

Vermont Health Workforce Assessment Survey

Outpatient Provider Office Nursing and Employee Study 2005

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Why was this survey done?

One factor in assuring access to quality health care for all Vermonters is an ongoing understanding of the state's health workforce resources. To this end, the Office of Nursing Workforce Research, Planning and Development conducted the Health Workforce Assessment Survey in February, 2005.

Who was surveyed?

The Vermont Health Workforce Survey was sent to the office manager in a convenience sample of 230 outpatient provider offices. The response rate was 37% (n=85).

What was learned?

Statewide Vacancy Rate ¹	(Range)
Nurse Practitioner/Physician Assistant	5%
Registered Nurse	2%
Licensed Practical Nurse	2%
Medical Assistant	2%
Scheduler	1%

Statewide Turnover Rate ²	(Range)
Scheduler	13%
Registered Nurse	17%
Licensed Practical Nurse	10%
Medical Assistant	11%
Nurse Practitioner/Physician Assistant	2%

AVERAGE TIME TO FILL POSITION FOR OFFICES REPORTING DIFFICULTY

Nurse Practitioner	22 weeks
RN	13 weeks
LPN	8 weeks
Medical Assistant	3 weeks

Recruitment incentives:

- 24% of respondents reported a pay differential for RN educational preparation (Associate's vs. Bachelor's degree).
- 18% of respondents reported a pay differential for credentialed RNs (e.g. RNC).
- 34% of respondents felt that starting salaries were too low to have an impact on recruitment.
- 12% of respondents reported efforts to recruit nurses age 50+ and 28% reported efforts to retain nurses 50+.

IMPACT OF SHORTAGES:

	Never	Several times a year	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	Missing or n/a
Curtailed plans for acquiring new technology	67%	6%			1%	26%
Reduced service hours	66%	13%		1%		20%
Increased wait times to surgery	44%	1%				55%
Cancelled surgeries	44%					56%
Mandatory staff overtime	53%	7%	2%	1%	1%	35%
Decreased patient satisfaction	54%	12%	4%	2%		28%
Increased patient complaints	55%	13%	2%	2%	1%	26%
Decreased staff satisfaction	39%	26%	8%	6%	1%	20%
Curtailed plans for facility expansion	Yes 6%					
	No 76%					18%
Discontinued clinical programs	Yes 6%					
	No 75%					19%

TYPES OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS REPORTED AS NEEDED BUT NOT AVAILABLE (FREQUENCY REPORTED):

Licensed Practical Nurse	(3)
Nurse Practitioner	(3)
Medical Assistant	(2)
Pediatrics	(2)
RN per diem	(1)
Medical records/scheduler	(1)
Certified Diabetic Educator	(1)
Office Manager	(1)
Women’s health	(1)
Endoscopy	(1)
X-ray license	(1)

Conclusions

Due to a limited response rate of 37%, the results of this survey may not accurately represent all of the Vermont outpatient office practices. Vacancy and turnover rates continue to be the lowest in outpatient provider offices when compared to the hospital, home health, and long-term care settings. The small use of recruitment incentives combined with low vacancy and turnover indicate that this setting is an attractive place to work for the current nurse workforce.

A variety of skills are needed to provide outpatient services, but only 15% of respondents indicated that they need health care professionals with specialized skills that they are unable to find. Many offices do not employ RNs which are in the shortest supply. The biggest impact of health care worker shortages has been experienced in the areas of decreased staff satisfaction.

Notes

¹Vacancy rates were calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\# \text{ FTE vacant}}{\text{Total FTEs employed} + \# \text{ vacant}} \times 100$$

from all responding institutions

²Turnover rates were calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Total \# workers leaving institution between 2/15/04 – 2/15/05}}{\text{Total \# part-time + full-time workers employed as of 2/15/05}} \times 100$$