



# **Sustaining Wisconsin's Healthcare Workforce: A report on Healthcare Worker Retirement and Departure Intentions in the Fox Valley**

**March 2012**



## **Introduction:**

The Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (FVWDB) serves our communities by providing individuals an opportunity to seek their fullest potential while affording businesses the opportunity to recruit the highest quality employees. Given that healthcare is Wisconsin's second largest employer, the FVWDB realized a healthcare shortage could be detrimental to the citizens of Wisconsin. To address this looming need, the FVWDB brought educators and healthcare employers from the Fox Valley together to collaborate on the Fox Valley Health Care Alliance (FVHCA). The FVWDB's charge was to remain a neutral facilitator and assist the Alliance in establishing goals, define outcomes, formulate and execute strategies, and assess the impact.

The current purpose of the Fox Valley Health Care Alliance is to ensure an abundant supply of healthcare workers in our region now and in the future by working collaboratively with all stakeholders. The FVHCA is a strong, working partnership comprised of area healthcare facilities, educational institutions, and community partners who work together on numerous healthcare-related projects. An Executive Committee oversees the activities of the FVHCA, which includes six other working subcommittees that focus on specific topic areas. For further information on the FVHCA, please go to [www.fvhca.org](http://www.fvhca.org).

## **Key Strategies:**

The Fox Valley Health Care Alliance identified four key strategies to direct its efforts:

- Market healthcare occupations in the Fox Valley through development of a website, education outreach activities, and promotion of the Alliance.
- Develop standardized job shadowing applications and clinical student background check requirements for all partners.
- Seek and write for Federal, State, and private grant funding to support healthcare initiatives in the Fox Valley when possible.
- Assess the specific healthcare labor needs of the Fox Valley region including retirement and departure intentions of the current healthcare workforce.

## **Survey Research:**

Planning for the Retirement and Departures Intentions survey began in mid-2011. The project set out with the following objectives:

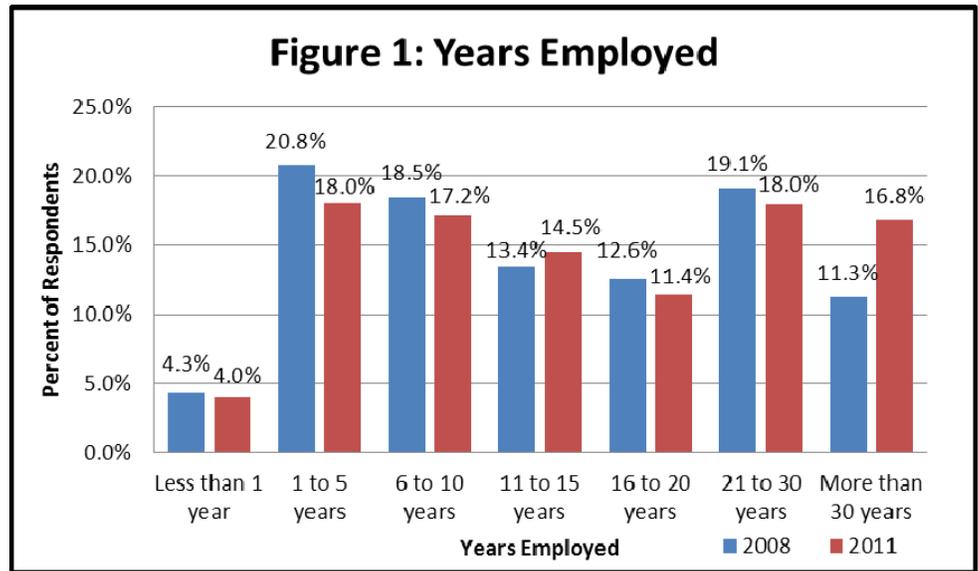
- Anticipate retirement plans and factors influencing the retirement decision.
- Anticipate departure plans (other than retirement) and the factors influencing the departure decision.
- Gather demographics, such as age, gender, specialty area, job function, tenure, and employment status, with which to analyze the retirement and departure intentions.

The surveying process was conducted via both paper and electronic surveys sent directly to employees through the assistance of each employer. Surveying lasted from mid-2011 through late-2011, culminating in responses from 8,524 employees representing eight major healthcare employers. The average employee response rate per organization was 55 percent, with several organizations over a 60 percent response rate. The results of the survey are presented in the following report. Note that occupations with fewer than ten respondents are not included in the retirement by occupation results.

# Respondent Demographics

## Years Employed

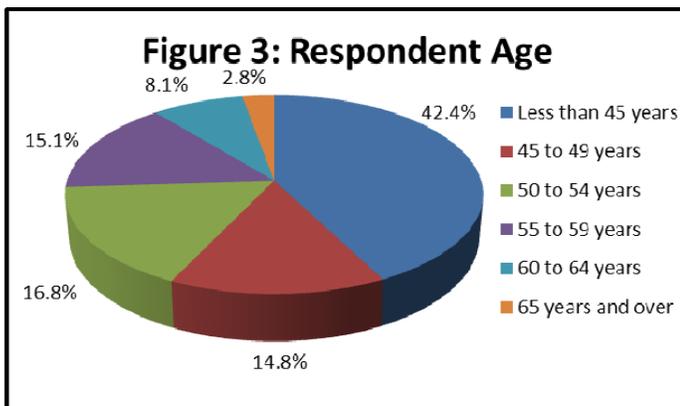
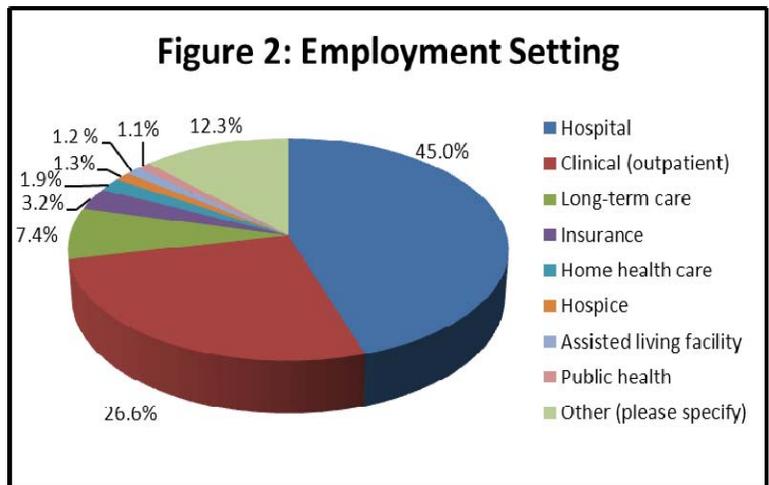
As seen in Figure 1, 22 percent of all healthcare workers have been employed five years or less while nearly 35 percent of workers have been employed twenty-one years or more. Current respondents are slightly more tenured than in 2008 where one quarter of all healthcare workers were employed five years or less while 30.4 percent of workers were employed twenty-one years or more.



Seventy-one-percent of the respondents reported full-time employment in the healthcare field while 26 percent indicated part-time employment. Only 3 percent of respondents describe themselves as casual employees.

## Employment Setting

Nearly one-half of responding employees, 45 percent, reported employment in a hospital setting while 26.6 percent indicated employment in a clinical (outpatient) setting (Figure 2). These findings compared similarly with the 2008 results where over 47 percent of respondents reported employment in a hospital setting and nearly 29 percent indicated employment in a clinical (outpatient) setting.

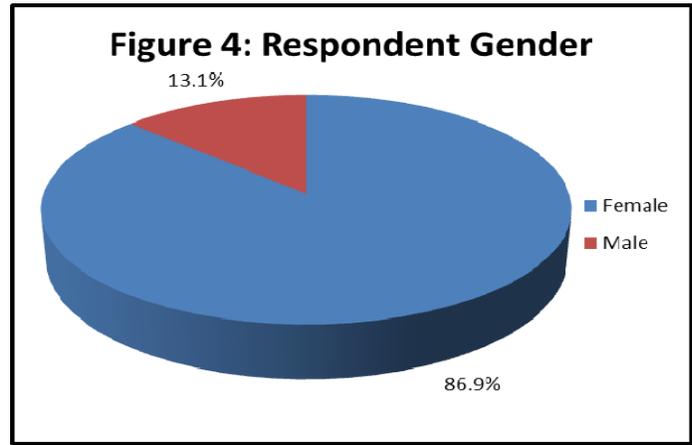


## Respondent Age

Of responding employees, 42.4 percent reported being younger than 45 years (Figure 3). An additional 14.8 percent indicated their age between 45 and 49 years. Nearly 11 percent of respondents described their age as 60 or over while the remaining 31.9 percent reported their age between 50 and 59 years.

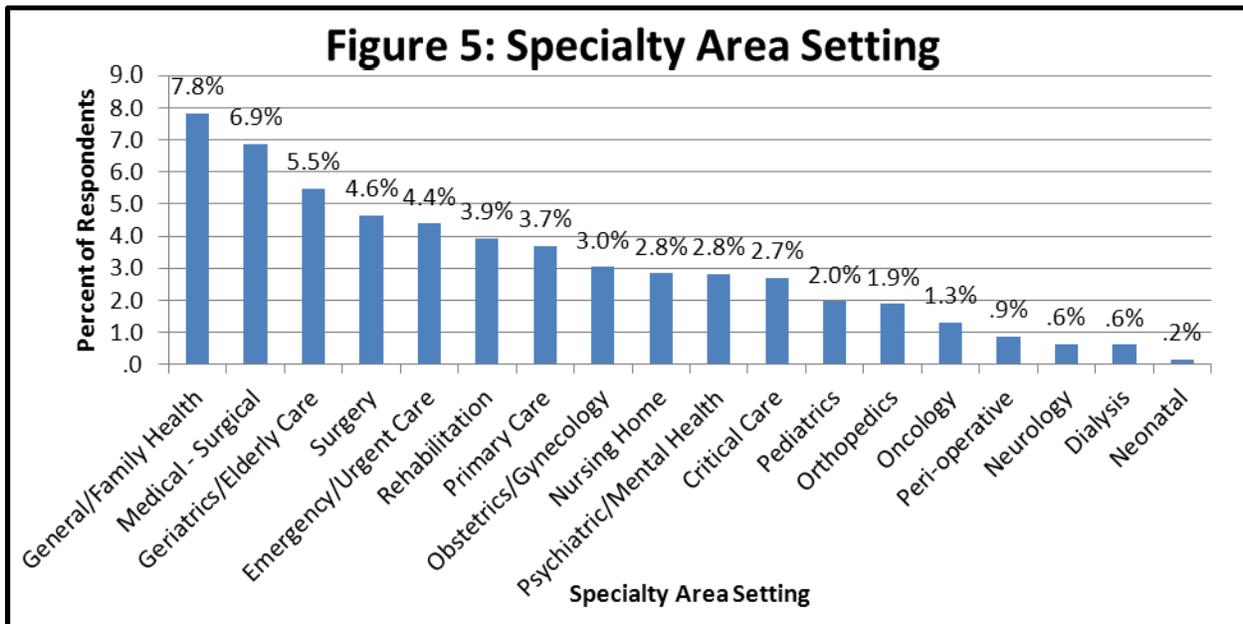
## Respondent Gender

As illustrated in Figure 4, nearly 87 percent of respondents reported their gender as female with the remaining 13 percent being male. These findings compared similarly to the 2008 findings where over 88 percent of respondents reported their gender as female and just over 11 percent male.



## Respondent Specialty Area Setting

Respondents were also asked to indicate their main specialty area setting in employment; the results are depicted in Figure 5. Of respondents who selected from the predetermined list, 7.8 percent reported general/family health as their specialty area setting followed by medical/surgical and geriatrics/elderly care at 6.9 percent and 5.5 percent respectively. In total, 44.4 percent of respondents did not identify with any of the options on the questionnaire and selected “Other” as their specialty area setting, and were given the option to describe their specialty area setting. Sizable “Other” specialty area settings include administration and laboratory.

