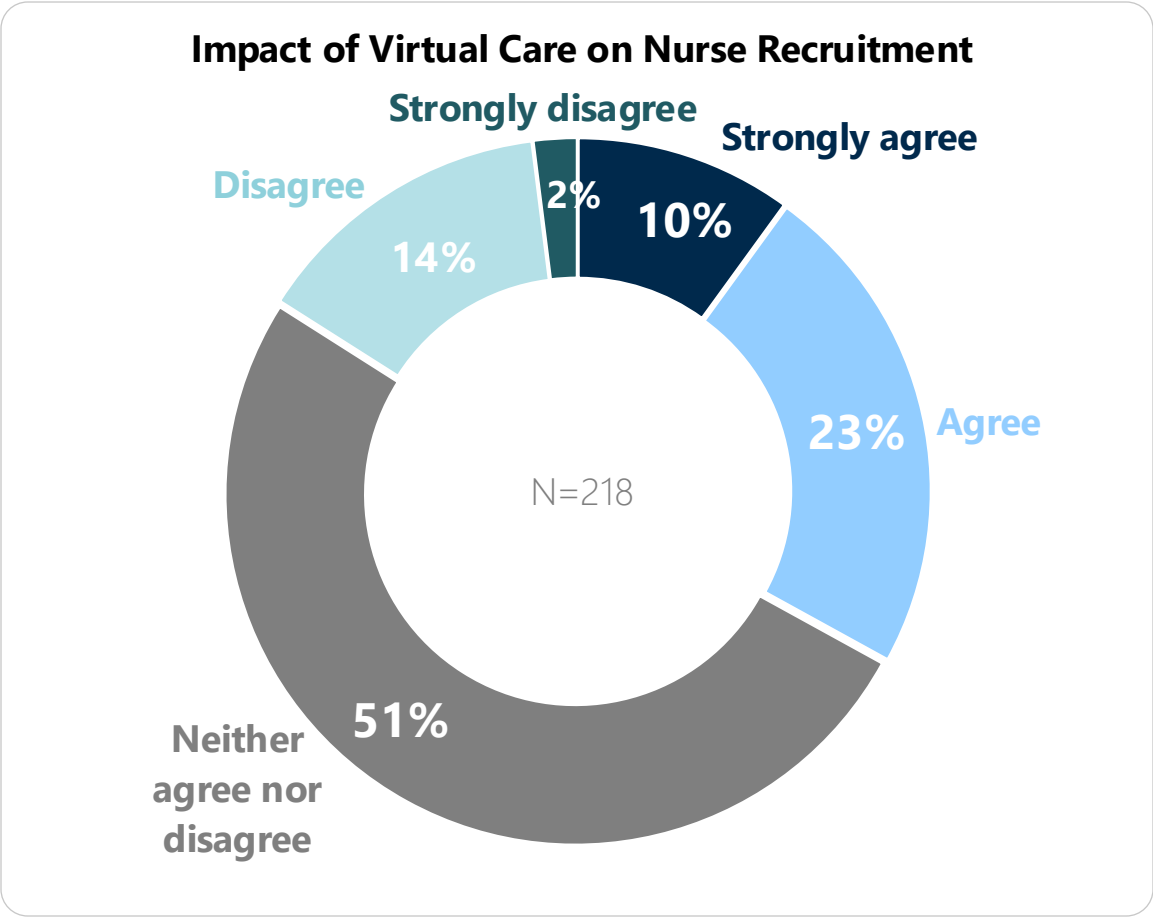
Size of Organization

Small (N=80)	Medium (N=95)	Lg/Very Lg (N=65)
67%	57%	59%

CNEs/CNOs and leaders at smaller organizations report slightly higher agreement that implementation of virtual care reduces turnover.

Half of Respondents are Neutral Regarding Impact of Virtual Care on Nurse Recruitment, While One-Third Report a Positive Impact

How much do you agree that virtual care has increased the ability to recruit new nurses?



Title

CNE/CNO (N=92)	Director (N=100)	N Manager (N=60)
44%	30%	26%

Size of Organization

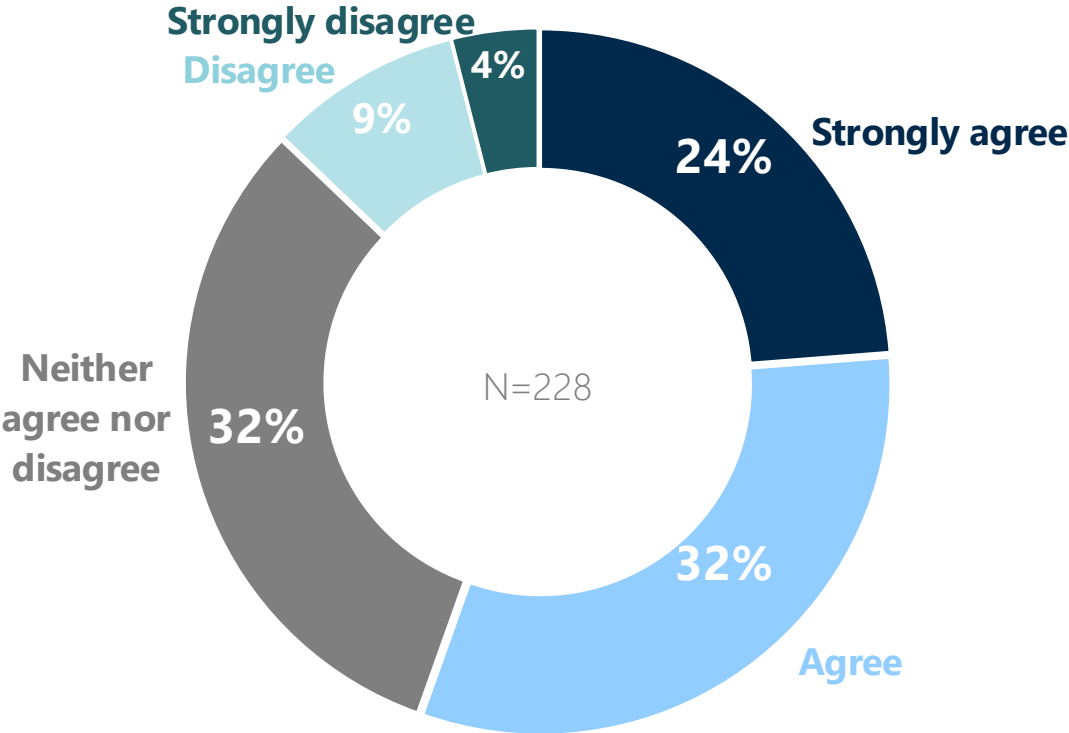
Small (N=78)	Medium (N=96)	Lg/Very Lg (N=65)
33%	33%	33%

CNEs/CNOs report slightly higher agreement that implementation of virtual care increases the ability to recruit new nurses.

Utilization of Virtual Nurses Reduces Experience Gap For Less Experienced Nurses for over 50% of Respondents

How much do you agree that utilization of more experienced virtual nurses increases confidence in having teams of less experienced nurses?

