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### **Number of Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners and Registered Nurses in Florida Growing While Number of Licensed Practical Nurses Remains Stable**

A recent survey administered by the Florida Center for Nursing revealed that Florida's potential RN (registered nurse) workforce gained nearly 21,000 nurses between 2012 and 2015. The majority of these new RNs are recent graduates of nursing programs. Likewise, the Advanced practice nursing (ARNP) supply increased by approximately 4,000 over the same time period. The majority of the ARNP nurse supply is attributed to a greater number of RNs returning to school to complete advanced degrees. The practical nursing (LPN) workforce has experienced equal gains and losses over the past 3 years, thus the cumulative change in the LPN workforce is very small.

This information was generated by the Florida Center for Nursing via a web survey that is offered to all nurses as they renew their professional licenses online. Historically, 92% of nurses complete the survey. The Center analyzes these data in order to estimate the supply of nurses in the State of Florida, thus, participating nurses are asked questions about their education, employment status, areas of specialization, and demographic characteristics.

Though the RN and ARNP supply has experienced growth, a long-held concern of the Center is that the absolute supply of nurses may dramatically decrease in the next 5-10 years as a great proportion of the nursing workforce retires. In fact, 41% of ARNPs are over 50 years of age and are expected to retire within 10 years. The average RN is 47.5 years old and the average LPN is 45.9. The imminent retirement of these men and women from the nursing workforce "will result in the loss of highly skilled nurses who contribute years of organizational and experiential knowledge," said Mary Lou Brunell, RN, MSN, Executive Director of the Florida Center for Nursing. "The nursing profession must continue to encourage young people to enter the field. But it is critical that we also implement changes in the work environment to retain nurses and extend their work life."

Emerging and evolving roles in the healthcare workforce presents nurses with a variety of practice options within and outside of hospital settings. Nonetheless, the overwhelming majority of current LPNs, RNs, and ARNPs continue to work in clinical practice. The most common employment settings represented are: long-term care (38.8%) and home health care (15.4%) for

LPNs and hospital settings (63.5%) for RNs. The primary clinical practice areas for ARNPs are acute/critical care (20.9%); adult/family health (20.9%) and anesthesia (17.6%).

Although white women still represent the greatest proportion of nurses, the field of nursing is becoming increasingly diverse. LPNs have the greatest percentage of non-white nurses in practice with almost half (49%) self-identifying as a racial and/or ethnic minority. In terms of RNs and ARNPs, Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs) represent the most diverse group (37.4% minorities) and Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs) represent the least (18.7% minority). Men now represent 35.8% of Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) though they are still less than 15% of the total advanced practice workforce, and between 10 and 11% of total LPNs and RNs.

National and state healthcare workforce needs will continue to be affected by demographic shifts, policy changes, and technological advancements. As the population of Florida continues to grow, age, and become more diverse, the need for culturally competent and age-sensitive instruction and education also continues to be a growing demand on nursing schools and clinical facilities around the state. While the Florida nursing supply does not appear to be decreasing, due to these societal changes and the aging of the nurse workforce, it is evident that the demand for nurses will continue to increase with Florida's aging population and continuing growth – Florida is now the 3<sup>rd</sup> most populous state.

The full report and more information on the Florida Center for Nursing can be found at [www.FICenterforNursing.org](http://www.FICenterforNursing.org). For the direct link to all three reports, please [Click Here](#).

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The Florida Center for Nursing is the definitive source for information, research, and strategies addressing the dynamic nurse workforce needs in Florida.