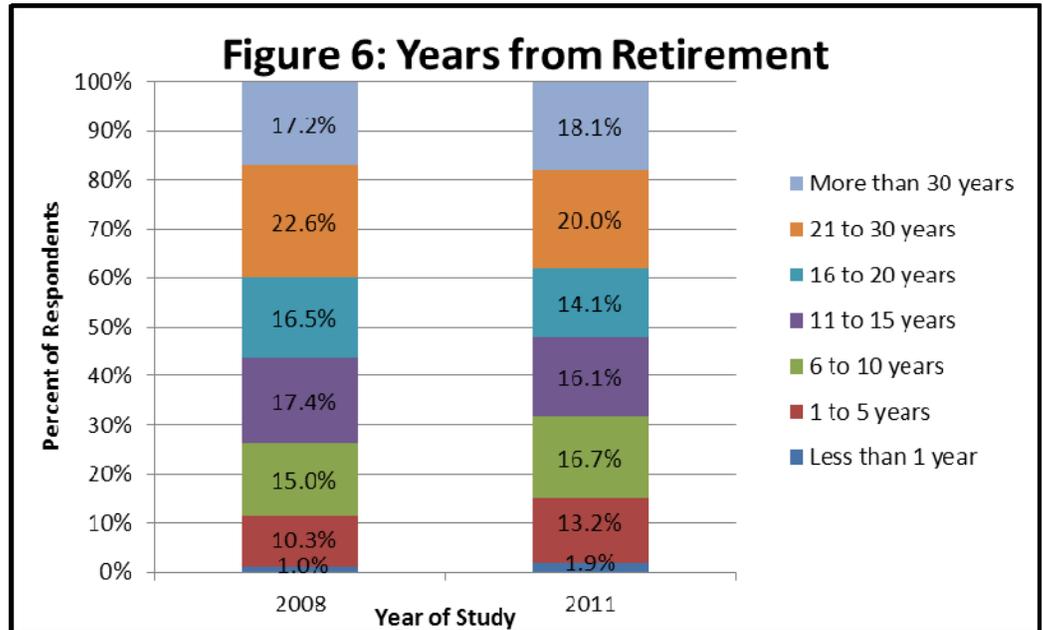


# Retirement Intentions

## Years from Retirement

Just over 15 percent of surveyed healthcare employees plan to retire within the next five years (Figure 6). An additional 16.7 percent plan to retire between 6 and 10 years, a cumulative loss of nearly 32 percent of healthcare workers over the next ten years. With a historic attrition rate of one-third of employees retiring every 15 years, the 2011 findings of nearly one half of respondents (47.9 percent) indicating retirement within the next 15 years demonstrates a retirement rate much higher than anticipated.

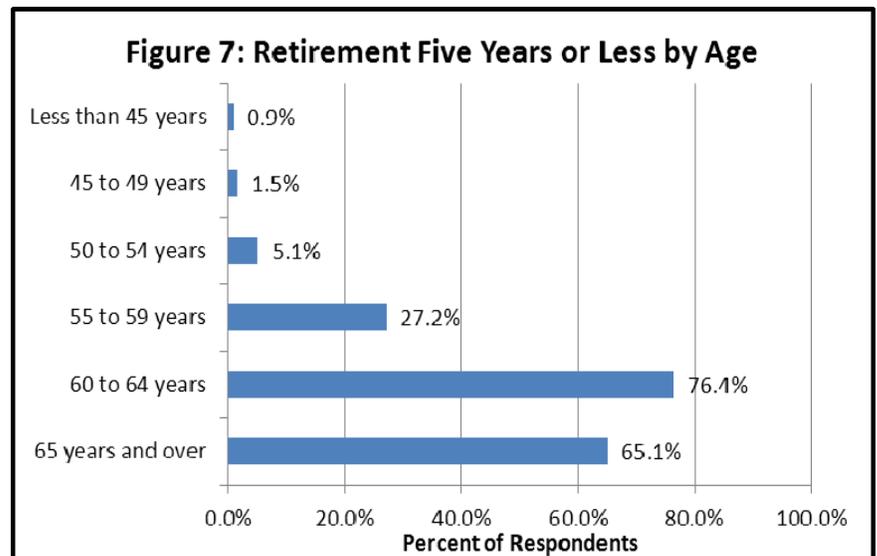
A comparison of the 2008 study to the 2011 study illustrates a natural progression of a workforce that is drawing closer to retirement (Figure 6). Over 26 percent of the 2008 study healthcare workers indicated retirement intentions within the next ten years, while nearly 32 percent of the 2011 study respondents reported retirement intentions within the next ten years. The largest changes include an



increase of 2.9 percentage points among respondents who reported retirement between one to five years, while a corresponding decrease of 2.6 percentage points exists among respondents who indicated retirement between 21 to 30 years.

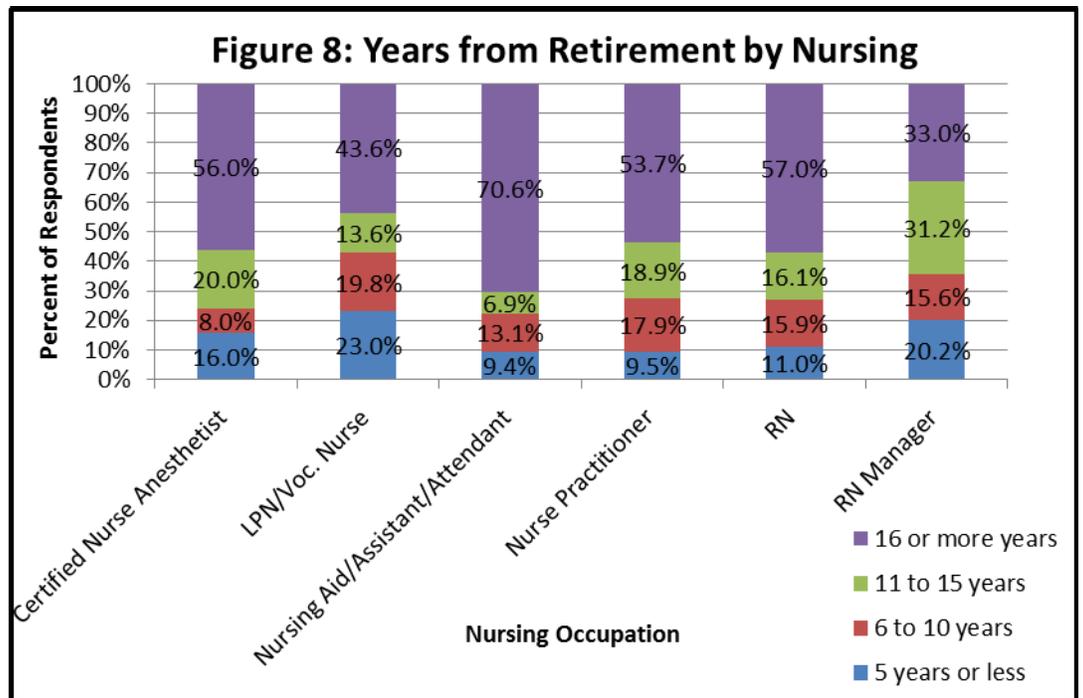
## Years from Retirement by Age

As seen in Figure 7, the vast majority of healthcare workers planning to retire within the next five years are 60 years old, or older. Only 27 percent of healthcare workers between 55 and 59 years plan to retire within the next five years.

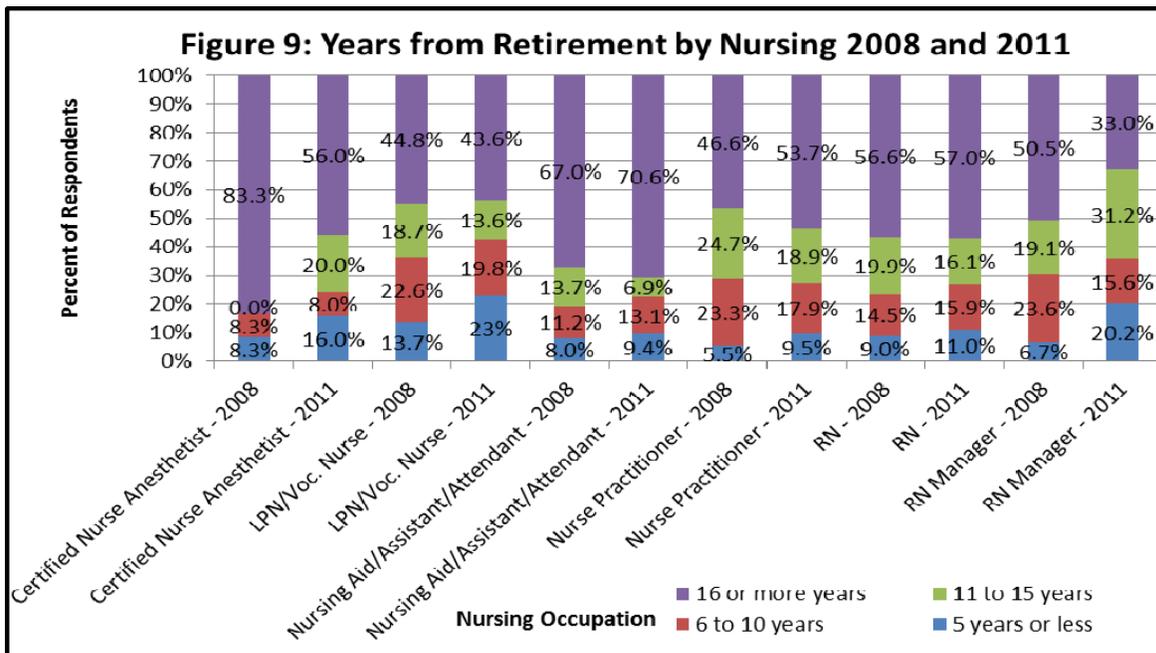


## Years from Retirement by Nursing

As depicted in Figure 8, fewer nursing aids/assistants/attendants, nurse practitioners, and RNs plan to retire within the next five years than the overall responding healthcare population. A higher than average percentage of LPNs/Vocational Nurses will be retiring within the next five years, with the trend continuing well into years six through ten. In the 11 to 15 year retirement block, RN managers will see the highest rate of retirement at 31.2 percent. Certified nurse anesthetists, LPN/vocational nurses, nurse practitioners, RNs, and RN managers will all see retirement rates much higher than the 15 year historical retirement average.

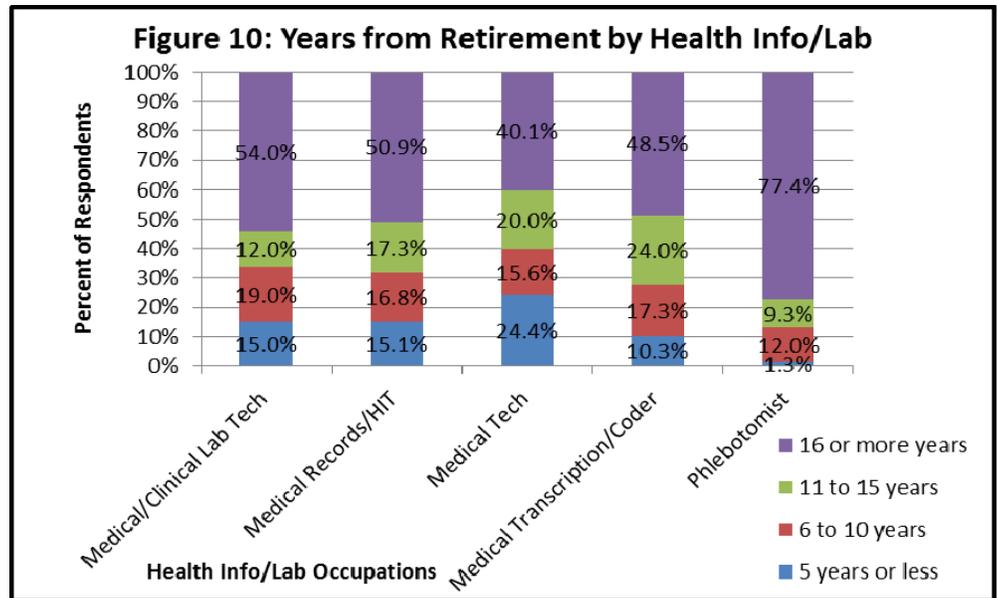


When comparing the 2008 study to the 2011 study, the findings demonstrate a natural movement of employees nearing to retirement (Figure 9). All nursing occupations saw an increase in those planning to retire within the next five years. The largest percentage point change between the two studies among those planning to retire within the next five years is RN managers with an increase of 13.5 percentage points. Several occupations saw a decrease among those planning to retire between six and ten years while nursing aids/assistants/attendants and RNs saw minimal increases. The largest increase in the 11 to 16 year retirement intention group is certified nurse anesthetists with none of the 2008 responding population planning to retire in 11 to 16 years, to one fifth of the 2011 responding population planning to retire within the same time period.