Impact of Virtual Care on Confidence of Less Experienced Nurses



Title

CNE/CNO (N=95)	Director (N=103)	N Manager (N=60)
62%	55%	51%

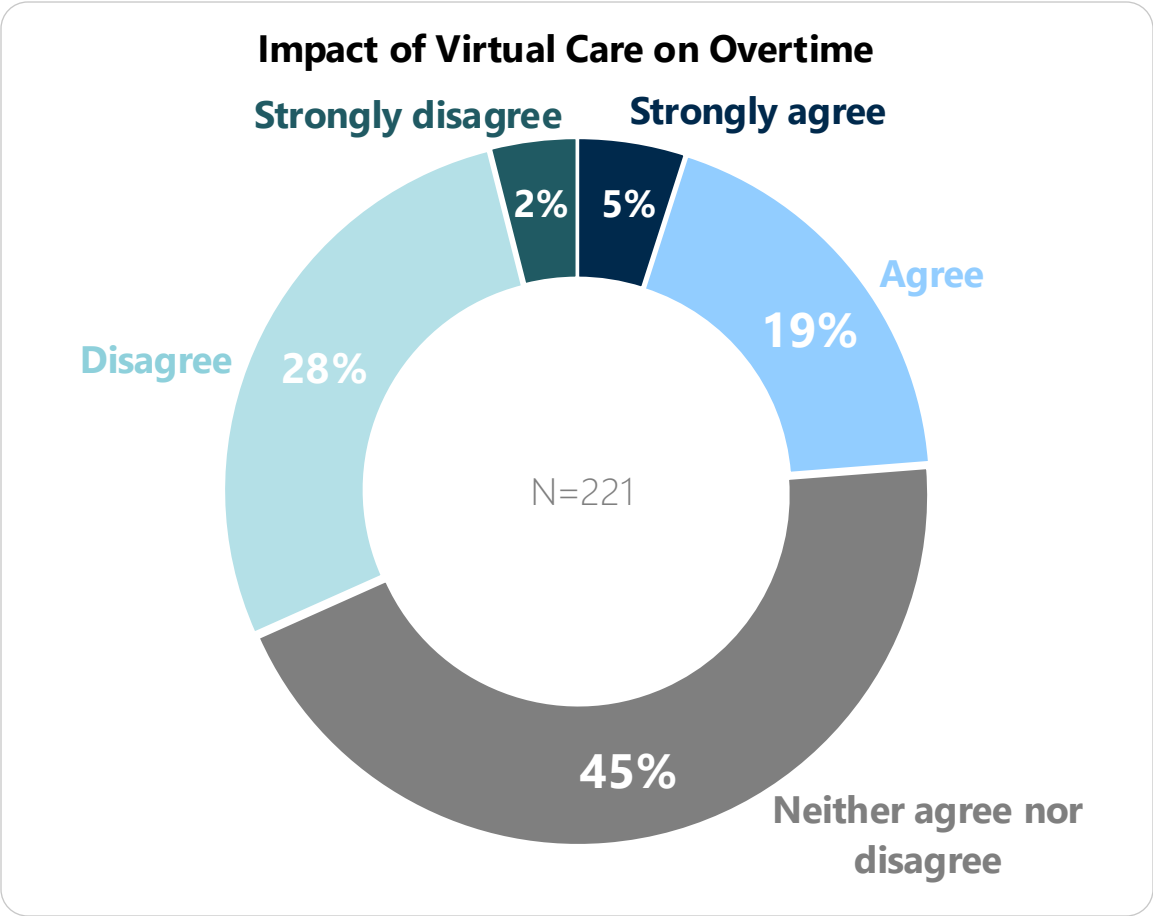
Size of Organization

Small (N=78)	Medium (N=100)	Lg/Very Lg (N=66)
49%	57%	54%

CNEs/CNOs report slightly higher agreement that implementation of virtual care increases confidence of less experienced nurses.

Around 25% of Respondents Report Implementation of Virtual Care Impacts Overtime

How much do you agree that your nurses are less likely to work overtime as a direct result of virtual care?



Title

CNE/CNO (N=91)	Director (N=100)	N Manager (N=57)
26%	15%	20%

Size of Organization

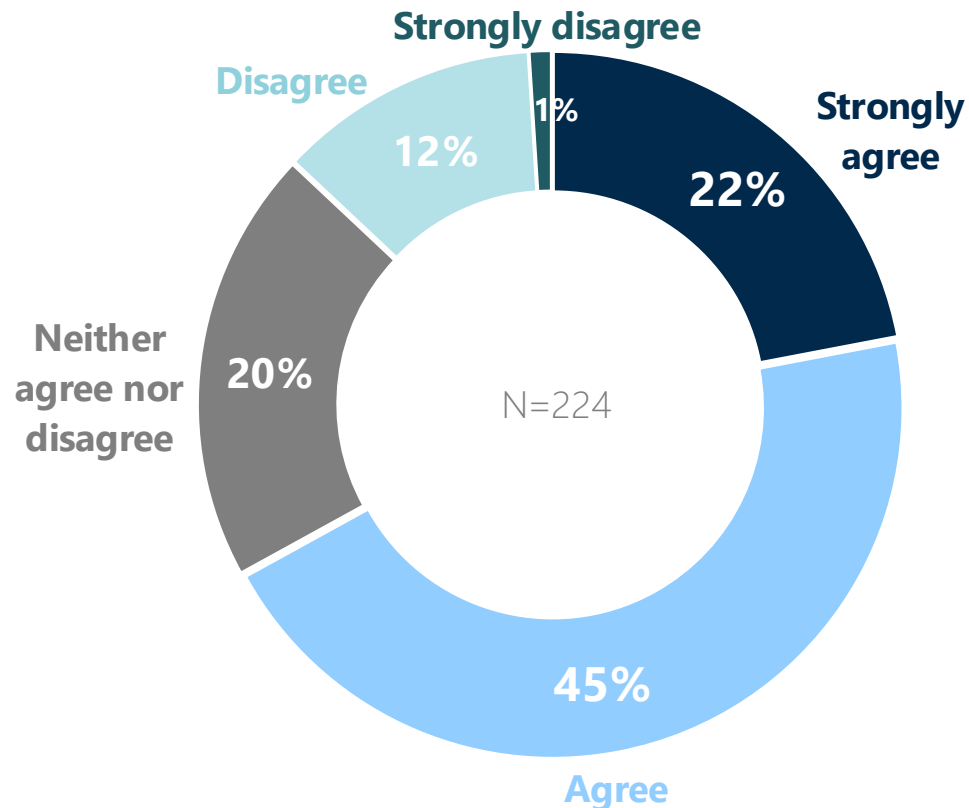
Small (N=78)	Medium (N=95)	Lg/Very Lg (N=63)
27%	19%	24%

CNEs/CNOs and leaders at smaller organizations report slightly higher agreement that implementation of virtual care decreases the likelihood of nurses working overtime.

Strong Agreement that Virtual Care Positively Impacts Administrative Workload

How much do you agree that virtual care has positively impacted the administrative aspects of the nurse workload (e.g., reduction in documentation, decrease in non-clinical tasks, etc.)?

Impact of Virtual Care on Administrative Workload



Title

CNE/CNO (N=97)	Director (N=102)	N Manager (N=60)
87%	61%	51%

Size of Organization

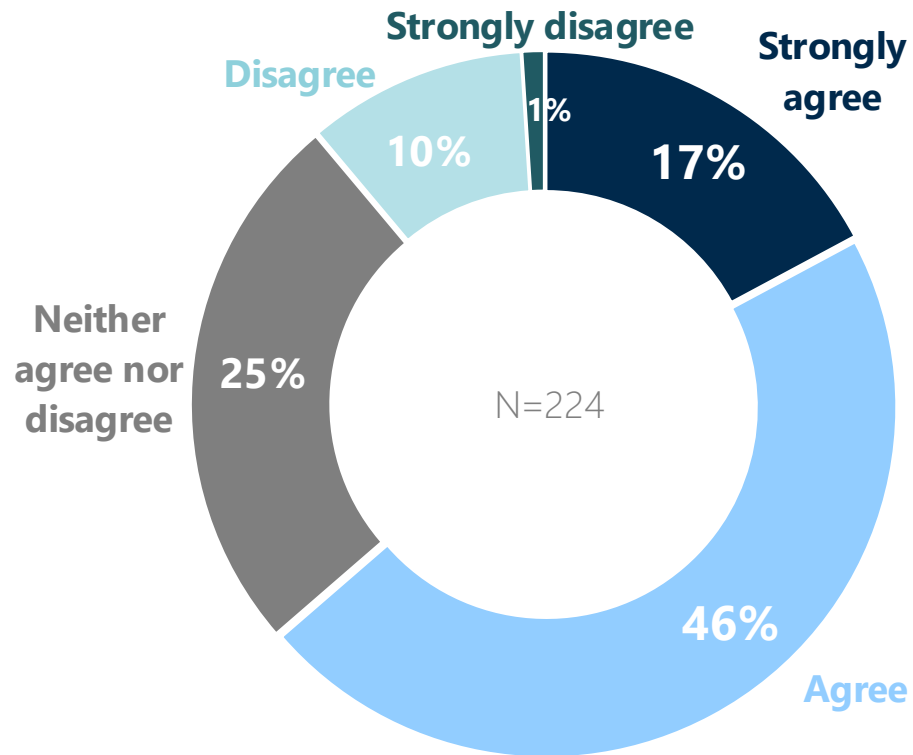
Small (N=78)	Medium (N=100)	Lg/Very Lg (N=66)
77%	68%	58%

CNEs/CNOs and leaders at smaller organizations report higher agreement that implementation of virtual care positively impacts administrative aspects of nurses' workload.

Strong Agreement that Virtual Care Positively Impacts Clinical Workload

How much do you agree that virtual care has positively impacted the clinical aspects of the nurse workload (e.g., quality and time spent in direct patient care, reduced interruptions, etc.)?

