

Nurses: Vital for Wisconsin's Health

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October 22, 2010

To: The Legislative Council Study Committee on Health Care Access

Representative Fred Kessler, Chair & Senator Luther Olsen, Vice-Chair

From: Judith M. Hansen, MS, BSN, RN

Executive Director - Wisconsin Center for Nursing

RE: Nursing Workforce Shortages in Wisconsin

The Wisconsin Center for Nursing (WCN) is a not-for-profit organization established in 2005 to provide a unified voice on nursing workforce issues in Wisconsin. WCN has as its mission the assurance of a sufficient, competent, and diverse nurse workforce to meet the needs of the citizens of Wisconsin. Wisconsin is one of 34 states having nursing workforce centers to assist in collecting, analyzing and disseminating data to address nursing workforce issues.

In fall of 2009, WI Statute, Chapter 106.30 was enacted, granting the approval of part of licensure renewal fees to support this work. The pathway for this important legislation was attributed to collaborative efforts with the WI Department of Workforce Development, the WI Department of Regulation & Licensing, and tireless support from Senator Judy Robson and DWD Secretary Roberta Gassman.

The legislation authorizes a state nursing center, WCN, to monitor and validate trends in nursing and nursing education, analyze pathways to nursing education (especially for underrepresented populations), and facilitate partnerships between the nursing community, health care providers, nursing educators, community leaders, consumers, and legislators. WCN will coordinate activities, in collaboration with other partners, such as the WI Nurses Association and the WI Hospital Association, to achieve policy consensus, promote nursing workforce diversity, and enhance nursing career mobility and leadership development.

During the January-March, 2010 license renewal period, a survey of all registered nurses in the state was accomplished, resulting in the history-making collection of data from 77,553 respondents. The WI Department of Workforce Development received the data and began consultation with members of the WI Health Workforce Data Collaborative. This Collaborative is comprised of key leaders from nursing and healthcare organizations, as well as the various systems for nursing education in the state.

A first 'At a Glance' document, the *Wisconsin 2010 RN Survey Summary* has been published and is being provided for you today. It can also be found as a downloadable document at http://worknet.wisconsin.gov/RNsummary and http://www.wisconsincenterfornursing.org Significant initial findings from the document include the following:

- Wisconsin RNs are predominantly white females, well-educated and older than the population as a whole.
- The median age for RNs is 45-49, while the rest of the state workforce is 40-44.
 Additionally, 46% of RNs are 50 years or older.
- Slightly less than 50% of RNs work in hospitals; other settings include ambulatory care, home health, nursing homes, community/public health and academic education.
- 50% of hospital nurses are 55 or older.
- Although 42.9% of nurses hold a BSN, only 8.6% have completed a Master's Degree in Nursing. A very small percentage of Wisconsin nurses hold a PhD in nursing, only 0.4%.
- 63.4% of nurses who provide direct patient care selected the category of '10 or more years' as to when they planned to leave the workforce.

These basic data alone provide important information about trends in the nursing workforce in Wisconsin. Our nursing workforce is advancing in age, and although it may be true they are working longer now because of today's economic climate, large waves in retirement are clearly in the near future. Minorities are hugely underrepresented in our workforce at only 5.2%, making culturally competent care more difficult to provide for underserved populations.

From an educational perspective, the nurses in our state need to advance to practice within the full scope of professional nursing. Less than half of Wisconsin's nurses hold Bachelor of Science degrees. In order to meet population health needs, the Institute of Medicine (2010) report, *The Future of Nursing*, calls for: (a) doubling the number of doctoral prepared nurses, (b) providing access to high quality, cost-effective care provided by Advanced Practice Nurses with fewer constraints on their practice, and (c) nurses without a bachelor's degree to start course work toward a BSN within 5 years of graduation. Wisconsin has much work to do!

This is only the beginning of this important work. Next on the horizon in this vital work is a deeper analysis of the RN Survey data, culminating in a comprehensive report to the legislature to further delineate critical information for specific regions of the state, and facilitate the development of strategies to address the unique nursing workforce needs to serve the populations of both rural and urban regions of Wisconsin. Other strategic initiatives the WCN is preparing to launch are a statewide survey of LPNs in 2011, and also a survey of nursing education programs to provide an accurate picture of the educational capacity for "growing our own" nurses in Wisconsin. Further, as the workforce surveys continue each year with licensure renewals, we will be able to track changes and monitor trends in the workforce and in doing so, anticipate how to best address their impact.