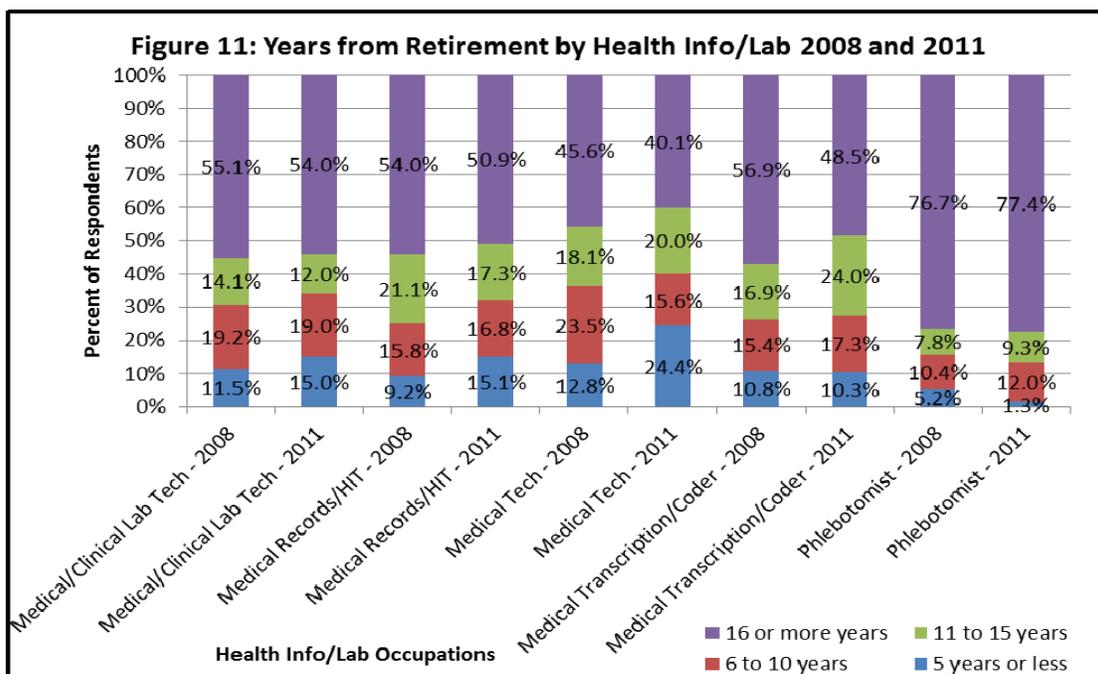


## Years from Retirement by Health Information and Lab

Medical/clinical lab techs and medical records/HIT will both see roughly 15 percent of the employee base retiring within the next five years (Figure 10). Due to low retirement intentions, Phlebotomists will not see a significant need to replace retiring employees for at least 16 years. To the contrary, medical technologists will see nearly one quarter of the employee base retiring within five years and well over one half of the responding employees retiring within 15 years. Of the 11 to 15 year retirement group, the medical transcription/coder occupation will see the greatest attrition at nearly one quarter of responding employees citing retirement intentions of 11 to 15 years.

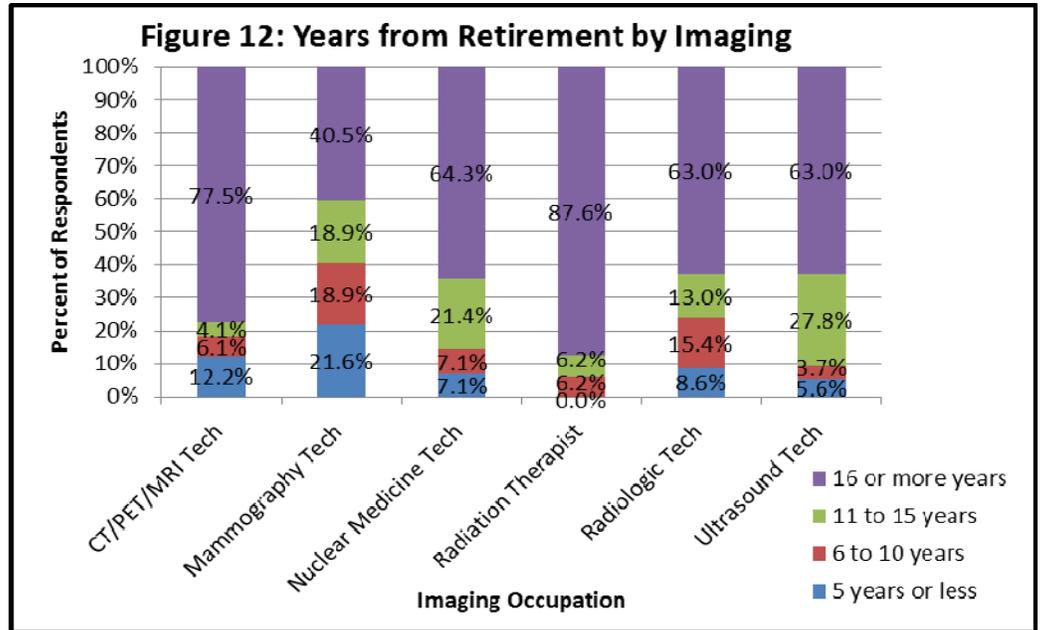


When comparing the 2008 study to the 2011 study, the medical/clinical lab tech, medical records/HIT, and medical technology occupations saw an increase in the percentage of those planning to retire within the next five years (Figure 11). The largest change between the two studies among those planning to retire within the next five years is medical technologists, up nearly 12 percentage points. The medical transcription/coder occupation saw a slight decrease while the phlebotomist occupation saw a more significant decrease in the five year or less retirement group. Several occupations saw an increase among those planning to retire between six and ten years. Both medical/clinical lab techs and medical technologist saw a decrease. The largest increase in the 11 to 16 year retirement intention group is in the medical transcription/coder occupation, while the largest decrease is the medical records/HIT occupation.

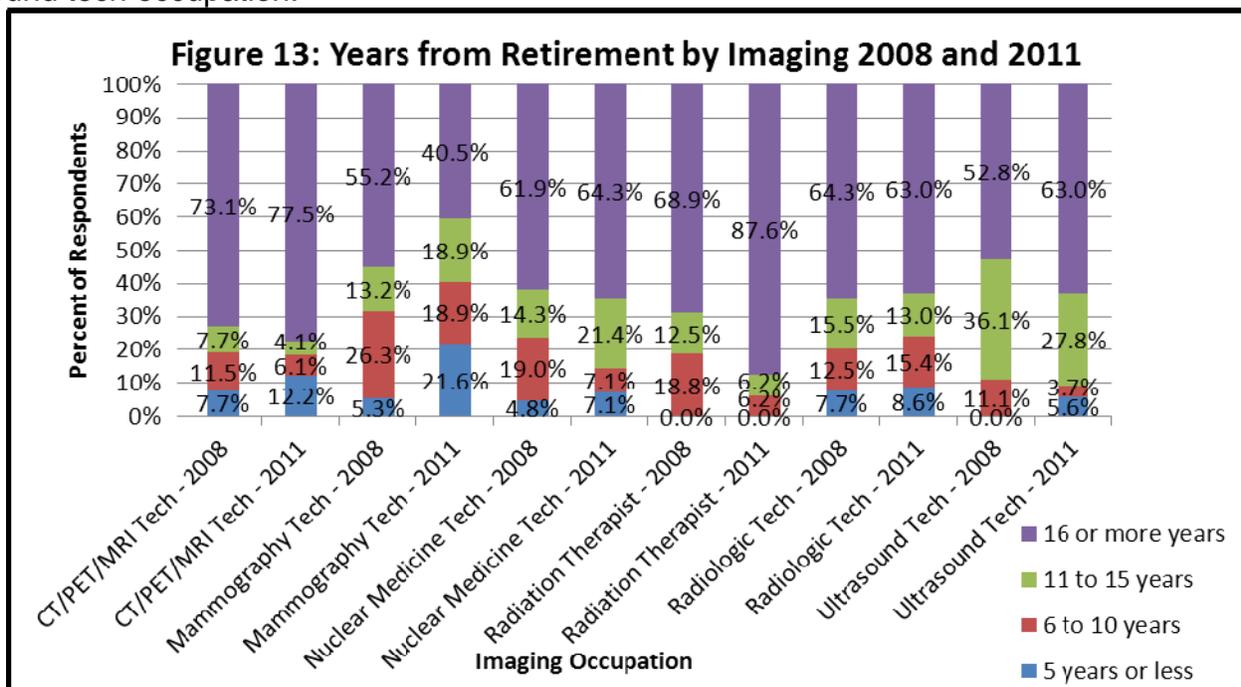


## Years from Retirement by Imaging

As depicted in Figure 12, the radiation therapist and ultrasound technician occupations will see very little attrition due to retirements over the next ten years. CTs/PETs/MRI techs will see lower than average retirements in the next 15 years at 22.4 percent. Mammography techs will see the largest attrition due to retirement over the next five years with one in five of responding healthcare workers planning to retire. Radiological techs and nuclear medicine techs will see modest retirements over the next 15 years while well over one-half of mammography techs will leave due to retirement during the same timeframe.

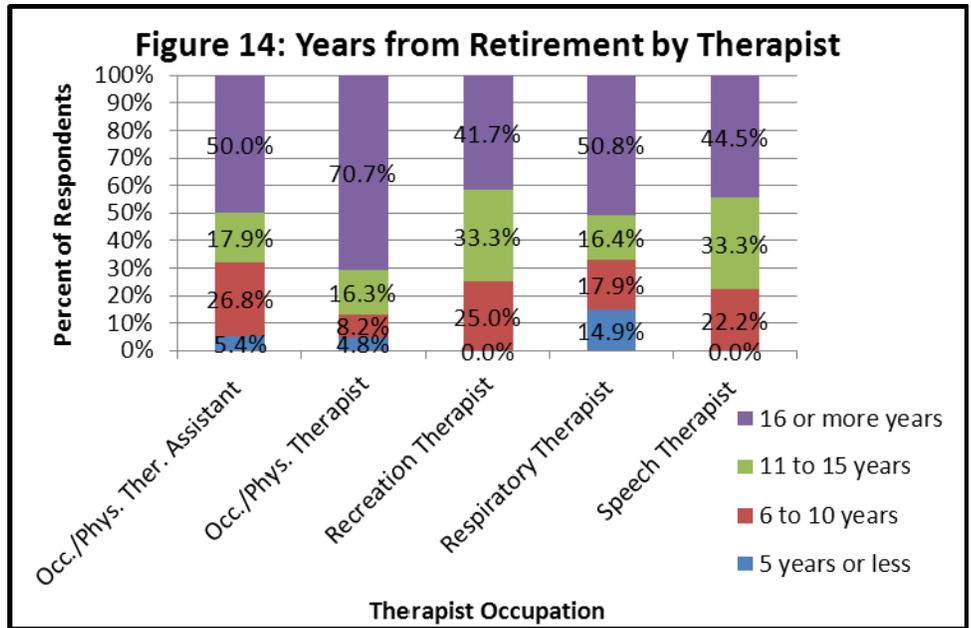


When comparing the 2008 study to the 2011 study (Figure 13), all occupations saw an increase in the percentage of those planning to retire within the next five years, with the exception of the radiation therapist occupation. In both 2008 and 2011, no radiation therapist respondents indicated retirement intentions within the next five years. The largest change between the two studies among those planning to retire within the next five years belongs to mammography technologists, in which the percentage quadrupled between 2008 and 2011. One occupation, radiologic tech, saw a minor increase in the percentage planning to retire between six and ten years while all other occupations saw relatively significant decreases. The largest increase in the 11 to 16 year retirement intention group is in the nuclear medicine tech occupation while the largest decrease was found among the ultrasound tech occupation.

