

Study Shows More than 12,000 Qualified Applicants Turned Away from Florida Nursing Programs

A recent survey of Florida's nursing education programs conducted by the Florida Center for Nursing, in partnership with the Florida Board of Nursing, found that more than 12,000 qualified applicants were turned away from nursing education programs during academic year 2007-2008 – a number nearly capable of eliminating the critical nursing shortage currently plaguing Florida's healthcare system. This news comes against the backdrop of a failing state and national economy, a factor that will likely further burden already struggling education budgets.

The study, which surveyed 100% of Florida's pre-licensure nursing education programs, showed that Florida is experiencing a supply-line "bottleneck" due to limited funding for faculty positions, faculty shortages, and limited clinical education space. More than 50% of qualified applicants were turned away from Associate's and Bachelor's degree RN programs as program leaders struggled with securing funding for new faculty members. The study also revealed a decrease in full-time faculty, leading to intensified workloads for existing faculty and significantly increased student-to-faculty ratios. As with Florida's RN population, the Center found that the average age of faculty members is rapidly increasing. Faculty retirements are expected to triple by 2011 and a decrease in Master's-level student enrollments indicates that there may be a strong decline in interest for teaching positions and therefore a limited potential pool for replacements.

View a full copy of the 2008 Nurse Education Survey [here](#)

New Quick Facts Sheet Available

Looking for a quick go-to reference with key information on Florida's nursing workforce data? The Florida Center for Nursing recently updated its Quick Facts sheet to include data from our most recent education and workforce research reports. This sheet provides a brief look at Florida's nurse supply and demand, nursing education capacity, nurse demographics, and the economic benefits of addressing the shortage.

Download the January 2009 Quick Facts sheet [here](#)

January 2009



**New Education
Survey Released**

**New Quick Facts
Sheet**

**New Workforce
Analysis Report**

**Heard it through
the Grapevine:
Nurse Forums**

Florida's First Look at RN Work Habits

We are excited to announce another “first-ever” look at Florida’s nurse workforce as we release the 2008 Nurse Workforce Survey; **download a copy of the 2008 Nurse Workforce Survey [here](#)**. Two-thirds of Florida’s Registered Nurses (RNs) and Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners (ARNPs) renewed their nursing licenses in 2008 and 92% (more than 100,000 nurses) opted to complete our voluntary survey during the renewal process. As a result, we now have unprecedented information on the work behaviors, employment settings, and education level of RNs in Florida. **Report highlights include:**

- Approximately 85% of RNs with an active, clear license and a Florida address practice nursing within the state of Florida. Not surprisingly, work behaviors are strongly associated with age. One-third of RNs who are not working in nursing are over the age of 61 and average FTE worked declines dramatically at ages 61 and above. Given the large cohort of nurses nearing age 60, succession planning efforts must be implemented to prevent the “brain drain” associated with the loss of many experienced nurses due to retirement.
- Florida’s RN workforce is largely prepared at the level of RN Diploma or Associate’s degree, which is also true nationally. In Florida, about 28% of working RNs hold a Bachelor’s degree in nursing and 9% hold a Master’s degree in nursing.
- About 61% of RNs in the nursing workforce report working in hospitals. Other settings employing large numbers of nurses include home health (7.4%), ambulatory care (5.4%), health provider offices (5.0%), and long term care (4.4%).
- We estimate that 81% of RNs in the nursing field work more than 36 hours per week, a figure that is higher than 2004 national estimates of full-time employment (70.3%). It is unknown whether the difference reflects the recent economic downturn (which may cause workers to increase their hours) or the unique nursing needs in Florida.

Heard it through the Grapevine: No Shortage of Nurse Opinions on Forums

Here at the Florida Center for Nursing, we continue to work hard to develop cutting-edge, state-specific research highlighting the many critical components of the nursing shortage in Florida. The information age has allowed us to effectively work towards our mission of disseminating reliable research to everyone from consumers to healthcare professionals, reaching a variety of audiences through both major media outlets as well as through our website.

With blogging and forum discussions taking front stage on everything from politics to parenting, it should come as no surprise that our research recently sparked a spirited [discussion](#) on the nursing shortage in Florida (along with many other issues critical to the nursing industry) on the popular AllNurses.com nursing forum. Although the reactions were as diverse as the 300,000+ membership base, there were a few commonalities: improved pay and working conditions were mentioned in post after post. Another recurring theme was the discussion of the perception of the shortage of LPNs versus RNs, as illustrated in the following post:

“I always thought that Licensed Practical Nurses were also nurses, but I'm learning the hard way that evidently we're not. I began school being proud to know if I worked & studied hard I'd be a nurse one day. Now I just feel like I wasted a year of my life 'cause no one wants what I've learned -- it isn't enough.”

These threads help provide a new level of insight into the frontline reaction to both statewide and national nursing research. Never before have we had access to such candid reactions regarding the issues nurses face and their reaction to recruitment and retention initiatives. While the discussions range from light-hearted anecdotes from the floor to cutting insights into policy, this forum (and others like it) provide an unprecedented opportunity for those outside to look in and for decision-makers to understand the key challenges of nurses.