

LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES IN VERMONT

SUMMARY OF BOARD OF NURSING RELICENSURE SURVEY MARCH 2004

Prepared by: Office of Nursing Workforce Research, Planning, and Development

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BACKGROUND

The Office of Nursing Workforce Research, Planning and Development has prepared this report in order to provide Vermonters with useful information on the status of Vermont's nurse workforce. The licensed practical nurse (LPN) is a valued team member in many settings that provide health care to Vermonters. This survey was included in relicensure materials sent out by the Vermont Board of Nursing in 2004 and was not mandatory. The survey was returned by 1435 LPN's (82% response rate). This study was supported by the Vermont Board of Nursing and a HRSA/ORHP grant: "Rural Nursing Workforce Research Planning and Development".

KEY FINDINGS

1,171 LPN's indicated they worked in Vermont in a position that required a current LPN license. Therefore, the following information describes only those LPN's who are currently in Vermont's nursing workforce.

Basic demographics:

- 96% of LPN's are female, 4% are male
- 96% of Vermont LPN's are Caucasian
- Age range: 19-83 years Median age: 46 years, 74% are over 40 years.

Education:

- 11% are currently enrolled in a nursing program. Of these:
83% in Associate Degree Programs, 14% in Diploma Programs, and 3% in Baccalaureate Programs.
- 49% reported participation in a continuing education program in the past year.

Employment (Setting of primary position):

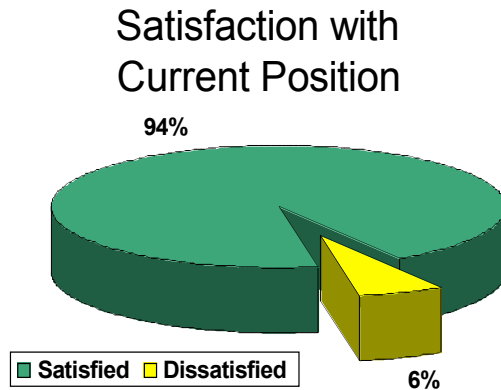
- Long term care facilities employ 34%
- Hospitals employ 20%
- Ambulatory/Outpatient/Community Health Centers employ 15%
- Independent Practice employs 9%
- Multiple setting 6%
- Home health agencies employ 5%
- Assisted Living facilities employ 4%
- Schools employ 3%
- "Other" settings employ <2%
- Mental Health Centers and Correctional Facilities employ <2% each
- Nursing Education and Public Health employ <1% each
- 71% reported patient care is primary activity, 15% reported management responsibilities.

Likeliness to leave primary position in next 12 months:

- 14% (n=242) indicated that they are “somewhat likely” or “very likely” to leave their primary position in next 12 months due to the following reasons:

Position change – 47%	Dissatisfaction with job assignment: 10%
Stress – 39%	Retirement - 9%
Dissatisfaction with salary - 38%	Co-workers – 6%
Returning to school - 31%	Promotion - 5%
Dissatisfaction with management – 28%	Health – 5%
Family leave – 14%	Supervisor – 5%
Moving -12%	

Job Satisfaction:



DISCUSSION OF THESE FINDINGS:

The mean age of the Vermont LPN is similar to the age of the Vermont RN, with the **minority** of both under the age of 40. This is worrisome in light of the Bureau of Labor Statistics prediction of a 34% increase in nursing positions over the next 10 years. Seago et al (2004) point out that LPN’s cannot directly substitute for RN’s, and that the RN and the LPN come from the same homogeneous worker pool, therefore; it is unlikely that the LPN will be able to substantially ease the RN shortage.

Opportunities for career advancement through education are taken advantage of by 11% of the working LPN’s. Surprisingly, some are traveling out-of- state to attend diploma nursing programs rather than the in-state associate degree and bachelor degree options. The fact that 51% of the sample reported that they have not participated in continuing education in the past year might reflect some LPN employers’ inability to finance educational offerings.

Low intention to leave remained consistent from the 2002 to the 2004 Vermont LPN surveys. Among those intending to leave, a higher percentage indicated a dissatisfaction with salary from 2002 (19%) to 2004 (39%). The addition of new survey categories of intending to leave for “position change” (47%) and “stress” (39%) could not be compared with 2002 data, but indicate that lateral career movement is now the number one reason for leaving an LPN position. In general, Vermont LPN’s continue to be a stable, satisfied, and important part of the nursing workforce.

Reference: Seago, J., Spetz, J., Chapman, S., Dyer, W., & Grumbach, K. (2004). *Supply, Demand and Use of Licensed Practical Nurses* (HRSA grant report # U79 HP 00032-01-01HRSA).