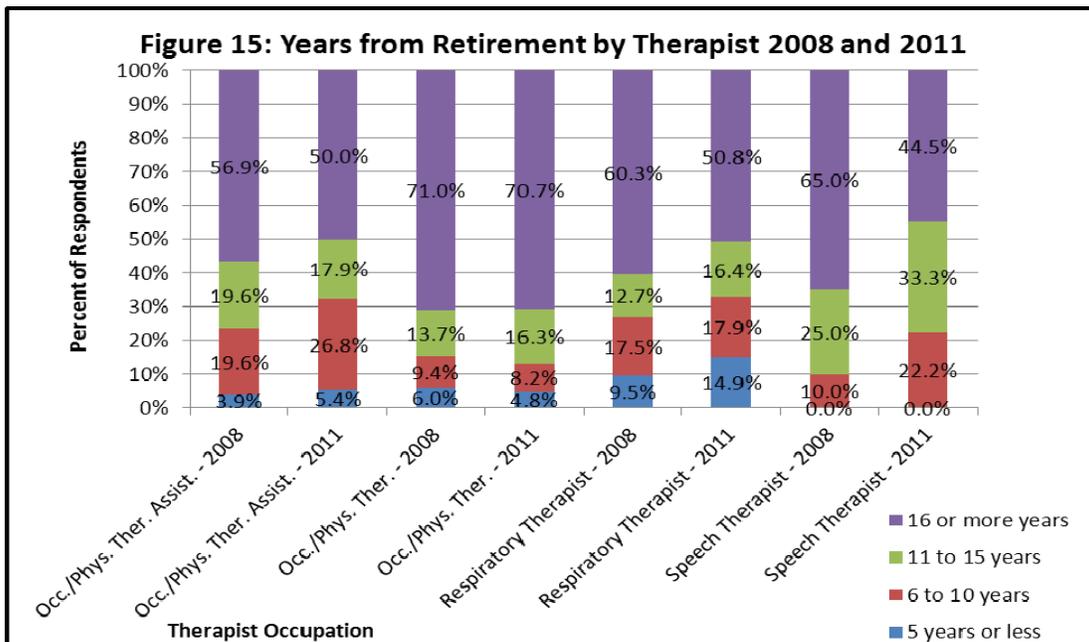


## Years from Retirement by Therapist

As illustrated in Figure 14, occupational/physical therapists and occupational/physical therapist assistants will see extremely modest retirements over the next five years while recreation therapists and speech therapists will see no retirements within the next five years. The respiratory therapist occupation reported the largest percentage of retirements within the next five years at nearly 15 percent. Elevated retirement intentions within the six to ten year mark were seen in two of the occupations where nearly three in ten occupational/physical therapist assistants, and one quarter of recreation therapists, reported retirement intentions.

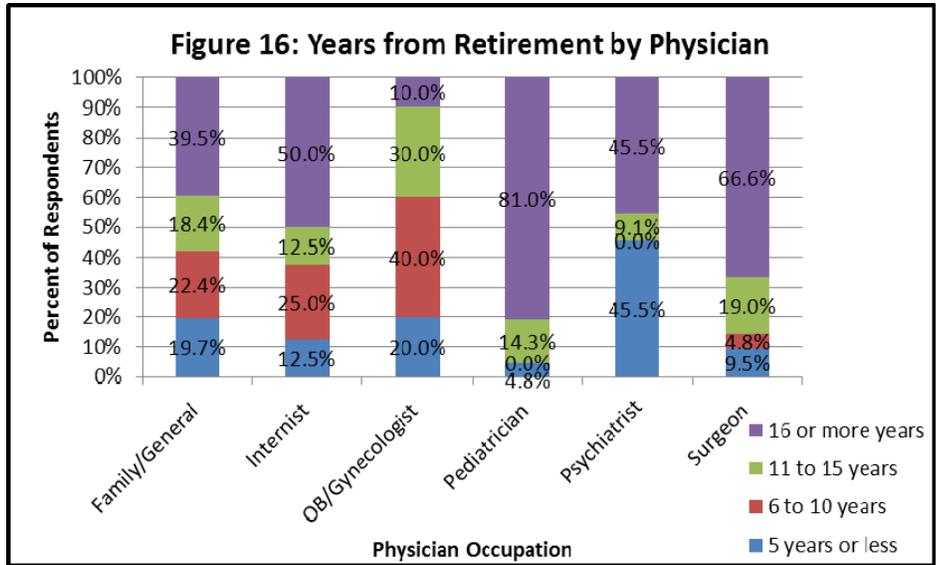


When comparing the 2008 study to the 2011 study (Figure 15), occupational/physical therapy assistants and respiratory therapists saw an increase in the percentage of those planning to retire within the next five years; both occupations increased at a very modest rate. No speech therapist occupation respondents indicated retirement intentions within the next five years in both the 2008 or 2011 study. The only decrease between the two studies among those planning to retire within the next five years is the occupational/physical therapist occupation with a very modest decrease of 1.2 percentage points. Speech therapists saw the largest increase among those planning to retire between six and ten years with an increase of over ten percentage points. The largest increase in the 11 to 16 year retirement intention group also belongs to the speech therapist occupation at over eight percentage points. Due to a response count less than ten in 2008, the recreation therapist occupation is not represented in Figure 15.

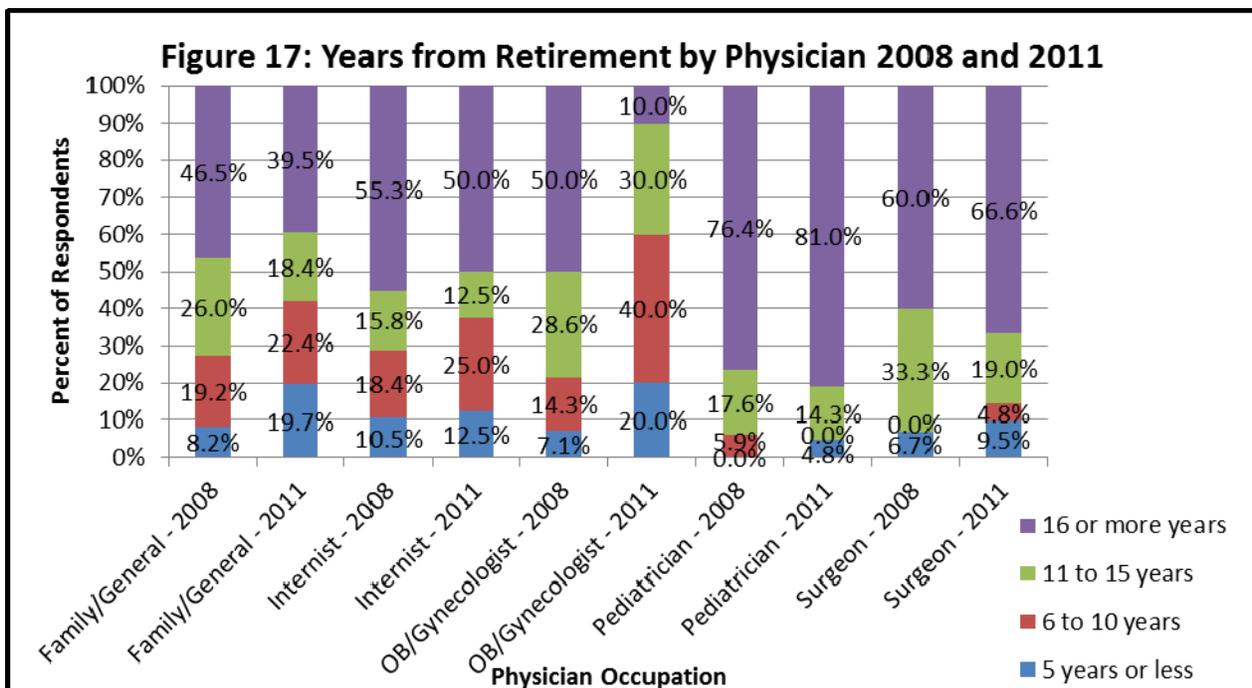


## Years from Retirement by Physician

As depicted in Figure 16, the family/general practice and OB/gynecologists occupations will see elevated levels of retirement within the next ten years at 42.1 percent and 60 percent respectively. Pediatricians will see extremely modest retirement rates within the next 15 years, while OB/gynecologists will see drastic retirements within the next 15 years, with nine in ten citing retirement intentions. The psychiatrist occupation will see the highest rate of retirements in the next five years with nearly one half of respondents planning to retire. One third of surgeons, and one half of internists, indicated retirement within the next 15 years.

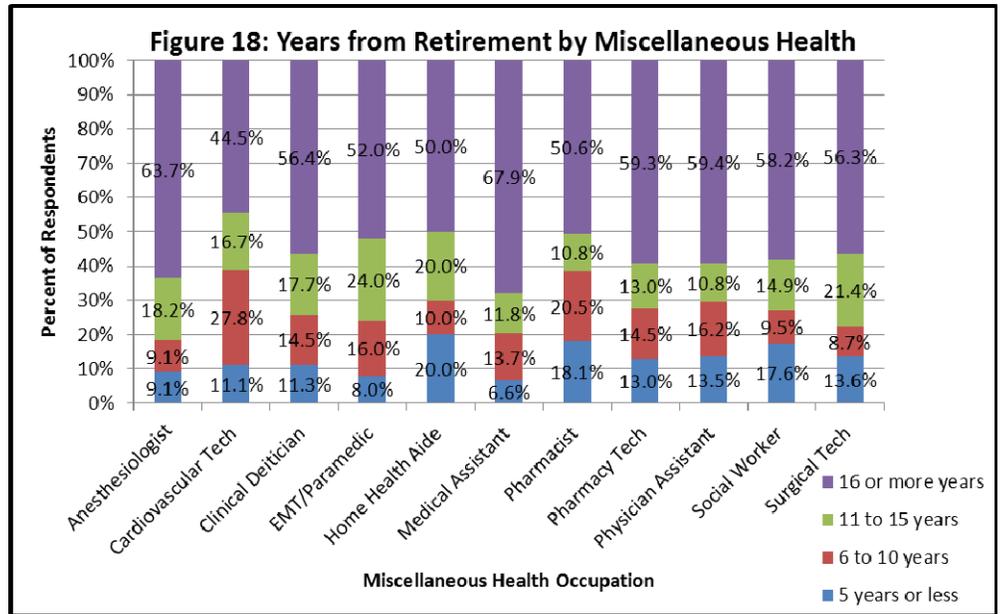


When comparing the 2008 study to the 2011 study (Figure 17), all occupations saw an increase in those planning to retire within the next five years. The largest change between the two studies among those planning to retire within the next five years is the OB/gynecologist occupation with a 2011 percent that nearly triples the 2008 percent. One occupation, pediatricians, saw a decrease among those planning to retire between six and ten years. Other occupations saw relatively modest increases with the exception of OB/gynecologists which increased by over 25 percentage points. Due to a response count less than ten in 2008, the psychiatrist occupation is not represented in Figure 17.

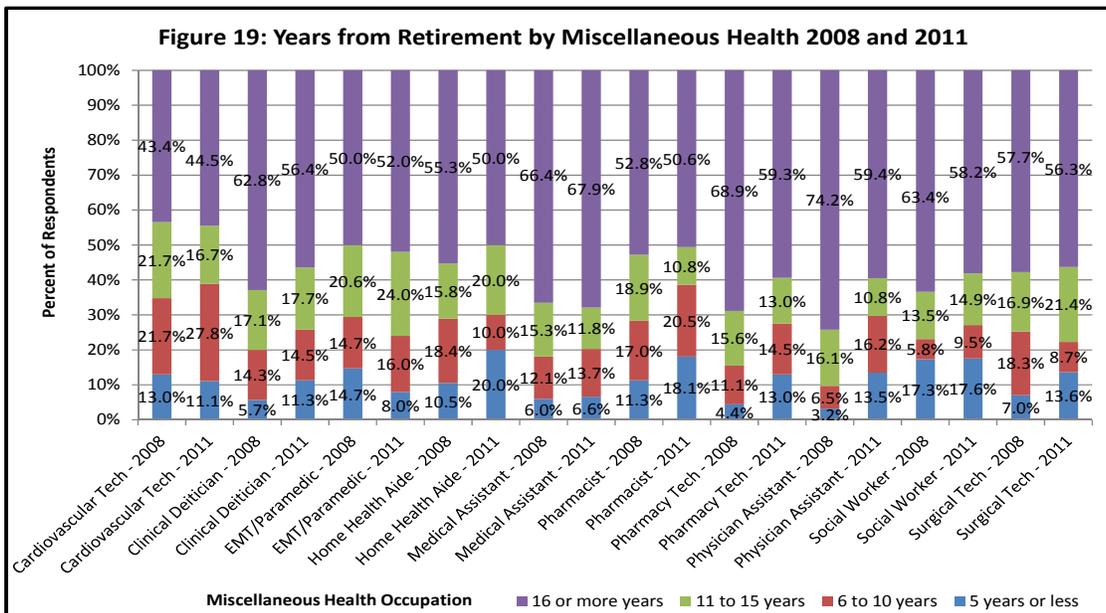


## Years from Retirement by Miscellaneous Health

Figure 18 represents retirement intentions for numerous miscellaneous healthcare occupations derived from occupations presented in the survey instrument as well as categorization of “Other” occupations noted by respondents. Of home health aide respondents, one fifth indicated retirement intentions within the next five years. Cardiovascular technicians, clinical dietitians, home health aides, pharmacists, pharmacy techs, physician assistants, and social workers will lose over a quarter of its employees to retirement over the next ten years. Cardiovascular technicians will see the largest rate of retirement within the next 15 years at over 50 percent. Medical assistants will see modest retirements over the next 15 years with a little less than one third of respondents planning to retire.