Impact of Virtual Care on Clinical Workload



Title

CNE/CNO (N=96)	Director (N=104)	N Manager (N=62)
82%	62%	54%

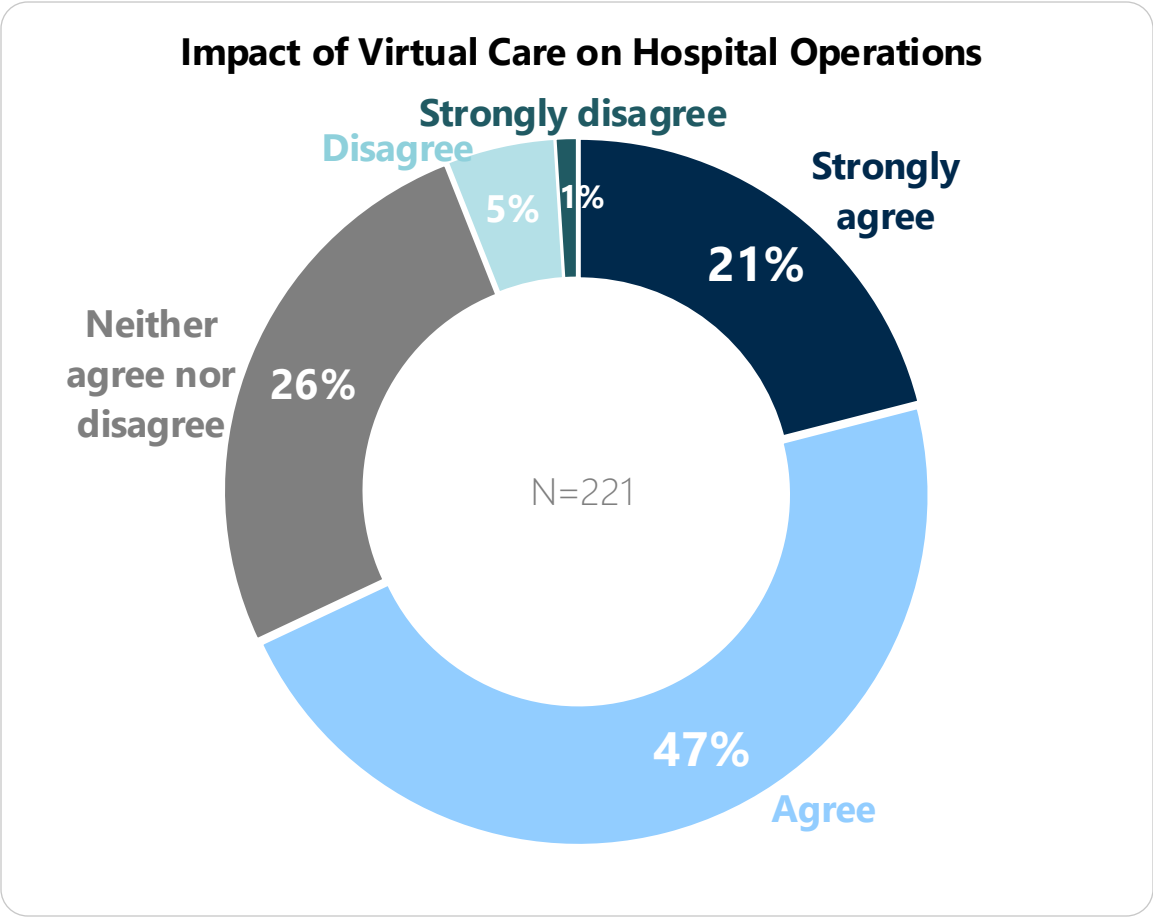
Size of Organization

Small (N=81)	Medium (N=99)	Lg/Very Lg (N=66)
62%	68%	55%

CNEs/CNOs and leaders at smaller/medium organizations report higher agreement that implementation of virtual care positively impacts clinical aspects of nurses' workload.

Strong Agreement that Virtual Care Positively Impacts Hospital Operations

How much do you agree that virtual care has positively impacted hospital operations?



Title

CNE/CNO (N=92)	Director (N=104)	N Manager (N=60)
75%	66%	59%

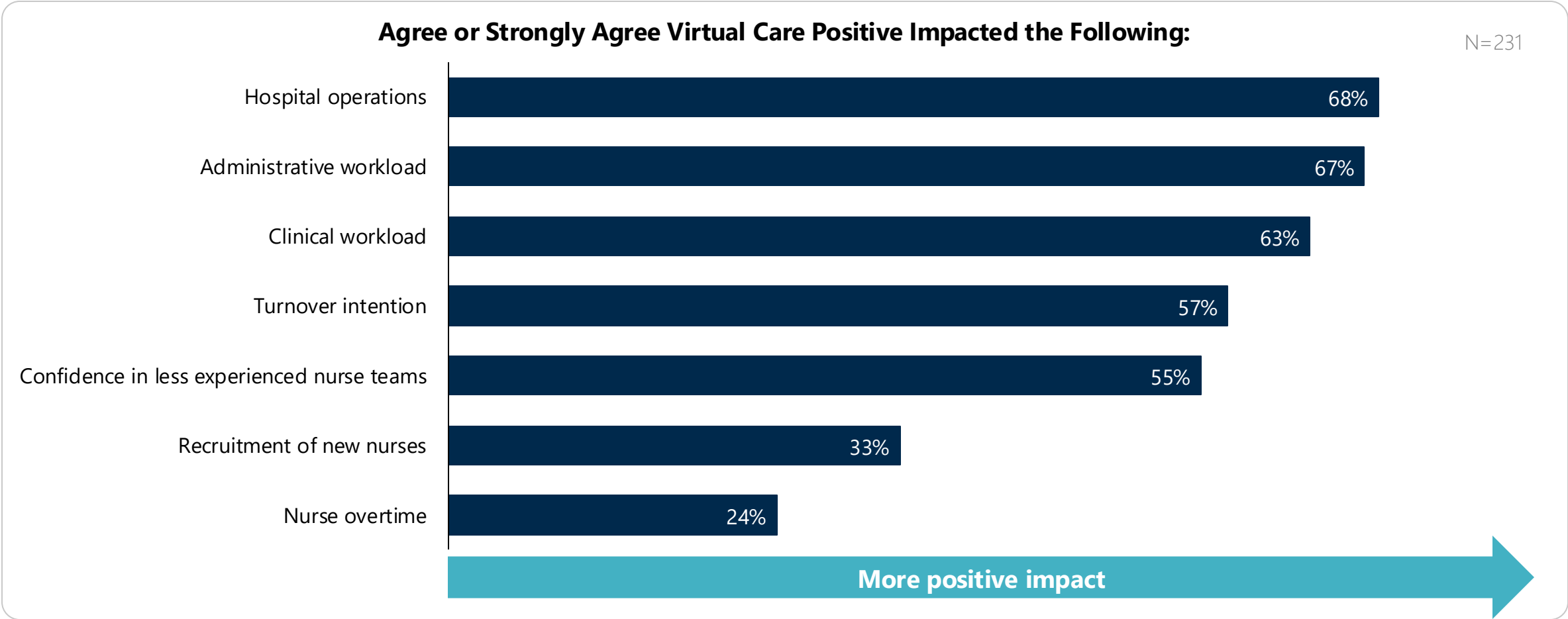
Size of Organization

Small (N=78)	Medium (N=100)	Lg/Very Lg (N=65)
68%	76%	63%

CNEs/CNOs and leaders at medium organizations report higher agreement that implementation of virtual care positively impacts hospital operations.

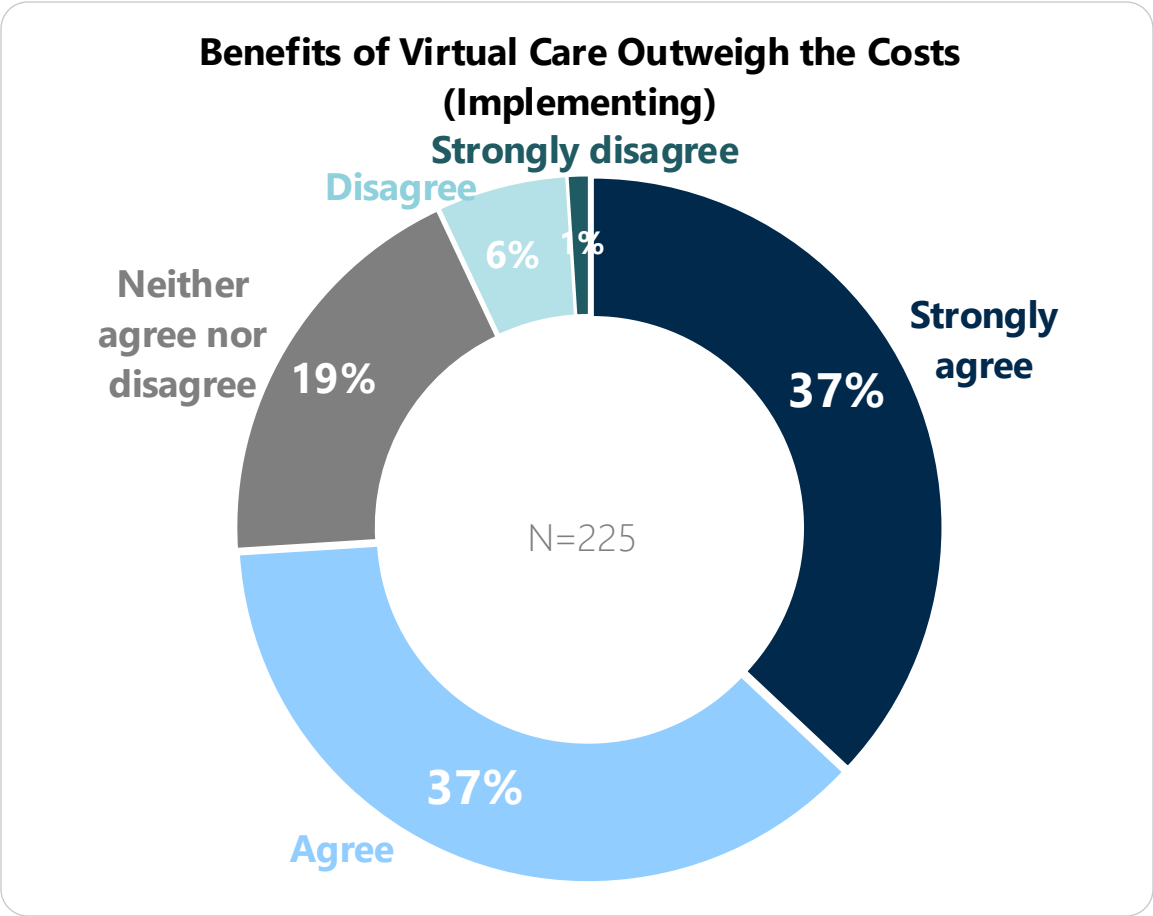
Virtual Care Perceived to Have Strongest Impact on Hospital Operations, as well as Nurse Administrative and Clinical Workload

