

2013

Texas Governmental Public Health Nurse Staffing Study



Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies

Center for Nursing Workforce Studies Advisory Committee

The Statewide Health Coordinating Council

Texas Department of State Health Services Center for Health Statistics



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The following is a description of the key organizations that were instrumental in the development and production of this report.

The Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies

The Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) was established under the governance of the Statewide Health Coordinating Council. The Center for Health Statistics at the Department of State Health Services provides administrative oversight. The TCNWS serves as a resource for data and research on the nursing workforce in Texas. The TCNWS is charged to collect and analyze data and publish reports related to educational and employment trends of nursing professionals; the supply and demand of nursing professionals; nursing workforce demographics; migration of nursing professionals; and other issues concerning nursing professionals in Texas as determined necessary by the TCNWSAC and SHCC.

One of the roles of the TCNWS includes collaboration and coordination with other organizations (such as the Board of Nursing, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Texas Nurses Association, Texas Hospital Association, and regional healthcare

organizations and educational councils) that gather and use nursing workforce data. The coordination is needed in order to avoid duplication of efforts in gathering data; to avoid overloading employers and educators with completing a large number of duplicate surveys; to share resources in the development and implementation of studies; and to establish better sources of data and methods for providing data to legislators, policy makers and key stakeholders. The TCNWS is currently working on several statewide studies that will provide current and pertinent supply and demand trends on the nursing workforce in Texas. More information about the TCNWS and TCNWSAC and published reports and information on the nursing workforce are available on the TCNWS website: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/chs/cnws/>.

Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies Advisory Committee

In response to the passage of House Bill 3126 from the 78th Regular Legislative Session, the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) and the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies Advisory Committee (TCNWSAC) were established in 2004. The TCNWSAC was added to the structure of the SHCC and serves as a steering committee for the TCNWS. This is a 21-member committee with representation from nursing and healthcare organizations, employers of nurses, state agencies, nurse researchers, and nurse educators as well as a consumer member. A list of the members of the TCNWSAC is located on page 5.

The TCNWSAC is charged with the following responsibilities:

- Develop priorities and an operations plan for the TCNWS;
- Review, critique, and develop policy recommendations regarding nursing workforce issues;
- Identify other issues concerning nursing professionals in Texas that need further study; and
- Critique and analyze reports and information coming from the TCNWS before dissemination.

Statewide Health Coordinating Council

In accordance with Chapter 104-105 of the Health and Safety Code, the purpose of the Statewide Health Coordinating Council (SHCC) is to ensure health care services and facilities are available to all citizens through the development of health planning activities. The SHCC is a 17-member council, with 13 members appointed by the governor and four members representing specified state agencies. The SHCC meets quarterly and oversees the Health Professions Resource Center and Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) in the Center for Health Statistics as well as the TCNWS Advisory Committee. Information on such things as the State Health Plan, telemedicine and telehealth, primary care and health professions workforce issues, and tracking of selected legislation are available at the following website: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/chs/shcc/>.

Center for Health Statistics


The Center for Health Statistics is the Department of State Health Services' focal point for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of useful health-related information to evaluate and improve public health in Texas.

The mission of the Center for Health Statistics is accomplished by:

- Evaluating existing data systems for availability, quality, and quantity;
- Defining data needs and analytic approaches for addressing these needs;
- Adopting standards for data collection, summarization, and dissemination;
- Coordinating, integrating, and providing access to data;
- Providing guidance and education on the use and application of data;
- Providing data analysis and interpretation; and
- Initiating participation of stakeholders while ensuring the privacy of the citizens of Texas.

The Center for Health Statistics is organized into two branches to address health-related information needs in Texas:

- The Health Information Resources Branch (Community Assessment, Data Management, GIS, and Data Dissemination).
- The Health Provider Resources Branch (Health Professions Resource Center, Hospital Data Section, and Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies).

Health related and health professions workforce information and reports produced through the Center for Health Statistics are available at the following website: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/chs/>. 

Executive Summary

This study provides an overview of the current state of the Texas governmental public health nursing workforce. The main findings are:

- Nurses make up approximately 10% of the total Texas governmental public health workforce, and the majority of nurses work in positions that require a nurse license.
 - RNs made up the majority (63.5%) of the nursing staff mix within Texas governmental public health agencies.
 - LVN positions accounted for 32.7% of nurse positions.
 - APRNs made up only 3.8% of all nurse staff positions.
- Most public health RNs work in a variety of program areas and have diverse job functions.
 - The program area most commonly staffed by RNs is immunization programs/services, followed by communicable disease and TB control.
 - More than a third of RNs, LVNs, and APRNs' main job function is clinic-based care.
- Vacancy rates for RN, LVN, and APRN positions in Texas governmental public health agencies are higher than vacancy rates for these positions within Texas hospitals, but lower than Texas home health/hospice agency vacancy rates.
 - 33.3% of agencies surveyed reported having vacant RN positions. The overall statewide position vacancy rate for RN positions was 12.9%.
 - 80.4% of agencies surveyed reported zero LVN position vacancies. Overall, the statewide position vacancy rate was 11.8% for LVN positions.
 - Few agencies reported staffing APRNs (n=17), but those that did reported nine FTE vacancies and 29.5 occupied FTEs.
 - Most agencies reported that it takes between 31 and 60 days to fill vacant RN, LVN, and APRN positions, though the number of days varied among agency types.
 - 47.5% of agencies reported increasing the workload, but not work hours, of existing staff in order to compensate for vacant positions.
- Turnover rates varied greatly by agency type and agency location.
 - Median statewide turnover rates for RNs were lowest in local health departments (0.0%) and highest in DSHS health service regions (26.1%).
 - Agencies located in metropolitan counties reported a higher median turnover rate for RN positions (n=44, 9.1%) than agencies located in non-metropolitan counties (n=11, 0.0%).
 - Agencies located in border counties reported a higher median turnover rate for RN positions (n=6, 38%) than agencies located in non-border counties (n=49, 0%).
- Few agencies plan on increasing the number of budgeted nurse positions in the next fiscal year.
 - A total of 22 RN positions are expected to be added in the next fiscal year, six LVN positions, and eight APRN positions.
 - 13.1% of responding agencies will increase RN positions, 6.6% will increase LVN positions, and 8.2% will increase APRN positions.
 - 26.2% of responding agencies reported that budgeted nurse positions had increased within the past two years. Among these agencies, 56.3% reported that an increase in funding was the reason for the increase.
 - Reductions in the number of budgeted nurse positions in the past two years were reported by 32.6% of responding agencies. Agencies reporting a reduction in budgeted RN positions most often cited a reduction in funding as the catalyst for the decrease (21.3% of all agencies). 🇹🇽

To read the full report, go to: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/chs/cnws/TGPHNSS-Reports.shtm>