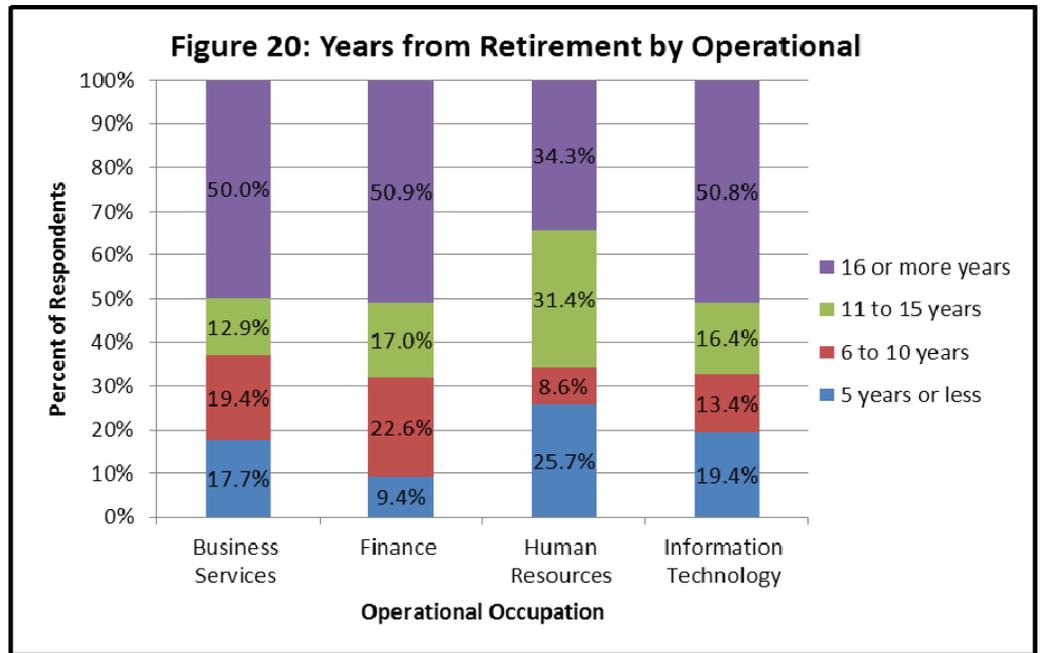


When comparing the 2008 study to the 2011 study (Figure 19), all occupations saw an increase in those planning to retire within the next five years, with the exception of the cardiovascular tech and EMT/paramedic occupations. The home health aide and physician assistant occupations had considerable increases among respondents planning to retire within the next five years with an increase of roughly ten percentage points. The majority of occupations stayed relatively consistent when looking at 15 year retirement intentions between the two studies with the exception of the pharmacy tech and physician assistant occupations. Due to a response count of less than ten in 2008, the anesthesiologist occupation is not represented in Figure 19.

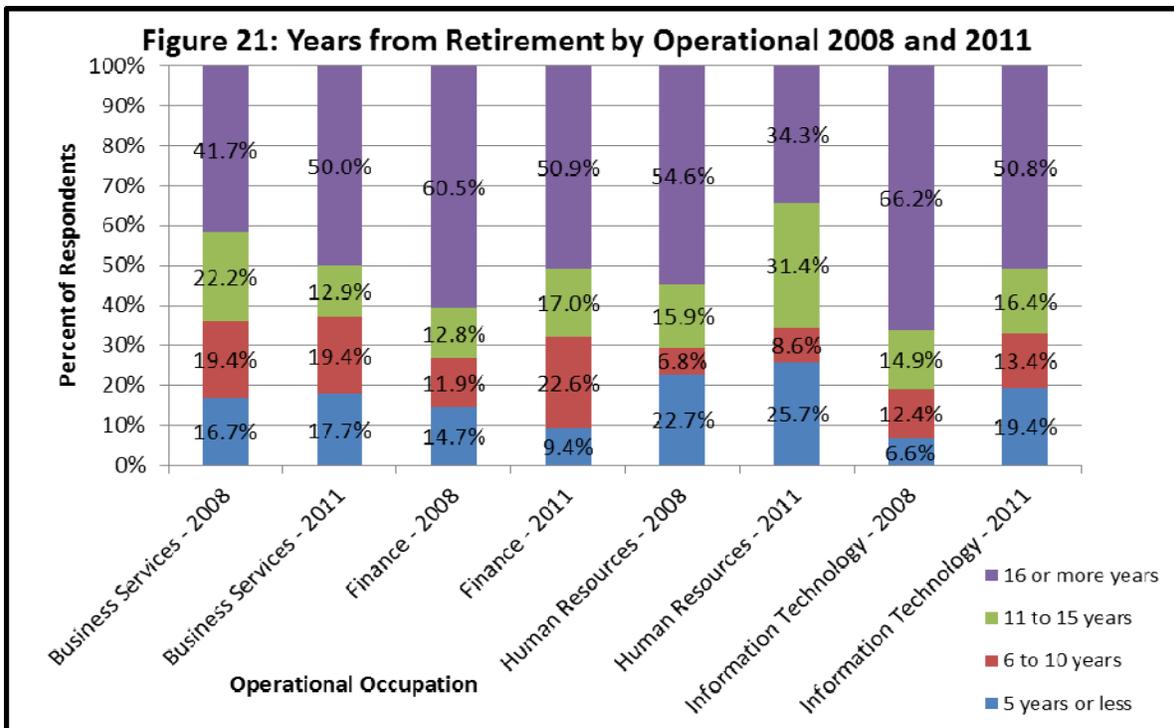


## Years from Retirement by Operational

Figure 20 represents retirement intentions for numerous operational occupation categories derived from the categorization of “Other” occupations noted by respondents. At one quarter of respondents, human resources will see the largest rate of retirement within the next five years. The most severe losses over the next 15 years also belong to human resources at 65.7 percent. Finance will see modest retirements within the next five years while business services and information technology will lose roughly one in five to retirements.

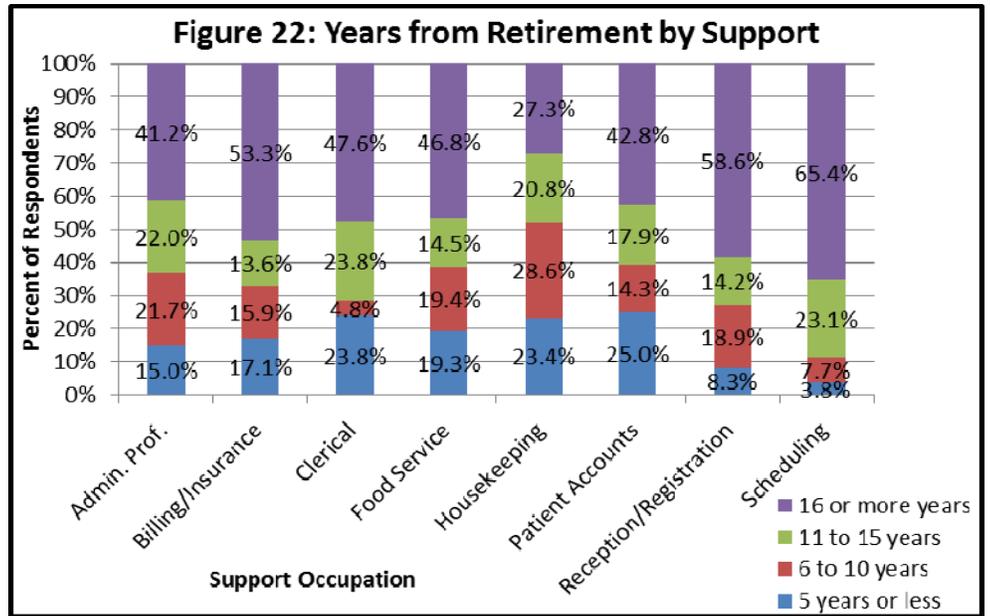


When comparing the 2008 study to the 2011 study (Figure 21), all occupations saw an increase in those planning to retire within the next five years, with the exception of finance which decreased by roughly five percentage points. The largest change between the two studies among those planning to retire within the next five years is the information technology occupation with a 2011 percent that nearly triples the percent in 2008. Other notable changes include an increase of roughly 15 percentage points in the 11 to 15 year group among human resource respondents, and finance nearly doubling in percentage points in the six to ten year group.

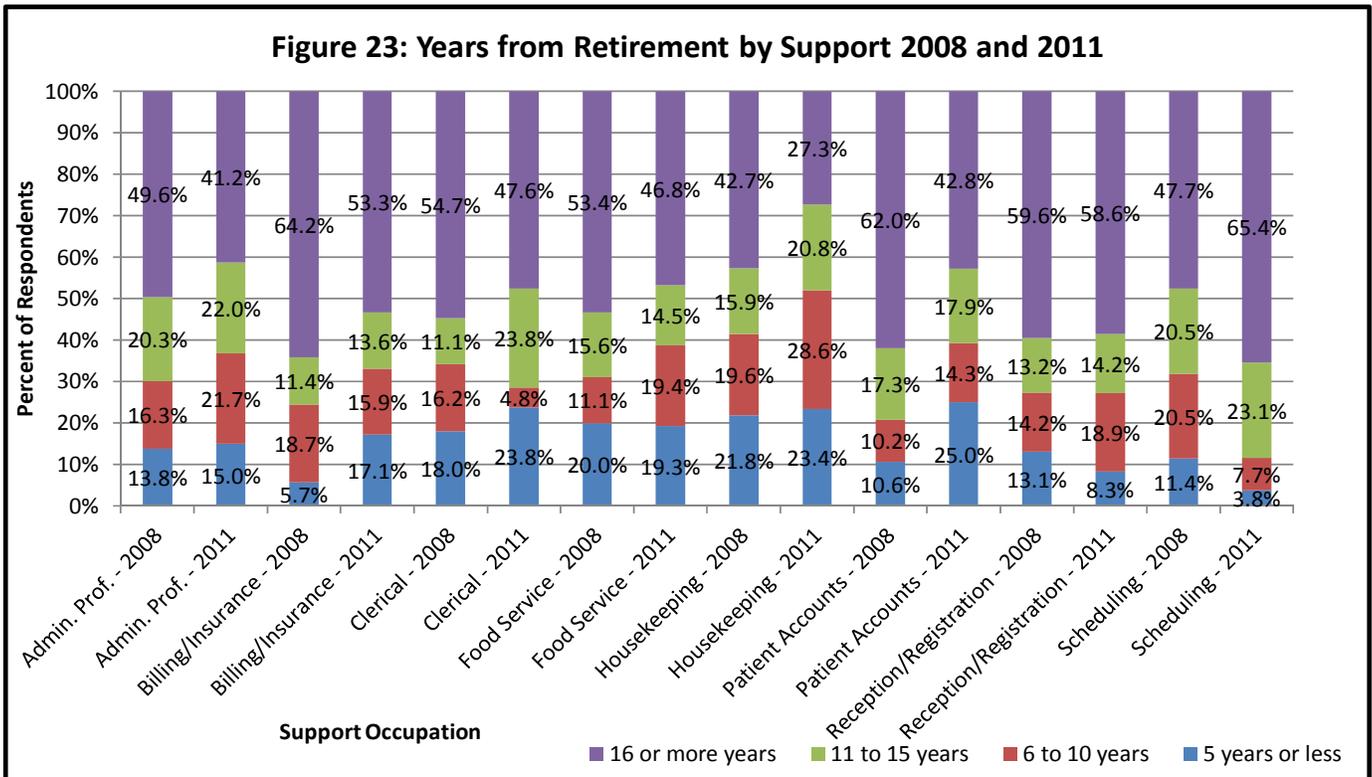


## Years from Retirement by Support

Figure 22 represents retirement intentions for numerous support occupations that were derived from the categorization of “Other” occupations noted by respondents. Roughly one in four clerical, housekeeping, and patient accounts staff plan to retire within the next five years while very modest retirement rates exist in the reception/registration and scheduling occupations. Over 50 percent of housekeepers and roughly one in three administrative professionals, billing/insurance, food service, and patient accounts plan to retire within ten years.