How much do you agree that virtual care has positively impacted the following?



Almost 75% of Respondents Implementing Virtual Care Agree the Benefits of Virtual Care Outweigh the Costs

How much do you agree that the benefits of virtual care outweigh the costs?



Title

CNE/CNO (N=91)	Director (N=99)	N Manager (N=60)
80%	73%	69%

Size of Organization

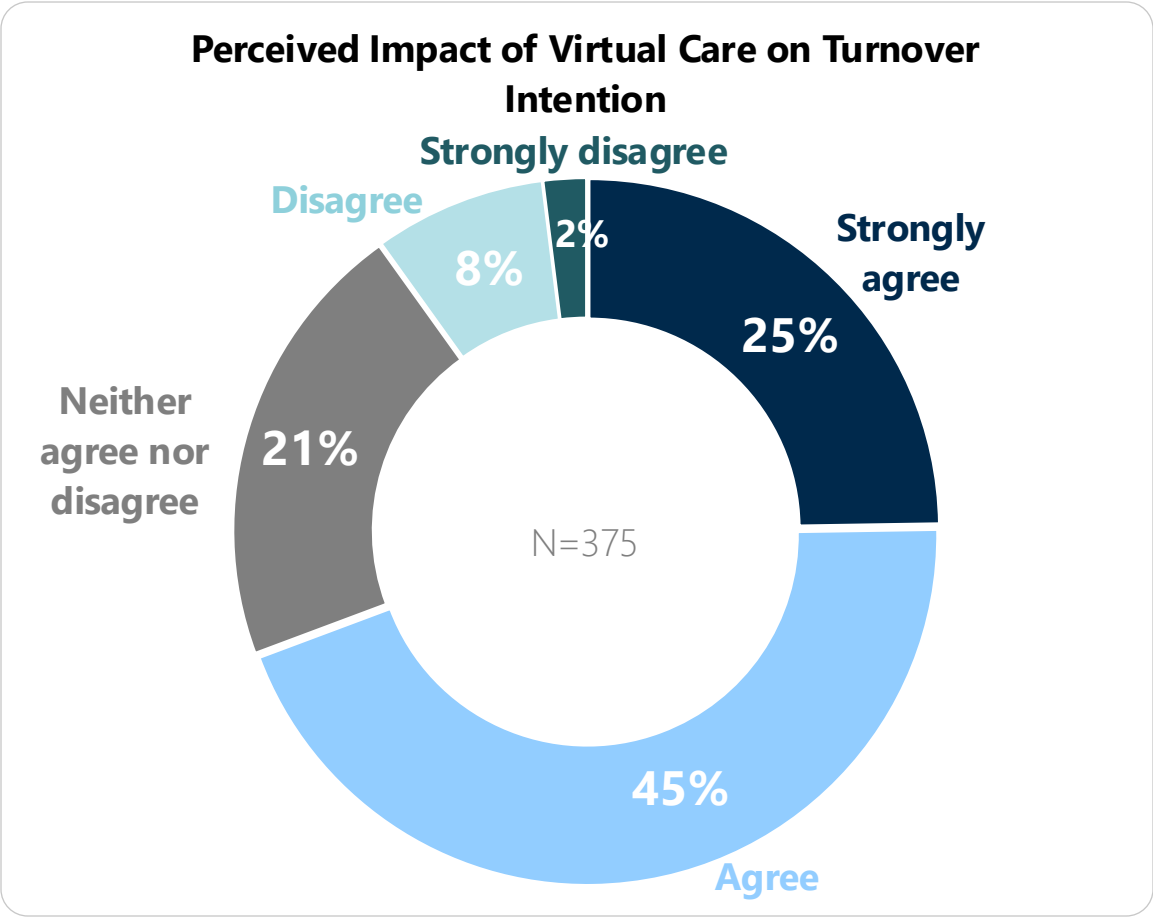
Small (N=77)	Medium (N=94)	Lg/Very Lg (N=63)
73%	67%	75%

CNEs/CNOs report higher agreement that the benefits of virtual care outweigh the costs.

Predictions from Those Not
Implementing Virtual Care at This Time

70% of Respondents Agree that the Implementation of Virtual Care Reduces Likelihood of Nurse Turnover

How much do you agree that virtual care would positively influence the desire for nurses in your organization to remain in their role?



Title

CNE/CNO (N=41)	Director (N=58)	N Manager (N=41)
75%	71%	62%

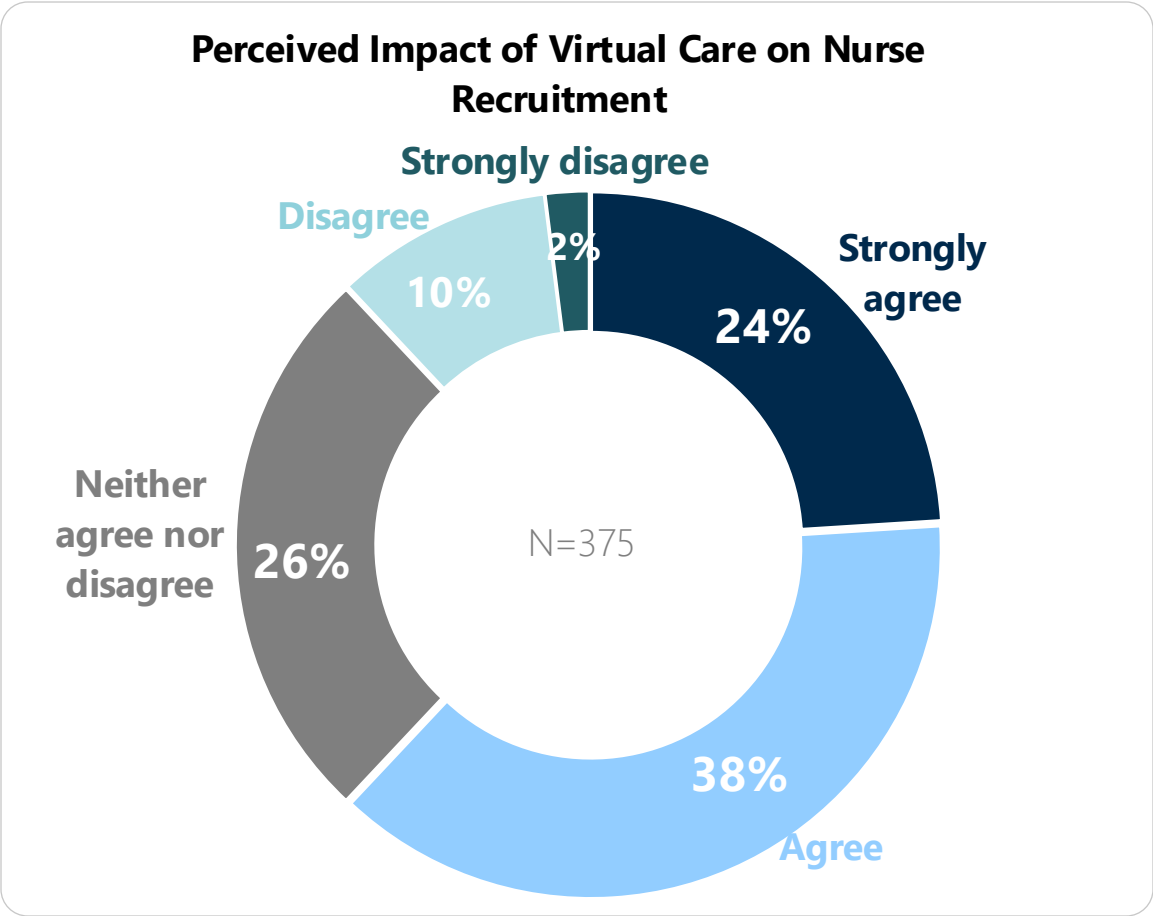
Size of Organization

Small (N=42)	Medium (N=69)	Lg/Very Lg (N=56)
70%	78%	66%

CNEs/CNOs and Directors, as well as leaders at medium-sized organizations report slightly higher agreement that implementation of virtual care would reduce turnover.

