

Nurses Piloting Generative AI



A growing group of nurses at UW Health are trialing the use of generative artificial intelligence, AI, to determine how it can be used to address health care workforce shortages and burnout, and improve the care experience for patients.

This work began in April 2023 when a small group of physicians at UW Health joined a pilot program [announced](#) by Microsoft and Epic to make generative AI available to clinicians.

The generative AI, specifically a large language model, or LLM, drafts responses to patients' messages in MyChart, the patient portal created by Epic. The clinical team members then review and edit for accuracy, tone and information before responding to patient questions and requests. In September, the first cohort of nurses began using the draft messages in response to patient messages in MyChart.

As AI continues to evolve rapidly and spread across industries, UW Health nurses have stepped up to help shape how AI can be used to benefit patients, nursing and the health care industry as a whole, according to Rudy Jackson, chief nurse executive, UW Health.

"It's critical that we as nurses are part of the conversation when it comes to using this technology to care for patients," he said. "It's exciting to see our nurses investigate this technology and offer observations and recommendations to make it better."

Since the pilot began, more than 75 nurses have begun using generative AI, which has assisted them in creating more than 3,000 messages across more than 30 departments.

"This has been a fascinating process, and one I've been glad to be part of," said Amanda Weber, registered nurse clinic supervisor, UW Health. "I have found having a draft to start from helpful, and I'm glad I could provide feedback on improvements and features to ensure this can be a good tool for nurses and have a positive impact on our patients."

Every message drafted using LLMs is reviewed and edited, if needed, by a person, and the user is responsible for the accuracy and appropriateness of the contents. Patient information is kept private and secure within the electronic health records system.

UW Health has a strong reputation for developing and enacting tools to strengthen the future of nursing.

UW Health has two nurse residency programs, ambulatory and inpatient, as well as a nurse externship program to bring new nurses into the system, help train them alongside experienced nurses and acclimate them to their careers. The [ambulatory residency program](#) began in 2021 and the inpatient program began in 2004. Since that program began, the first-year retention rate at UW Health for nurses has been 97%. The national retention average for hospitals with a nurse residency program is 91%. For hospitals that do not have nurse residency programs, the retention rate is 71%.

In 2023, UW Health launched the first [registered nurse apprenticeship program](#) of its kind in the nation with Madison College and the Wisconsin

Department of Workforce Development to reduce barriers and create a pathway to a rewarding career in nursing.

"We are not immune to the workforce shortages in health care, and we're also seeing a growing demand for our care," Jackson said. "We're eager to try innovative methods to ensure our nurses have the tools they need to focus on caring for their patients."

Epic and MyChart are trademarks of Epic Systems Corporation.

Source: [UW Health](#)

Published on : Thu, 6 Jun 2024