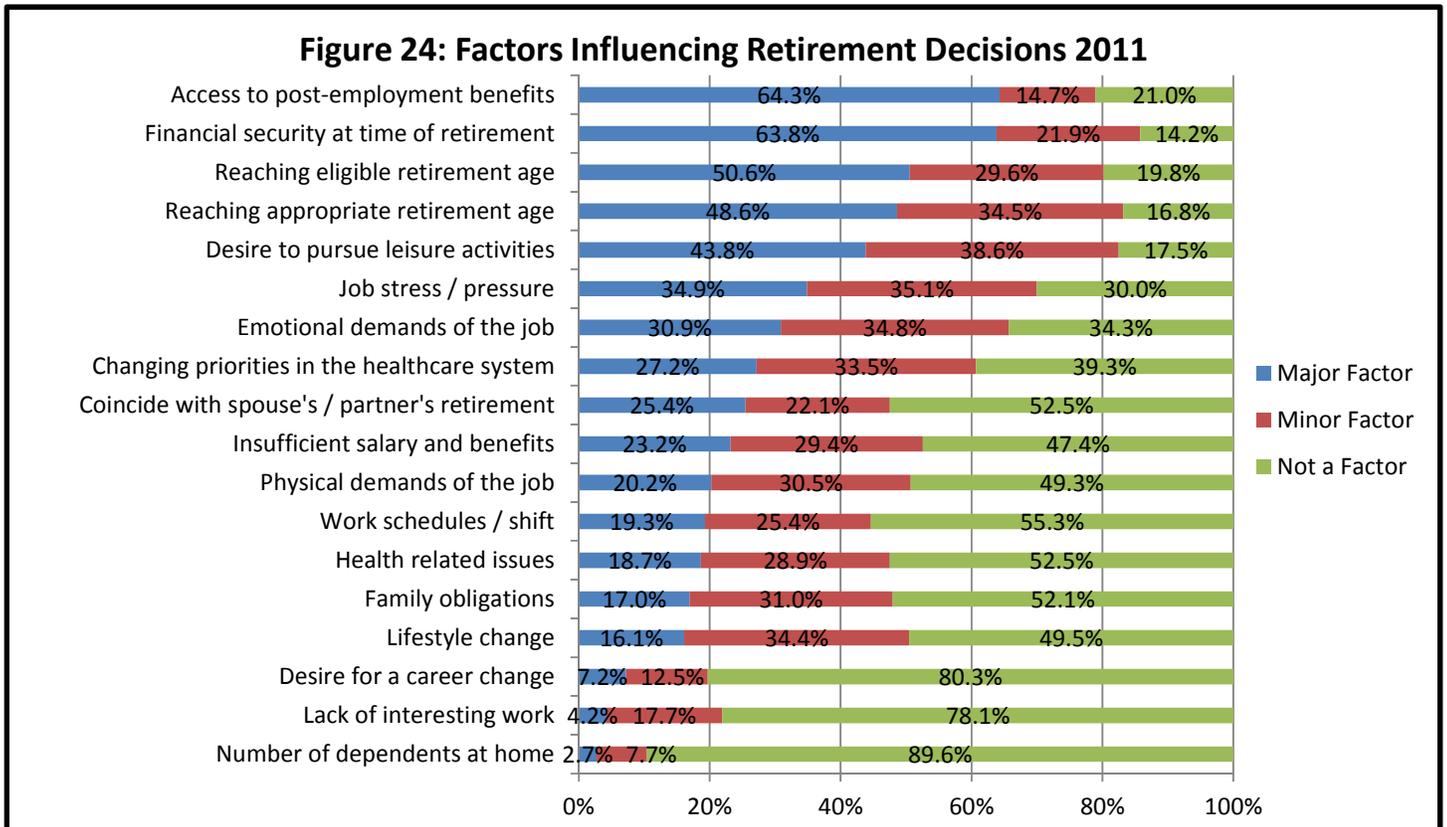


When comparing the 2008 study to the 2011 study (Figure 23), all occupations saw an increase in employees planning to retire within the next five years with the exception of the food service, reception/registration, and scheduling occupations which decreased. The largest change between the two studies among those planning to retire within the next five years is the patient account occupation, whose retirement intentions more than doubled between 2008 and 2011. Other notable changes include a strong decrease among scheduling employees who plan to retire in the next ten years and a large increase among responding housekeeping staff planning to retire within the next 15 years; over 70 percent of housekeeping staff plan to retire in 15 years.



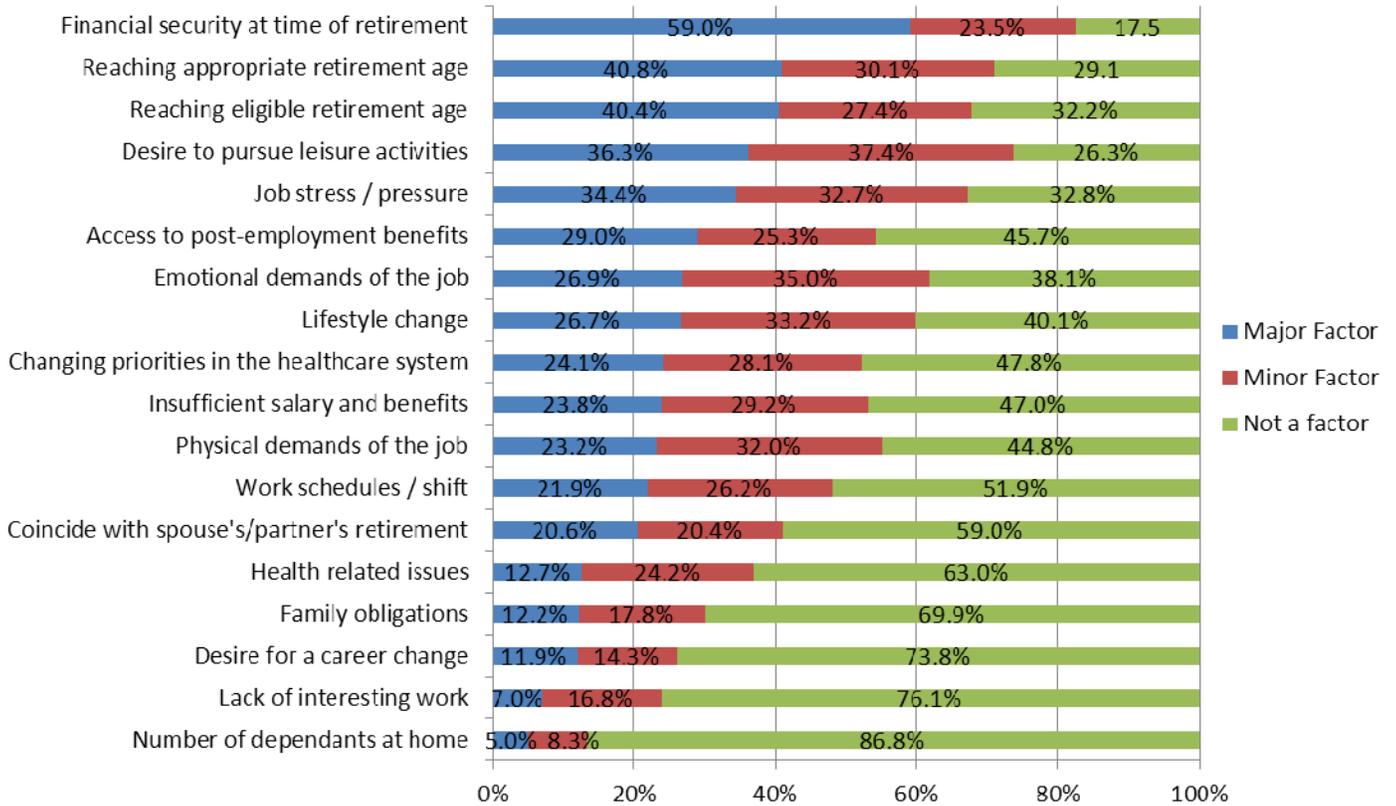
# Factors Influencing Retirement Decisions

Respondents retiring within the next five years were presented a list of retirement issues and asked how much of a factor each was in their decision to retire (Figure 24). Access to post-employment benefits was the most significant driving force in respondents' retirement decisions followed closely by financial security at time of retirement. Reaching eligible retirement age, reaching appropriate retirement age, and a desire to pursue leisure activities were also major factors motivating retirement decisions. Desire for a career change, lack of interesting work, and the number of dependents at home were identified as the least motivating factors influencing retirement decisions.



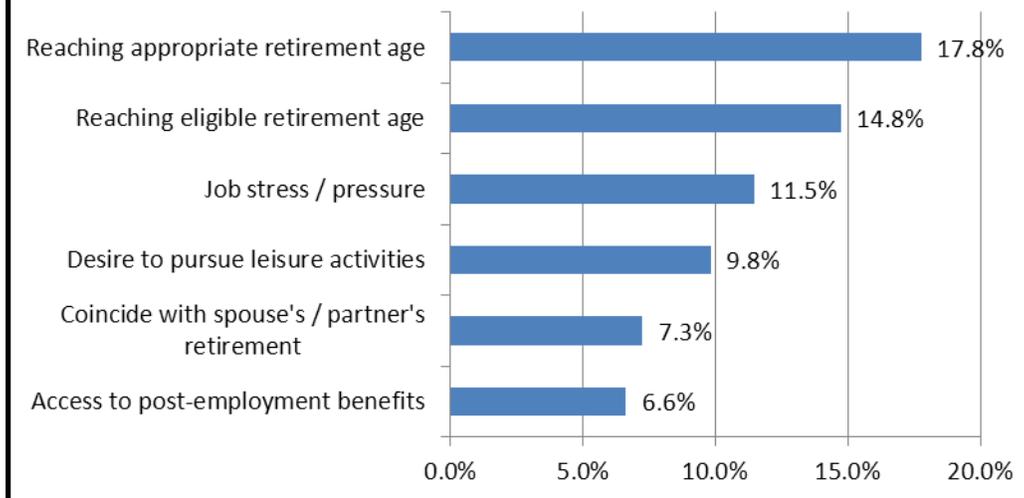
When comparing current data (Figure 24) to the 2008 study (Figure 25), slightly different patterns emerged. Access to post-employment benefits was not as major a factor in the 2008 study as it was in the 2011 study. Financial security at the time of retirement, was the most indicated major factor in 2008, and is the second most indicated major factor in 2011.

**Figure 25: Factors Influencing Retirement Decisions 2008**

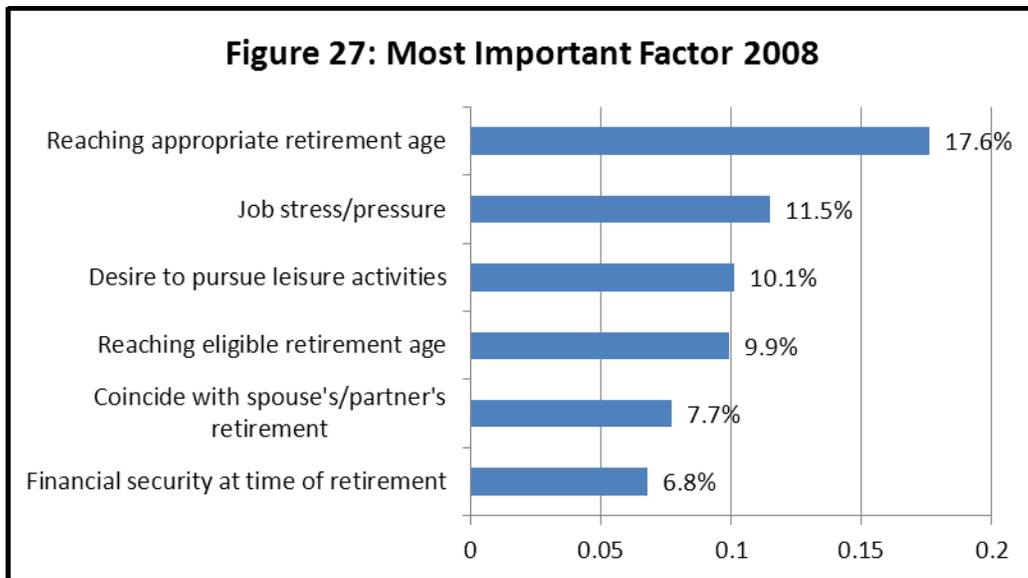


To further examine factors influencing retirements, respondents who plan to retire within the next five years were asked to indicate the single most important factor driving their retirement decision. Figure 26 illustrates the top six factors influencing retirement decisions. Nearly one in five respondents indicated reaching appropriate retirement age as the most important factor influencing their retirement decisions. Reaching eligible retirement age and job stress/pressure were also important factors among those planning to retire in five years. Roughly one in ten indicated a desire to pursue leisure activities to be driving their retirement decision, while the remaining factors were individually selected by less than ten percent of respondents.