More than Half of Respondents are Hopeful Virtual Nursing would Increase the Ability to Recruit New Nurses

How much do you agree that virtual care would increase the ability to recruit new nurses?



Title

CNE/CNO (N=39)	Director (N=53)	N Manager (N=39)
64%	62%	53%

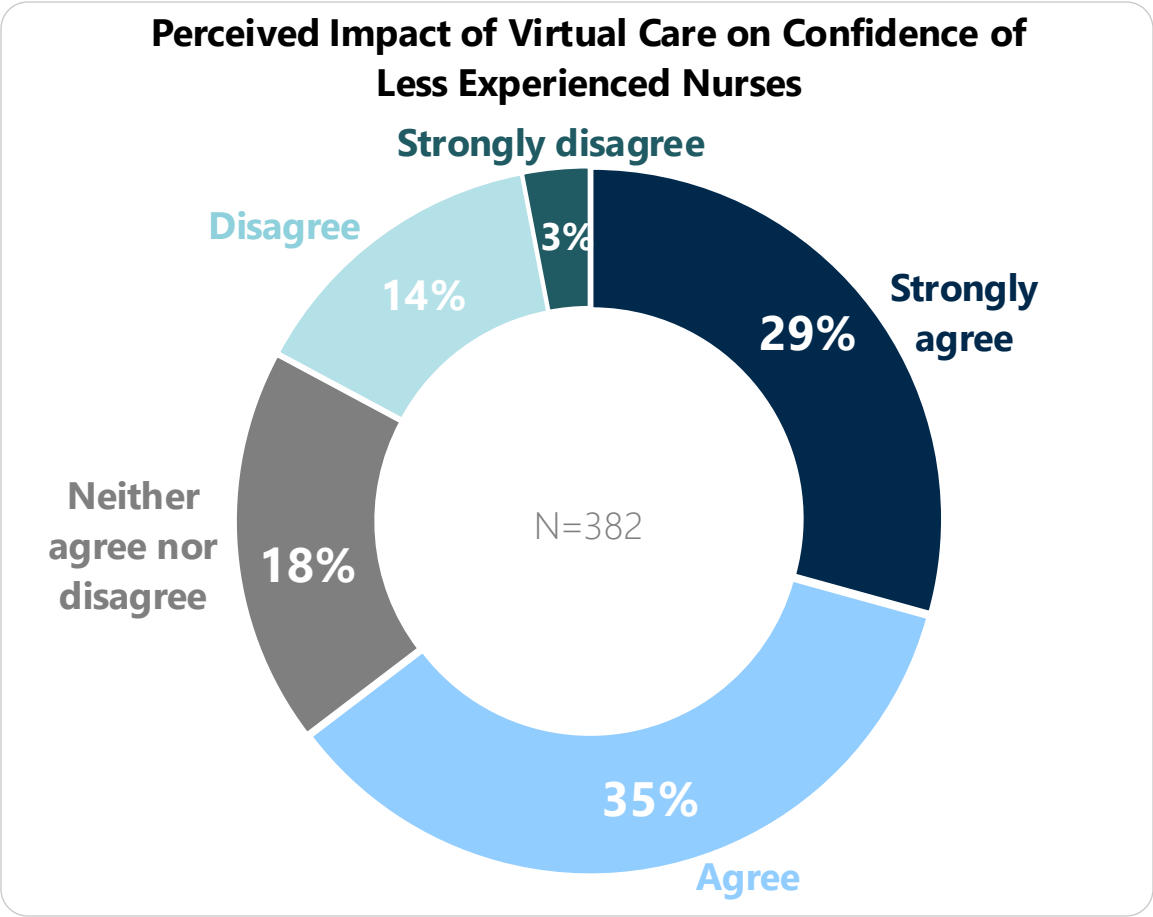
Size of Organization

Small (N=39)	Medium (N=64)	Lg/Very Lg (N=54)
60%	71%	54%

CNEs/CNOs and Directors and leaders at medium-sized organizations report higher agreement that implementation of virtual care would increase the ability to recruit new nurses.

Most Respondents Report Belief that Virtual Would Increase their Confidence of Teams with Less Experienced Nurses

How much do you agree that utilization of more experienced virtual nurses would increase confidence in having teams of less experienced nurses?



Title

CNE/CNO (N=39)	Director (N=58)	N Manager (N=39)
78%	65%	45%

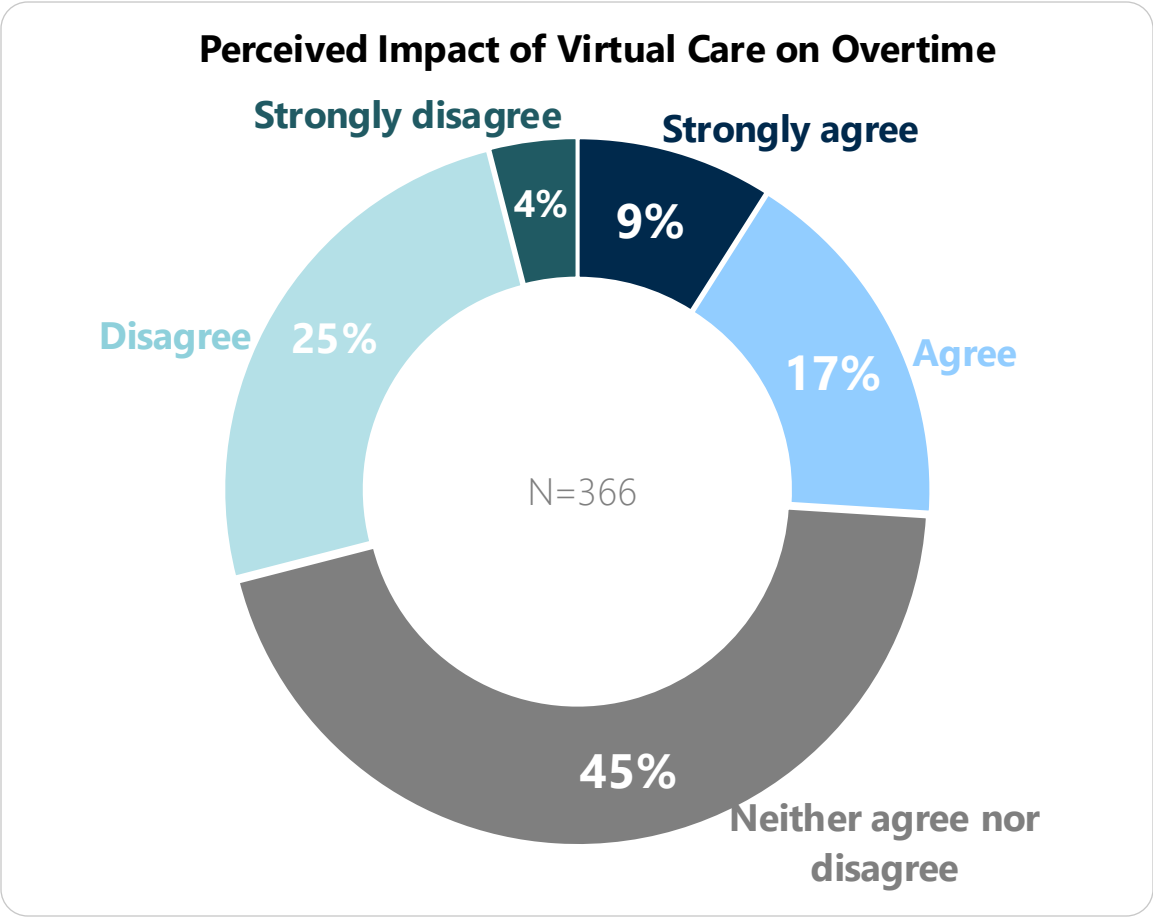
Size of Organization

Small (N=41)	Medium (N=68)	Lg/Very Lg (N=54)
68%	59%	70%

CNEs/CNOs and leaders at small and large/very large organizations report higher agreement that implementation of virtual care would increase the confidence of less experienced nurses.

Around 25% of Respondents Report That Implementation of Virtual Care Would Impact Nurse Overtime

How much do you agree that your nurses would be less likely to work overtime as a direct result of virtual care?