In summary, let me encapsulate what this means for health care access. Nurses comprise the largest segment of health care providers. They are both highly trusted and capable to provide and manage care throughout the continuum of an individual's lifespan. A carefully planned for, and balanced nursing workforce will assure that we have the right types of nurses, the right number of them, and that they are in the right places to best achieve positive health outcomes for all populations in Wisconsin. We know the WCN can effectively lead this critical endeavor, and would respectfully recommend to the committee that we serve as the contact point for this vital information, so as to assist you in your efforts to improve health care access for our most vulnerable and at risk populations.

The WCN is grateful for the collaboration of its many partners at the state, local, and regional levels. We are committed to creating a vision for the future of nursing in our state. This vision will lead to the development of a diverse nurse workforce, which is sufficient in number, appropriately educated, effectively utilized and adequately supported to provide safe and quality evidence-based care to improve health care access, and ultimately the health outcomes of all Wisconsin residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony to the Committee.

Technical Notes:

The data reported in this publication reflects a survey mandated under Chapter 106.30 Wis.Stats for all Wisconsin registered nurses (RNs). The survey was conducted as an element in the biannual license renewal requirement from January 6, 2010 and March 1, 2010. The mandate was communicated to registered nurses through numerous venues and organizations as well as employers.

Two forms of the survey were used, an on-line internet version and a mail-in paper version. The data summarized in this report includes all paper responses received prior to March 17, 2010. The two versions are substantially the same, though the paper survey contains missing responses while the on-line version required responses to all questions. The dataset includes 77,553 responses, of which 3,111 are from the paper survey. (See the Additional Information Section for contact information to receive additional technical background and information on accessing the dataset for specific analyses.)

The survey instrument was constructed and processed by Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development in consultation with the Wisconsin Health Workforce Data Collaborative. The survey reflects multiple surveys of the registered nurse community and contains all data elements of the National Nursing Workforce Minimum Dataset: Supply.

The survey was administered by the Wisconsin Department of Regulation and Licensing.

This project is funded in part by the Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program, a component of the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin endowment at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

Additional Information

To receive additional copies of this publication visit the DWD Website, WORKnet at http://worknet.wisconsin.gov/RNsummary

For additional survey information, email Nelse Grundvig at anelse.grundvig@dwd.wisconsin.gov

Send mail requests to:

Nelse Grundvig

Attn: Nurses Survey
Labor Market Information Section
Department of Workforce Development
201 E. Washington Ave
P.O. Box 7944

Madison WI, 53707



Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development
Division of Employment and Training
Bureau of Workforce Training
Labor Market Information

Wisconsin Center for Nursing



WISCONSIN 2010

RN SURVEY SUMMARY



General Information

Total Valid Survey Respondents % of Applicable Respondents

Survey Response*	n = 77,553	
Gender (n = 77.515)	-	
Female	72,271	93.2%
Male	5,244	6.8%
Age Distribution (n = 77,442)		
< 25	2,059	2.7%
25-29	6,855	8.9%
30-34	7,028	9.1%
35-39	7,692	9.9%
40-44	7,738	10.0%
45-49	10,522	13.6%
50-54	12,072	15.6%
55-59	11,492	14.8%
30-64	6,891	8.9%
55-69	3,214	4.2%
	1,335	1.7%
75 and older	544	0.7%
Race/Ethnicity (n = $77,014$)		
Mhite	72,909	94.7%
JIACK/African American	1,642	2.1%
Tispanic	951	1.2%
	7,512	2.0%
Advanced Practice Nurses (n = 77,553)		
Educationally prepared advanced practice nurse with masters degree	5,110	6.6%
viaster's degree working as an APN	3,802	4.9%
Advanced Practice Nurse Prescriber**	2,252	2.9%
hBinest level of education - all degrees $\{n = 11,389\}$	731	0.9%
haster	9,303	12.0%
sachelor	34,376	44.4%
Institute Distriction	24,922	32.2%
	8,053	10.4%
lighest level of nursing education (n = 76,738)		
	286	0.4%
ASSE	6,614	8.6%
actietor	32,887 37,777	42.9%
Jursing Diploma	9 174	12.0%
Information reflects self-reported data and valid responses only	9.74	17.0%
mornation reflects self-reported data and valid responses only.		

For more information visit: http://worknet.wisconsin.gov/RNsummary

5 - 9 years 10 or more years

*3,386 APNPs as 04/10/10. Source: Department of Regulation and Licensing.

Registered Nurses in Focus

Total Valid Survey Respondents

% of Applicable Respondents

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