**Figure 26: Most Important Factor 2011**

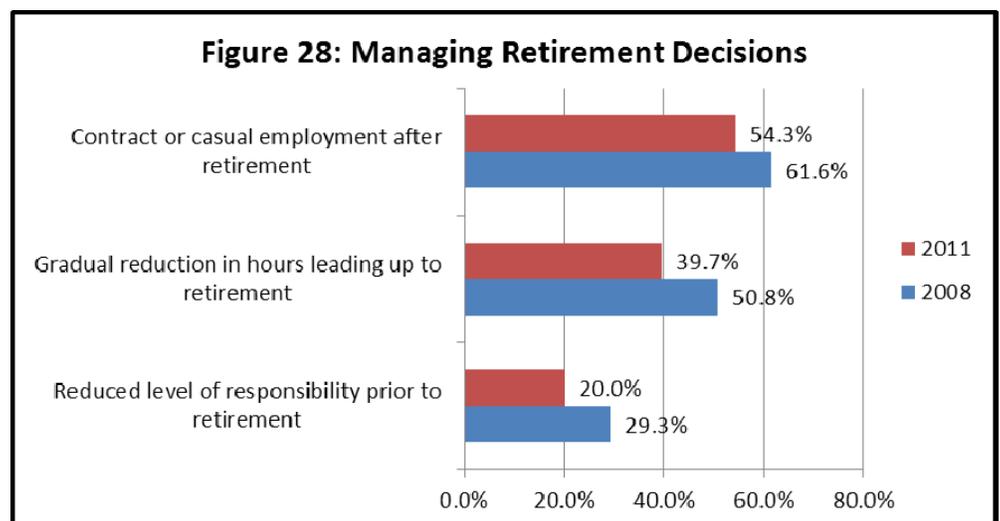


Similar patterns emerged when comparing the 2008 study to the 2011 study (Figure 27). Reaching appropriate retirement age has remained the most important factor driving retirement decisions. Job stress/pressure was indicated by 11.5 percent of those planning to retire within the next five years in both 2008 and 2011. The largest change exists in reaching eligible retirement age with 9.9 percent of respondents citing the factor in 2008 and 14.8 percent citing in 2011; an increase of roughly five percentage points.



## Managing Retirement Decisions

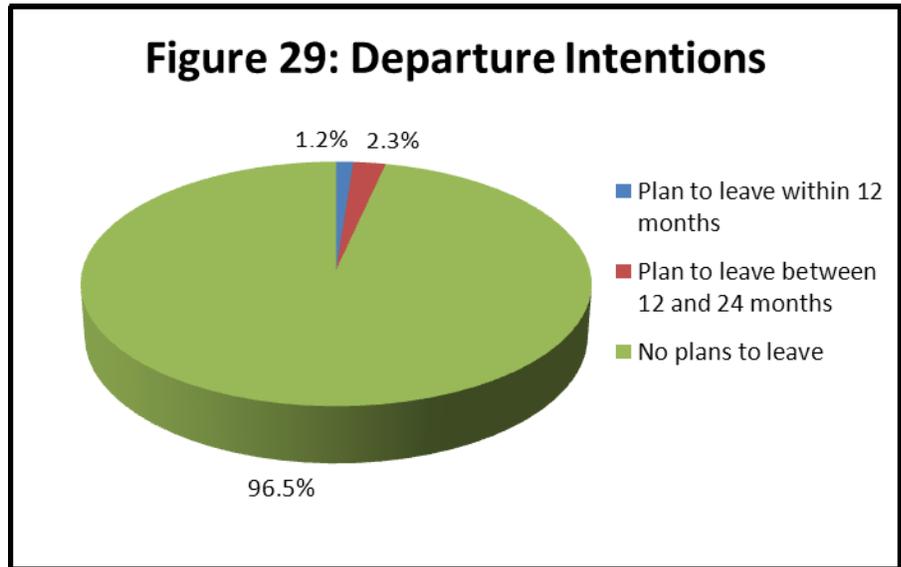
A question was posed to respondents planning to retire within the next five years investigating what their current employer could offer that would entice them to delay their retirement decisions (Figure 28). Over one-half of respondents indicated contract or casual employment after retirement would be a viable option in delaying full retirement. Roughly two in five respondents reported an interest in a gradual reduction in hours leading up to retirement while one in five indicated an interest in a reduced level of responsibility prior to retirement. When comparing the 2008 study to the 2011 study (Figure 28), all categories had a decrease of roughly ten percentage points, potentially indicating the presented options are not of interest to those planning to retire in five years or less.



## Departure Intentions

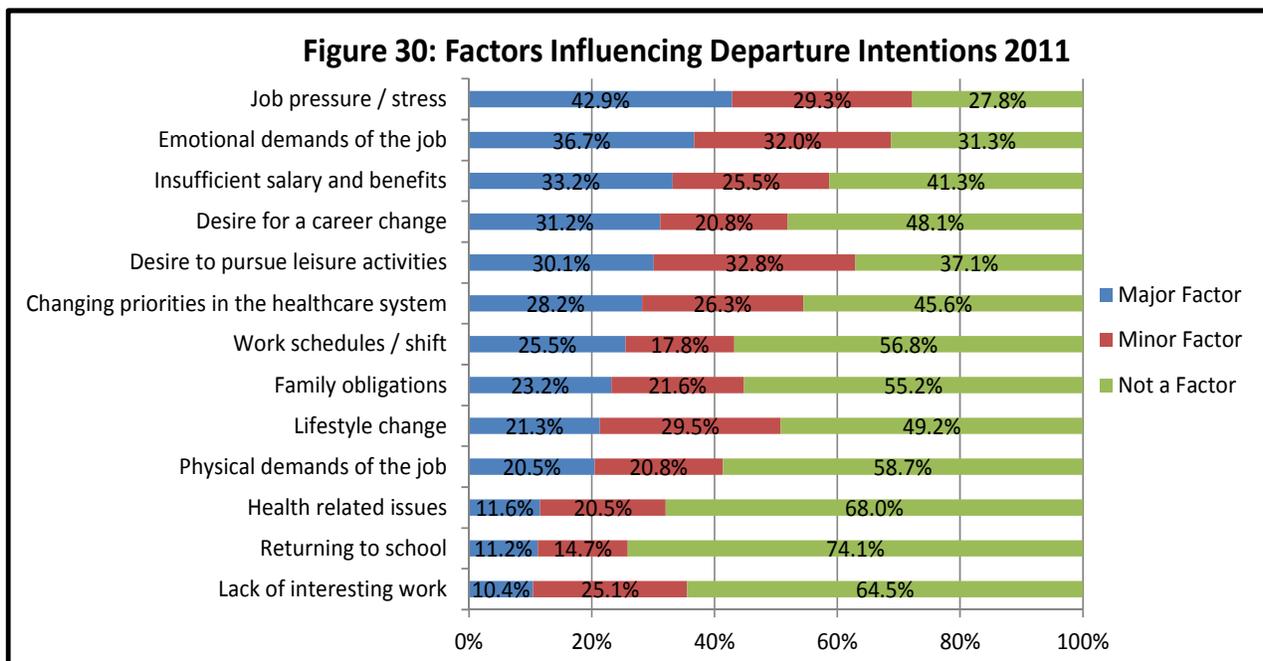
To better understand non-retirement departure intentions, respondents were asked to indicate if they plan to leave the healthcare field for reasons other than retirement within the next 24 months (Figure 29). Only three and one half percent of surveyed healthcare employees plan to leave the healthcare field within the next 24 months for reasons other than retirement.

Occupations most likely to lose employees within the next 24 months include food service at 15.2 percent, finance at 14.3 percent, OB/gynecologist at 10.0 percent, and anesthesiologist at 9.1 percent.

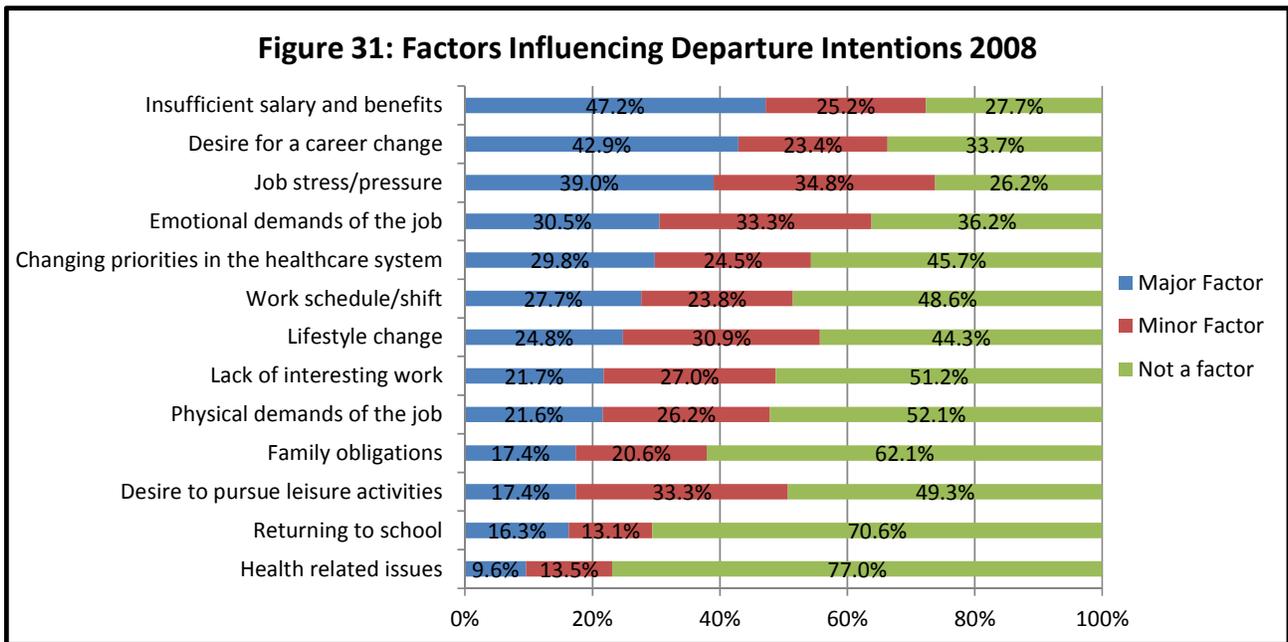


## Factors Influencing Departure Decisions

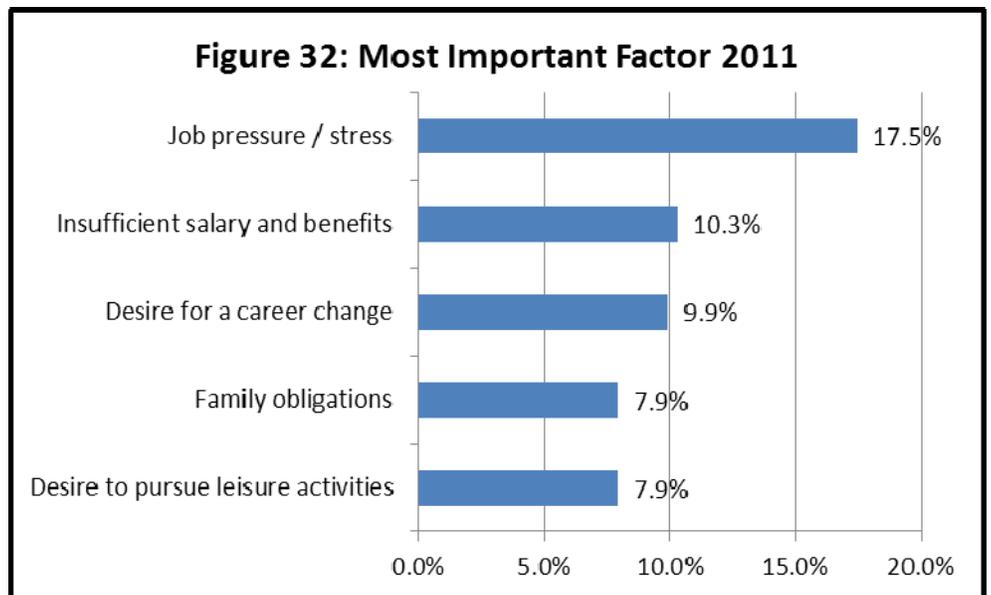
Respondents planning to depart within the next 24 months for reasons other than retirement were presented a list of issues and asked how much of a factor each was in their departure decision (Figure 30). Job pressure/stress was the most significant driving force behind departure decisions followed by emotional demands of the job and insufficient salary and benefits. Among the least influential are health related issues, returning to school, and a lack of interesting work.