Title

CNE/CNO (N=38)	Director (N=53)	N Manager (N=40)
24%	35%	21%

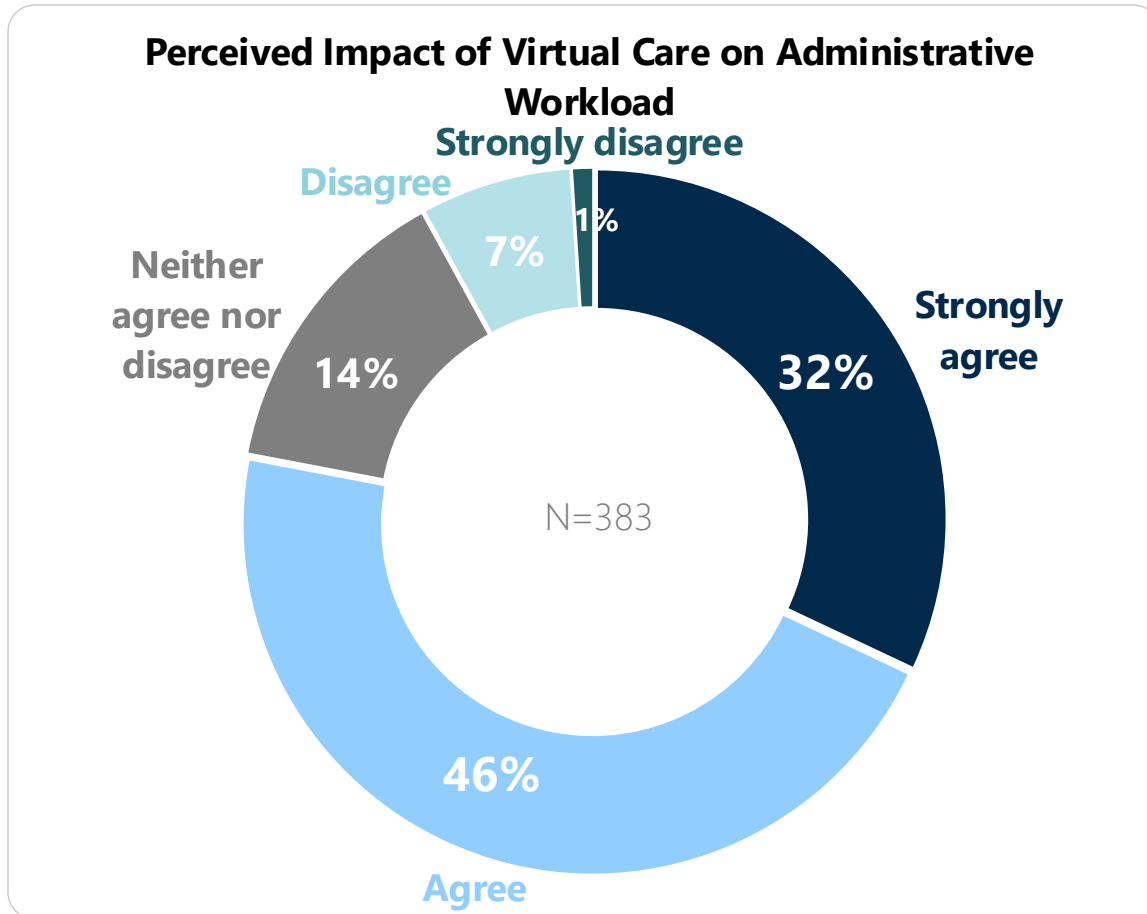
Size of Organization

Small (N=37)	Medium (N=65)	Lg/Very Lg (N=54)
24%	26%	27%

Directors report higher agreement that implementation of virtual care would decrease the likelihood of nurses working overtime.

Strong Agreement that Virtual Care would Positively Impact Administrative Workload

How much do you agree that virtual care would positively impact the administrative aspects of the nurse workload (e.g., reduction in documentation, decrease in non-clinical tasks, etc.)?



Title

CNE/CNO (N=39)	Director (N=55)	N Manager (N=39)
78%	85%	70%

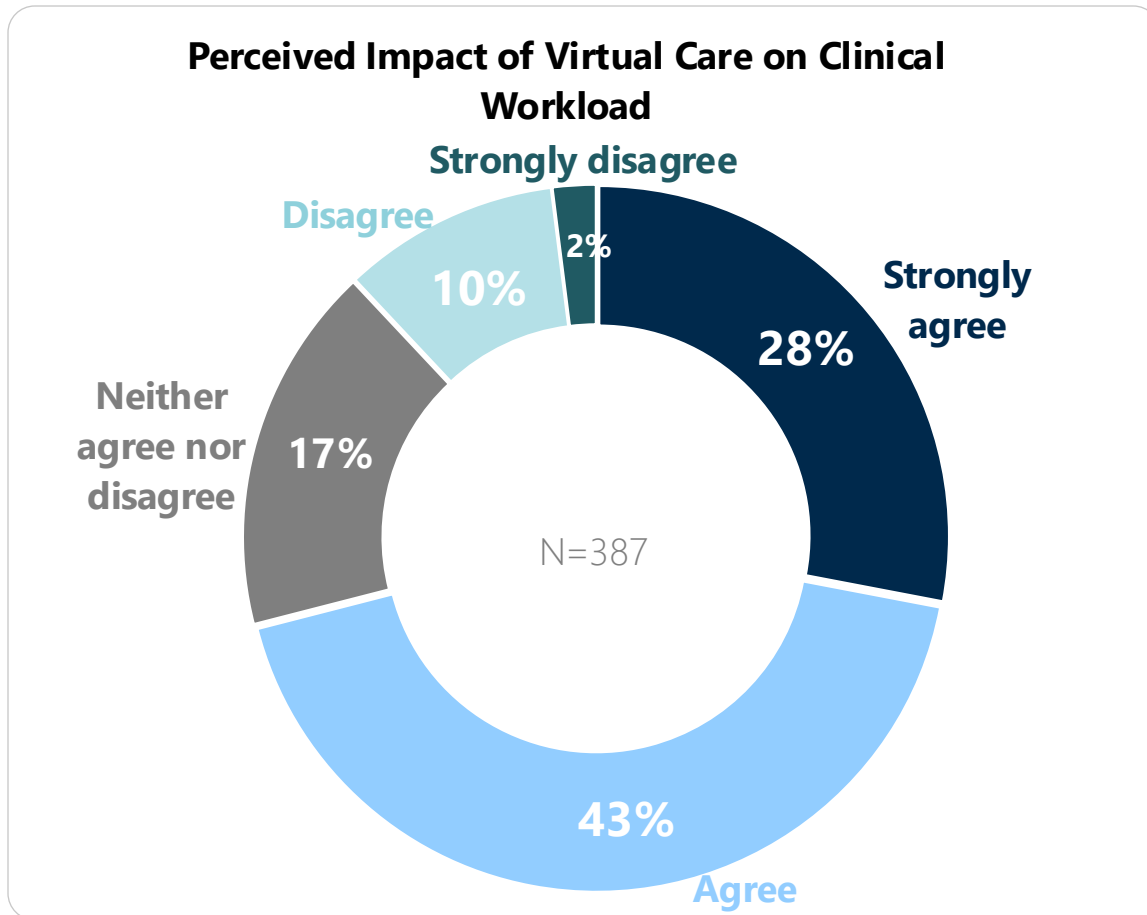
Size of Organization

Small (N=39)	Medium (N=66)	Lg/Very Lg (N=56)
78%	82%	80%

Directors report higher agreement that implementation of virtual care would positively impact administrative aspects of nurses' workload.

Strong Agreement that Virtual Care Would Positively Impact Clinical Workload

How much do you agree that virtual care would positively impact the clinical aspects of the nurse workload (e.g., quality and time spent in direct patient care, reduced interruptions, etc.)?



