

The Home Health and Hospice Care Nurse Staffing Study (HHHCNSS) assesses nurse staffing and related issues in home health and hospice agencies. During the summer of 2015, the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) administered the survey to 3,148 home health and hospice agencies in Texas. A total of 1,023 agencies participated for a final response rate of 32.5%. The agencies that completed the 2015 HHHCNSS were representative of all Texas home health and hospice agencies by county metropolitan ($\chi^2(1, N = 1023) = 0.6, p = 0.4$) and border status ($\chi^2(1, N = 1023) = 2.1, p = 0.1$), patient census ($\chi^2(4, N = 1023) = 5.3, p = 0.3$), and agency type ($\chi^2(2, N = 1023) = 1.6, p = 0.5$). Responding agencies were representative of non-responding agencies by county metropolitan status ($\chi^2(1, N = 1023) = 3.3, p = 0.2$) and agency type ($\chi^2(1, N = 1023) = 0.6, p = 0.4$).

This report includes information on the Design and Methods of the 2015 HHHCNSS.

Survey Development

TCNWS established a taskforce consisting of nurses and directors from home health and hospice agencies, Texas Association for Home Care and Hospice, and TAMHSC Rural and Community Health Institute. These home health and hospice care experts were asked to assist in the development and implementation of the survey. The members of the HHHCNSS taskforce helped to revise and edit the survey instrument to ensure questions were applicable and understandable to all home health and hospice agencies. The taskforce also helped to test and market the survey, and reviewed the final report.

The 2015 HHHCNSS implemented some changes from the 2013 survey. Updates included adding questions about, RNs on agency boards, recruitment efforts, new hire attributes, number of newly licensed RNs hired, nurse informaticists, and existence of a transition to practice program. A total of 30 questions were included in the final survey instrument.

The 2015 HHHCNSS survey instrument and its operational definitions can be found in Appendices B and C, respectively.

Data Collection

The 2015 HHHCNSS was launched on June 01, 2015. A link to the web-based survey along with the survey instrument, cover letter, operational definitions, and instructions was sent out to all Medicare licensed and certified home health and hospice agencies by email, if provided in the Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) database. Survey materials were also distributed by mail on June 3, 2015 and again on July 15, 2015. Mailed materials included the survey instrument, cover letter, operational definitions, and instructions. Agencies were strongly encouraged to complete the survey online; however, faxed, mailed, and emailed submissions were also accepted.

The initial survey deadline was July 10, 2015; however, the deadline was extended to August 28, 2015, to allow the

submission of additional surveys. Surveys were accepted until September 01, 2015.

The survey was hosted by Qualtrics, an online survey software. In order to accommodate respondents who needed additional time, surveys were accepted through August 28, 2015 at which point the survey link was deactivated.

Various strategies were used to increase the survey response rate. These included:

- Email announcements from TCNWS and taskforce members were made throughout the survey period.
- Follow-up phone calls were also made by the TCNWS staff throughout the survey period to encourage participation from non-respondents.

- Surveys were faxed directly to agencies and business reply envelopes were included in mail outs.

Additionally, various entities assisted in the marketing of the survey by sending email announcements and posting alerts on their websites. These included:

- Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS)
- Texas Association for Home Care & Hospice (TAHCH), and
- Texas & New Mexico Hospice Organization (TNMHO)

Data Analysis

All data analyses were conducted in SPSS version 22. Variables were analyzed by agency type, county designation (i.e. metropolitan vs. non-metropolitan, border vs. non-border), and health service region. 2015 data were reviewed and notable inconsistencies were removed from the analysis.

Agency Characteristics

Frequency counts were run for each variable reported in the Agency Characteristics report. Response rates were analyzed by region, county designation, and agency type. Attention was also given to total number of visits, declined patients, and registered nurses on agency boards.

Vacancy and Turnover

The 2015 HHHCNSS asked respondents to provide the total number of occupied and vacant RN positions in their facility on the date of 04/30/2015. These numbers were used to calculate vacancy and turnover rates as described in the 2015 HHHCNSS Vacancy and Turnover report. The two methods for calculating vacancy rates describe two different considerations: the position vacancy rate describes the proportion of all full-time equivalent (FTE) positions that are vacant across all responding agencies, whereas the median agency vacancy rate provides the midpoint of vacancy rates among all agencies, regardless of agency or staff size.

In order to calculate turnover rates, respondents provided their number of occupied full-time and part-time staff positions at two points in the year (1/1/2014 and 12/31/2014), and these numbers were averaged to determine an average number of employees. Turnover rates were calculated for each facility and by each nurse type by dividing the number of reported employee separations during this period by the sum of average full-time and part-time staff. The median facility turnover rate was reported for the state and for each region.

Staffing

The Staffing report includes data on nurse staffing such as the number of nurses employed in home health and hospice agencies, average employees and total separations, additional staff needed, temporary nurses, and consequences of an inadequate supply of nurses. If applicable, inductive coding was used to analyze open-ended free response questions.

Recruitment and Retention

The Recruitment and Retention report includes information from five questions directly related to employee recruitment for RN positions. First, agencies were asked to indicate how long it took their organization to fill nursing vacancies by nurse type. Second, they were asked where they recruited RNs in Texas, in other states, or internationally. Third, agencies responding that they recruited outside of Texas were then asked why they did so. Fourth, respondents were asked to rate their experience recruiting nurses by nurse type. Finally, agencies reported any recruitment/retention strategies they offered to nursing personnel. Frequency counts and analysis by region were conducted for this report.

Hiring Practices/Transition to Practice

Data in the 2015 Hiring Practices/Transition to Practice report pertain to attributes agencies find important when hiring RNs, importance of a bachelor's in nursing, impact of recent economic recession on hiring practices, and the number of newly licensed RNs hired. Responding to a recent initiative to increase orientation programs for newly licensed nurse graduates, the 2015 HHHCNSS asked facilities to provide information, if any, on their transition to practice program.

Frequency counts were used to describe data on both hiring practices and the availability of a transition to practice program.