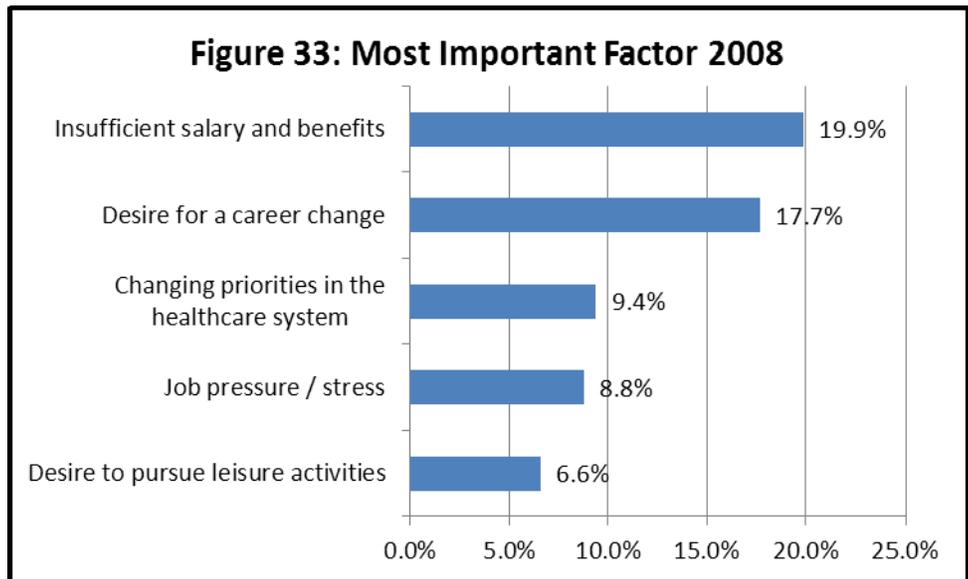
When comparing the 2008 study (Figure 30) to the 2011 study (Figure 31), slightly different patterns emerged. In 2008, insufficient salary and benefits was the most indicated factor, while it ranked third most in 2011. Likewise, in 2011 job pressure/stress is the most indicated factor, and was the third most indicated major factor in 2008. The second and fourth most indicated factors also switched in both studies with emotional demands of the job being the second most indicated major factor and desire for a career change being the fourth most indicated major factor in 2011. Nearly doubling in percentage points, more respondents indicated a desire to pursue leisure activities as a major factor in deciding to leave within the next 24 months in the 2011 study.



To further examine departure intention factors, respondents who plan to depart within the next 24 months were asked to indicate the single most important factor driving their departure decision. Figure 32 illustrates the top five factors influencing departure decisions. Nearly one in five respondents who plan to depart within the next 24 months indicated job stress/pressure as the most important factor influencing their departure decisions. Roughly one in ten respondents cited insufficient salary and benefits and a desire for a career change as the most important factor driving departure intentions within the next 24 months. The remaining factors were individually selected by less than ten percent of respondents.



New patterns emerged when comparing the 2008 study (Figure 32) to the 2011 study (Figure 33). Insufficient salary and benefits is no longer the most important factor driving departure decisions, as it was in 2008. Job pressure/stress went from the fourth most important factor in 2008 to the most important factor in 2011. A desire for a career change also had a significant decrease from 17.7 percent in 2008 to 9.9 percent in 2011. A desire to pursue leisure activities remained the fifth most indicated factor. Changing priorities in the healthcare system is no longer one of the top five most important factors driving departure decisions in 2011, while family obligations entered the top five.



Job pressure/stress went from the fourth most important factor in 2008 to the most important factor in 2011. A desire for a career change also had a significant decrease from 17.7 percent in 2008 to 9.9 percent in 2011. A desire to pursue leisure activities remained the fifth most indicated factor. Changing priorities in the healthcare system is no longer one of the top five most important factors driving departure decisions in 2011, while family obligations entered the top five.

## Employer Hiring Intentions

Key healthcare employers in the Fox Valley area were asked questions related to forecasting changes in healthcare employment. Figure 34 identifies occupations for which employers projected a net increase of employees over the next five years. Also included are the number employed by occupation, projected employment and retirement intentions over the next five years, 2008 to 2018 employment projections reported by the State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) for the Fox Valley, and the percent of employees who are 55 years or older. The DWD identifies the Fox Valley region as Calumet, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Outagamie, Waupaca, Waushara and Winnebago counties. Due to a response count less than ten, some five year retirement intention rates are not reportable.

When comparing the employer identified occupations that will see a net increase in the number employed over the next five years with the employee reported five year retirement intentions, it appears that employers will need to plan effective recruitment strategies due to job growth as reported by employers and effective retention strategies due to high retirement intentions as reported by employees. Recruitment and retention strategies will have to extend beyond the five year mark as employment projections through 2018 for the Fox Valley area as reported by the DWD identify job growth at a rate much higher than the average in multiple healthcare occupations to include the anesthesiologist, internist, medical assistant, occupational/physical therapist, occupational/physical therapist assistant, social worker, and surgical technologist occupations. It is important to note that all occupations where data is available will see growth. Employers will need to pay close attention to the mammography technician occupation where employers project job growth and mammography technician employees report a much higher than the average retirement intention rate at 21.6 percent over the next five years and employers report nearly one quarter of mammography technician employees being 55 years or older. The RN manager occupation is in a similar state with employer projected job growth, a high five year retirement rate of 20.2 percent, and an alarming 35 percent of employed RN manager's being 55 years or older.

**Figure 34: Employer Reported Position Increases**

Employer reported positions to <u>increase</u> in number over the next five years	Total Currently Employed (employer reported)	Anticipated Number in Five Years (employer reported)	Reported Five Year Retirement (employee reported)	WI DWD Number Employed % Change 2008-2018	% 55 Years or Older (employer reported)
Anesthesiologist	31	33	9.1%	25.0%	12.9%
Cardiovascular technician/technologist	26	28	11.1%	12.5%	15.4%
CT/PET/MRO technician	130	131	12.2%	N/A	14.6%
Internist	54	57	12.5%	20.0%	22.2%
Mammography technician	67	68	21.6%	N/A	23.9%
Medical assistant	550	555	6.6%	22.7%	20.0%
Nurse practitioner	179	186	9.5%	N/A	22.9%
Nursing aid/assistant/attendant	986	1,010	9.4%	14.7%	11.9%
Occupational/Physical therapist	285	295	4.8%	22.4%	10.2%
Occupational/Physical therapist assistant	122	124	5.4%	26.3%	10.7%
Pharmacist	106	108	18.1%	6.5%	30.2%
Pharmacy technician	115	120	13.0%	17.9%	17.4%
Radiologic technician/technologist	231	233	8.6%	14.3%	17.3%
RN Manager	143	145	20.2%	N/A	35.0%
Sleep technician	46	52	N/A	N/A	8.7%
Social worker	82	87	17.6%	19.0%	23.2%
Surgical technologist	196	198	13.6%	22.7%	14.8%
Ultrasound Technician	85	87	5.6%	N/A	10.6%

Figure 35 identifies occupations employers projected to see a net decrease of employees over the next five years. Despite the net reduction in employees, the number planning to retire over the next five years in each of the occupations outstrips employer staff reduction intentions, indicating employers will still need to plan for replacing a portion of the retiring workers in these occupations.

**Figure 35: Employer Reported Position Decreases**

Employer reported positions to <u>decrease</u> in number over the next five years	Total Currently Employed (employer reported)	Anticipated Number in Five Years (employer reported)	Reported Five Year Retirement (employee reported)	WI DWD Number Employed % Change 2008-2018	% 55 Years or Older (employer reported)
LPN	462	457	23.0%	15.4%	32.3%
Medical transcription/coder	322	290	10.3%	6.3%	32.6%
RN	2,952	2,939	11.0%	19.8%	19.0%

Figure 36 identifies occupations employers projected to see the same employment numbers over the next five years. With employment projected to be the same over the next five years, employers will need to prepare for occupations with high five year retirement rates and an aging workforce. The family/general practice physician, home health aide, medical records/health information technician, medical technologist, OB/gynecologist, and respiratory therapist occupations all reported high retirement intentions within the next five years. Occupations with an aging workforce of employees 55 years or older include the medical records/health information technician, medical technologist, nurse anesthetist, OB/gynecologist, and respiratory therapy technician occupations.

**Figure 36: Employer Reported Employment to Stay the Same**

Employer reported positions to <i>stay the same</i> in number over the next five years	Total Currently Employed (employer reported)	Anticipated Number in Five Years (employer reported)	Reported Five Year Retirement (employee reported)	WI DWD Number Employed % Change 2008-2018	% 55 Years or Older (employer reported)
Audiologist	12	12	N/A	0.0%	0.0%
EMT/Paramedic	49	49	8.0%	1.9%	22.4%
Family/General practice physician	133	133	19.7%	16.7%	29.3%
Health data analyst	41	41	N/A	33.3%	26.8%
Home health aide	38	38	20.0%	44.0%	23.7%
Medical records/Health information technician	115	115	15.1%	12.1%	35.7%
Medical technologist	163	163	24.4%	16.1%	39.9%
Nuclear medicine technologist	35	35	7.1%	33.3%	14.3%
Nurse anesthetist	26	26	N/A	N/A	42.3%
OB/Gynecologist	17	17	20.0%	33.3%	35.3%
Optometrist	4	4	N/A	20.0%	0.0%
Pediatrician	45	45	4.8%	N/A	11.1%
Phlebotomist	212	212	1.3%	N/A	8.0%
Podiatrist	4	4	N/A	N/A	0.0%
Privacy and confidentiality manager	8	8	N/A	N/A	12.5%
Psychiatric technician	62	62	N/A	N/A	30.6%
Radiation therapist	24	24	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Recreation therapist	6	6	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Respiratory therapist	101	101	14.9%	22.2%	11.9%
Respiratory therapy technician	18	18	N/A	N/A	55.5%
Speech therapist	29	29	0.0%	N/A	10.3%
Surgeon	23	23	9.5%	22.2%	17.4%

## Suggestions for Retaining Healthcare Workers in Northeast Wisconsin

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide suggestions on what healthcare organizations could do to retain healthcare workers. The majority of comments focused on a need to aid in the reduction of employee stress that ultimately leads to employee burnout. This comment is verified by findings in Figure 26 and Figure 32 where job stress/pressure is cited as the third most important driving force behind retirement intentions and the most important driving force behind departure decisions. The comments painted a picture that healthcare employees feel like their job demands are ultimately outstripping their resources. Paired with complaints of reduced benefits and pay, employees also reported not feeling valued by their employers. This is supported by the findings in Figure 32 where insufficient salary and benefits is the second most indicated factor driving departure decisions among respondents planning to leave within the next 24 months for reasons other than retirement. Several respondents indicated flexible scheduling as a method for reducing employee burnout. Older respondents specifically called for the option to work fewer hours in lieu of retirement which is supported by the findings illustrated in Figure 28 where four in ten respondents indicated that a gradual reduction in hours leading up to retirement would entice them to continue working into their retirement years. Respondents also commented on the morphing of a health service organization that runs more like a business rather than a care provider. These comments are in contrast to the findings in Figure 32 where changing priorities of the healthcare system is no longer one of the most important factors driving departure decisions; changing priorities of the healthcare system was the third most important factor driving departure decisions in 2008.

For further information on the FVHCA and its activities, please visit [www.fvhca.org](http://www.fvhca.org).

# Acknowledgements

The Fox Valley Workforce Development Board and Fox Valley Health Care Alliance would like to extend a special thank you to the following organizations for their participation in the research.



Northeast Regional Office



Thank you to the FVWDB and Cheryl Welch (CEO) for their support of this project and to Jen Meyer for her tireless support of the Fox Valley Health Care Alliance.

The Fox Valley Health Care Alliance would like to express special thanks to Dr. Sheila Ruhland, president of Moraine Park Technical College, for supporting this research and to Dr. Josh Bullock and Ben Konruff for conducting the research and compiling the information contained within this report.