Title

CNE/CNO (N=39)	Director (N=55)	N Manager (N=39)
74%	78%	58%

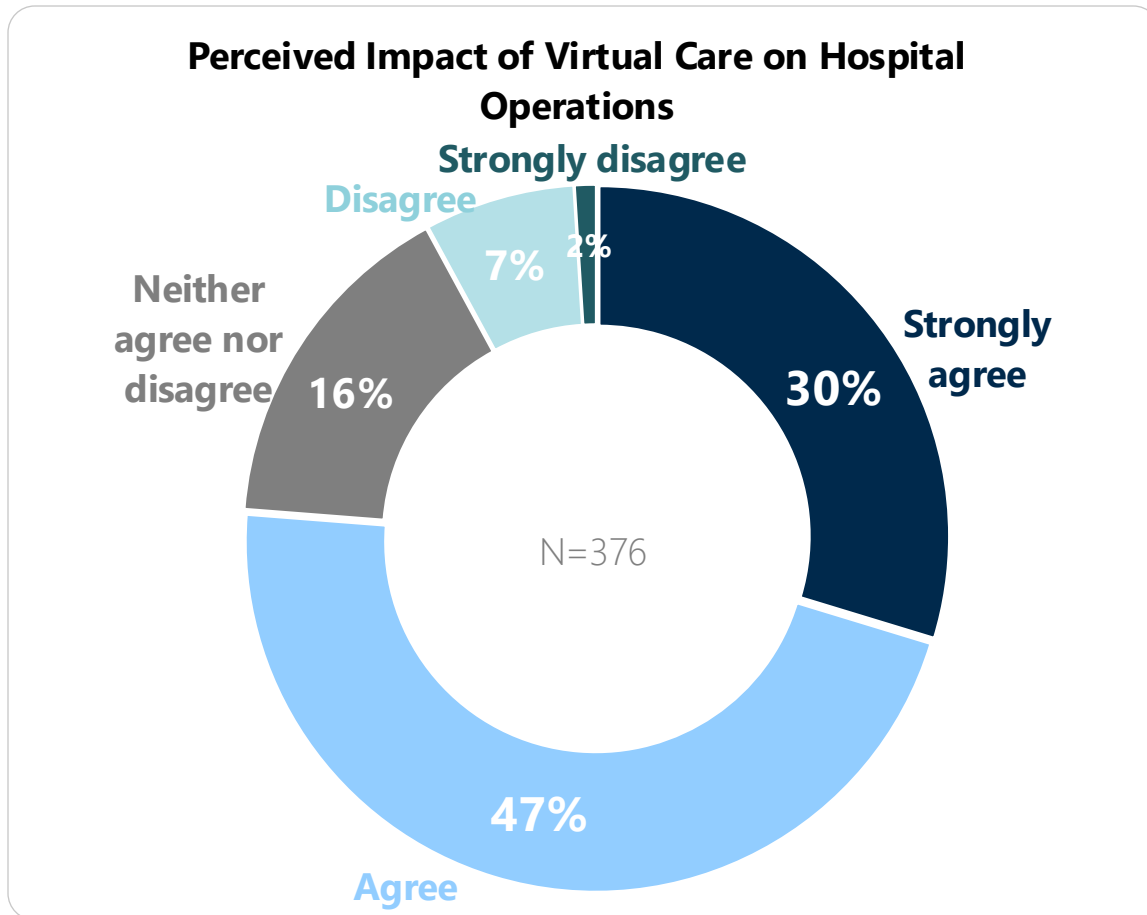
Size of Organization

Small (N=41)	Medium (N=66)	Lg/Very Lg (N=52)
65%	77%	74%

CNEs/CNOs and Directors report higher agreement that implementation of virtual care would positively impact clinical aspects of nurses' workload.

Strong Agreement that Virtual Care Positively Impacts Hospital Operations

How much do you agree that virtual care would positively impact hospital operations?



Title

CNE/CNO (N=40)	Director (N=53)	N Manager (N=39)
74%	78%	73%

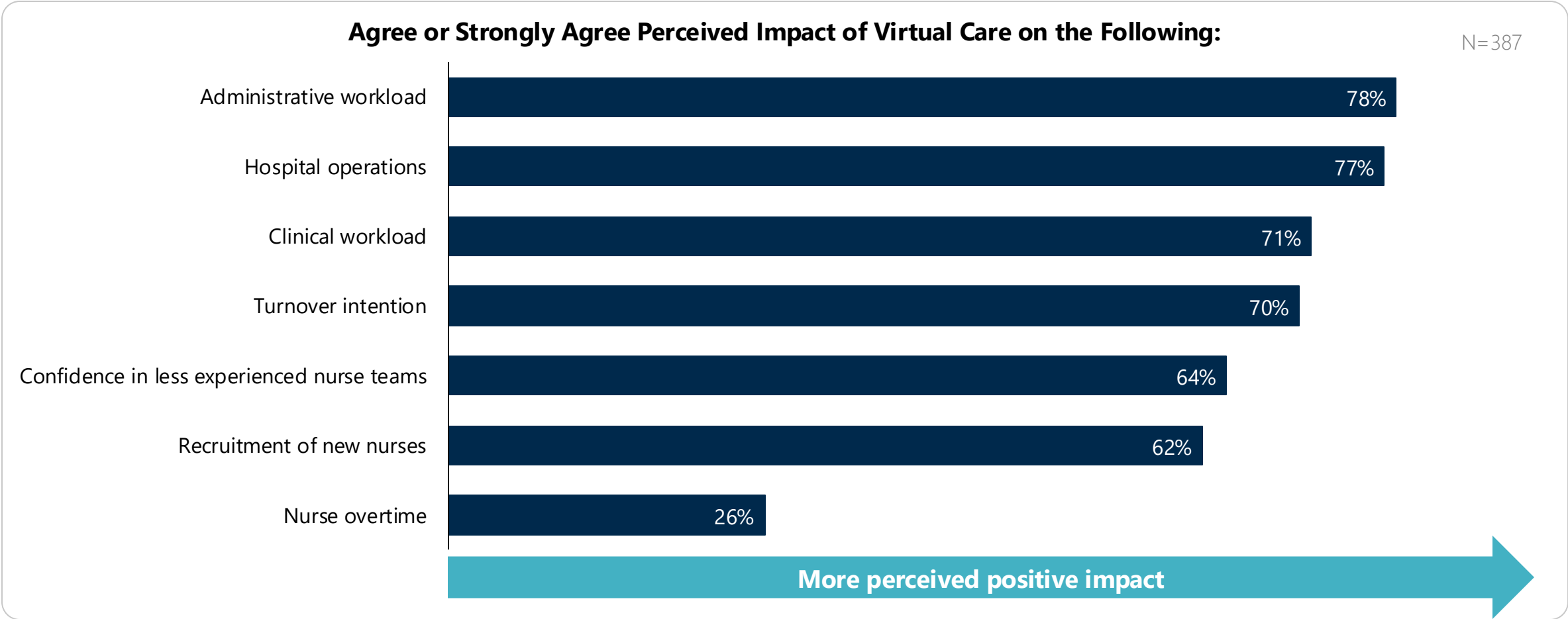
Size of Organization

Small (N=41)	Medium (N=66)	Lg/Very Lg (N=52)
79%	76%	80%

There are no significant differences between groups in terms of agreement that implementation of virtual care would positively impact hospital operations.

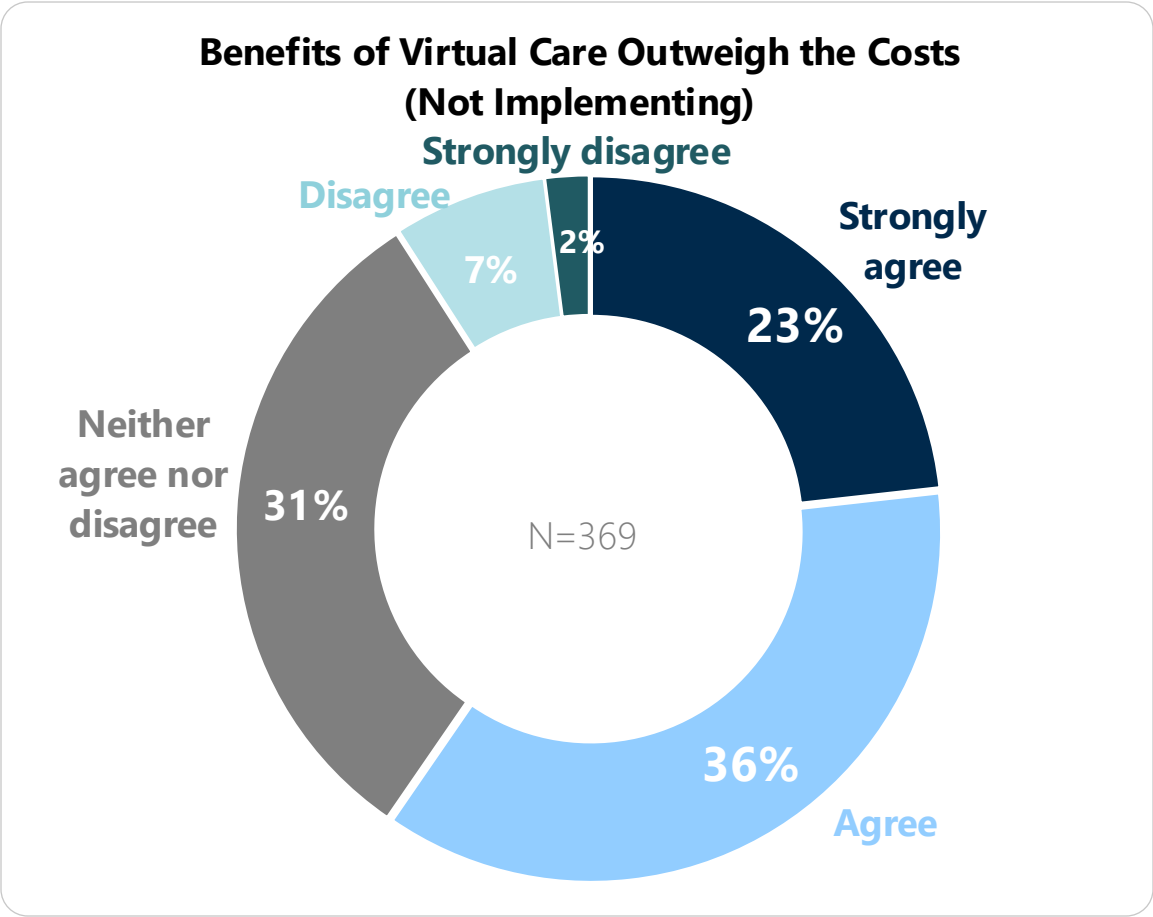
Virtual Care Perceived to Have Strongest Impact on Hospital Operations, as well as Nurse Administrative and Clinical Workload

How much do you agree that virtual care has positively impacted the following?



Almost 60% of Respondents Not Currently Implementing Virtual Care Agree the Benefits of Virtual Care Outweigh the Costs

How much do you agree that the benefits of virtual care outweigh the costs?



Title

CNE/CNO (N=41)	Director (N=56)	N Manager (N=39)
56%	65%	60%

Size of Organization

Small (N=41)	Medium (N=66)	Lg/Very Lg (N=52)
68%	65%	54%

Directors and nurse leaders at small- and medium-sized organizations report slightly higher agreement that they believe the benefits of virtual care would outweigh the costs.

Comparison across Levels of Implementation of Virtual Care

Generally, Those Not Implementing Virtual Care Overestimate the Impact, Particularly for Impact on Nurse Recruitment

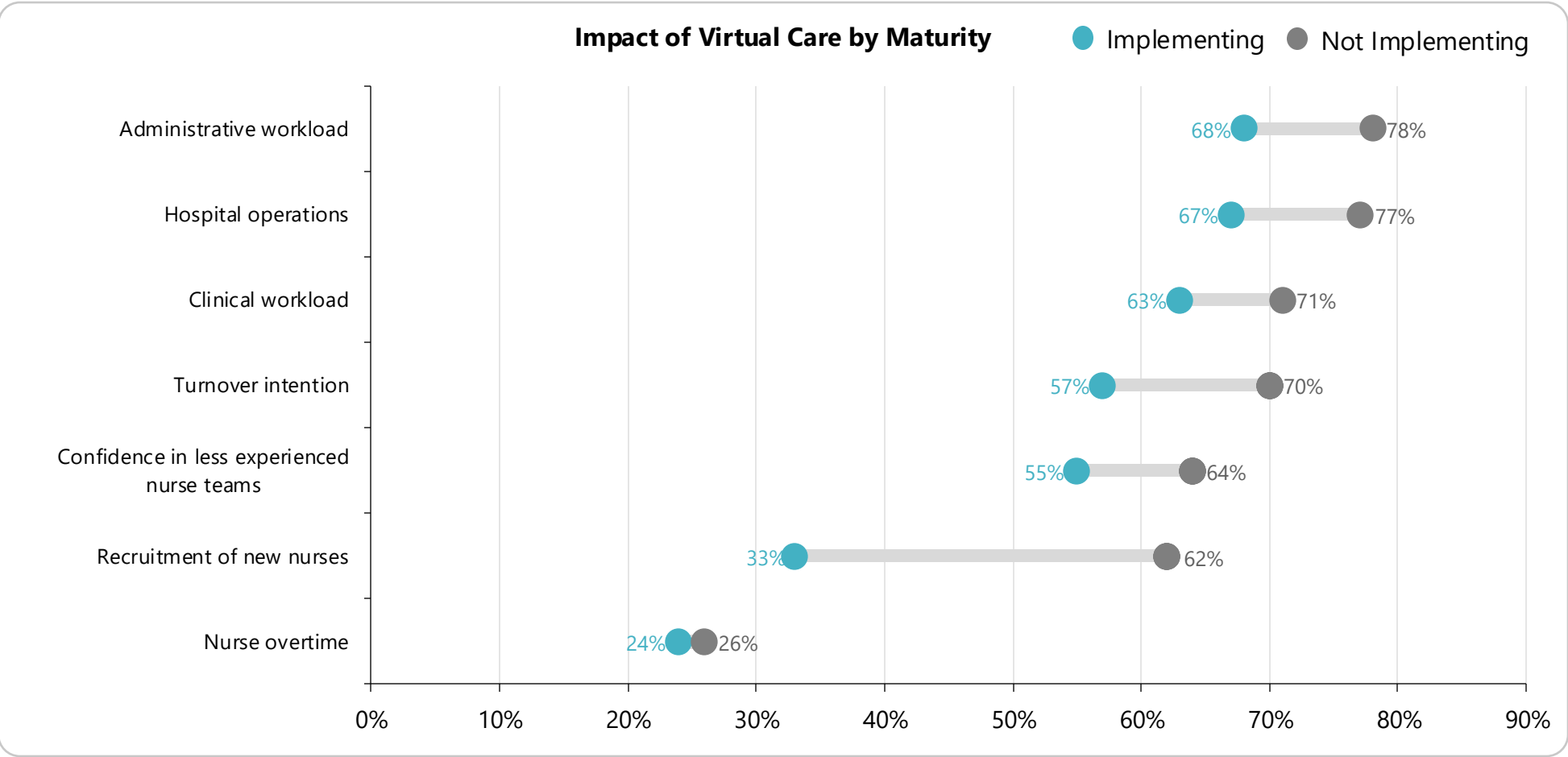
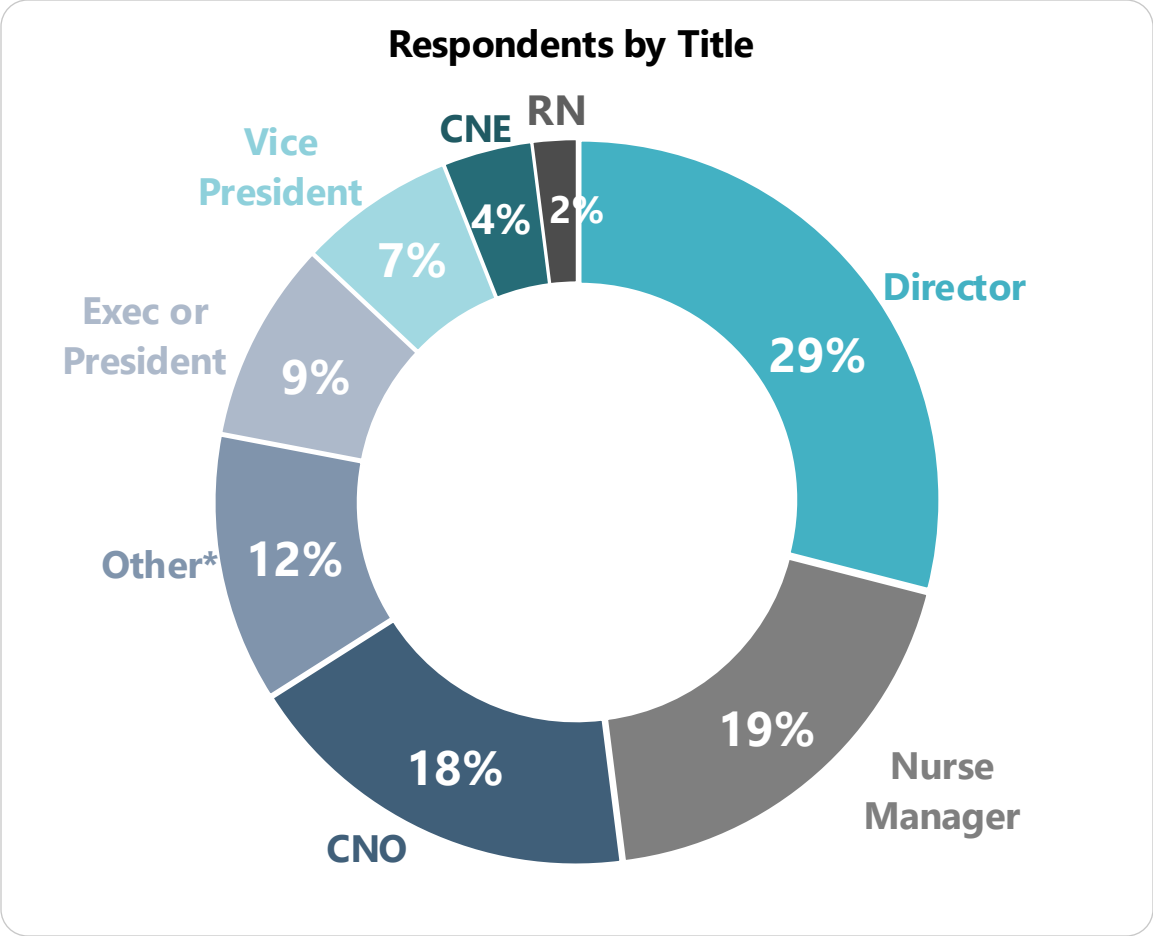


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Titles of Respondents



Other = Supervisor, Coordinator, or Leader in title

Number of Respondents by State and AONL Region

