



The Long Term Care Nurse Staffing Study (LTCNSS) assesses nurse staffing and related issues in the long term care setting. In 2016, approximately 26% of licensed vocational nurses (LVNs) and 3% of registered nurses (RNs) in Texas worked in the nursing home/extended care setting. Long term care facilities may also employ certified nurse aides (CNAs), certified medication aides (CMAs), and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs). During the spring of 2017, the TCNWS administered the LTCNSS to 1,213 Texas nursing facilities. A total of 439 facilities participated, for a final response rate of 36.2%.

Studies have shown that Directors of Nursing (DONs) can have an impact on the quality of care in long term care settings.<sup>1</sup> Facilities that reported having a DON with longer job tenure had higher quality of care scores.<sup>1</sup> This report provides information on DONs in Texas long term care nursing facilities, including salary, longevity, qualifications/experience, and reasons for DON turnover. 437 of 439 (99.5%) facilities reported having a DON at the time of data submission.

<sup>1</sup>Krause, M.R. (2012) Director of Nursing Current Job Tenure and Past Experience and Quality of Care in Nursing Homes. Health Care Manage Rev., 37, 98-108.

## Longevity and Tenure

Figure 1 shows the proportions of DONs that have held their current position over various time periods and Figure 2 shows the proportions of DONs with various levels of long term care experience.

- In 2017, 291 out of 433 (67.1%) DONs had 6 or more years of experience in long term care compared to 66.5% of 430 DONs in 2016.
- 178 of 433 (40.8%) DONs held their current position for less than 1 year. In 2016, 50% of 421 DONs had been employed at their facility for less than a year. Research has shown that facilities who employed a DON with shorter current job tenure had considerably lower quality of care scores compared to those facilities who had a DON with longer tenure.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 1. DON long term care position tenure

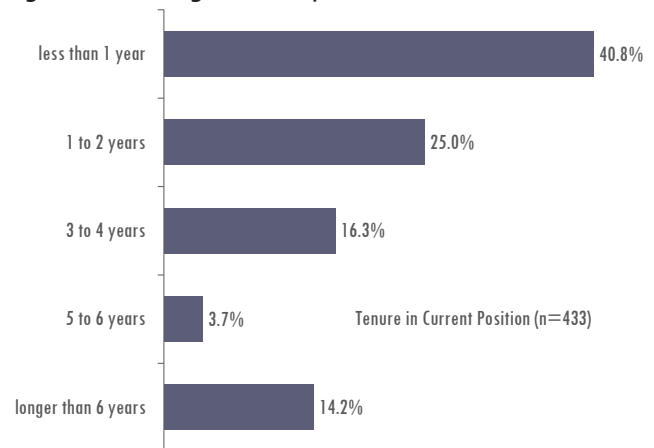
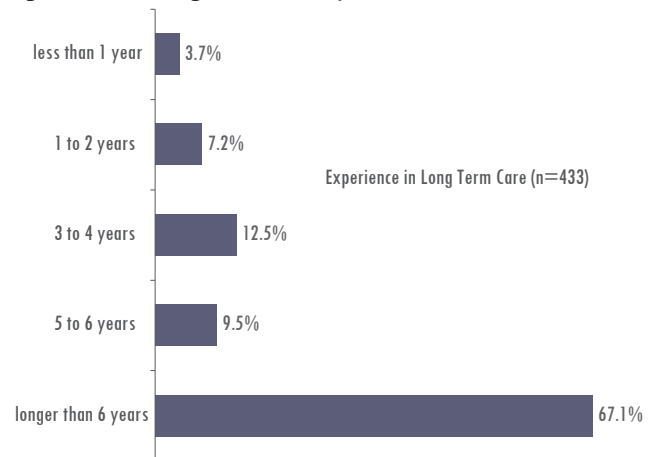


Figure 2. DON long term care experience



## Reasons for DON Turnover

**Table 1. Frequency of reasons reported for DON turnover**

Reason for DON turnover	# of respondents	% of respondents
DON turnover is not an issue	165	38.3%
Staffing issues	171	39.7%
Resident/family expectations	95	22.0%
Exhaustion/burnout	160	37.1%
Fear of litigation	56	13.0%
Burden of regulatory requirements	149	34.6%
Lack of administrative/corporate support	48	11.1%
Pay/benefits not commensurate	53	12.3%
Excessive paperwork	106	24.6%
Lack of nursing knowledge	13	3.0%
Lack of management/leadership skills	78	18.1%
Lack of LTC experience	30	7.0%
Other	17	3.9%

Respondents were asked to select the issues that contributed to the turnover of Directors of Nursing in their long term care facility. Note that respondents could select all that apply in this question, unless they selected “DON turnover is not an issue.”

- 165 of 431 (38.3%) respondents indicated that DON turnover was not an issue at their facility (Table 1), which was an increase from the 2016 LCTNSS (35.3% of 439 respondents).
- The most frequently cited reason for DON turnover was staffing issues (39.7%).

Of those respondents who selected the “other” category in their response to which issues contribute to DON turnover, 16 provided a written response.

- 25% of these 16 respondents claimed that job promotion contributed to DON turnover.

## Education

In 2011, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) published *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*<sup>1</sup>. This report recommended a series of concrete policy and administrative changes that would allow the American healthcare professions to deal with our country’s healthcare workforce needs. Two of these recommendations deal specifically with the education and training of nursing staff:

- Increase the proportion of nurses with at least a baccalaureate degree to 80% by 2020.
- Double the number of nurses with a doctorate in nursing by 2020.

With respect to these recommendations, we asked about the educational attainment of DONs in Texas long term care facilities. The proportion of DONs in Texas with a bachelor’s degree has decreased since the 2016 LTCNSS, when 36.6% of DONs had a bachelor’s in nursing. However, the number of DONs with a master’s in nursing increased.

<sup>1</sup>Institute of Medicine (IOM). (2011). *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press. Retrieved from: [http://thefutureofnursing.org/sites/default/files/Future%20of%20Nursing%20Report\\_0.pdf](http://thefutureofnursing.org/sites/default/files/Future%20of%20Nursing%20Report_0.pdf)

Table 2 presents a breakdown of the most commonly held degrees by DONs.

- 413 of 429 (95.8%) DONs had a nursing degree.
- The most common degree type among DONs was an associate’s in nursing.

**Table 2. Educational attainment of DONs**

Degree Type	# of DONs	% of DONs
Diploma	18	4.2%
Associate's in nursing	226	52.4%
Bachelor's in nursing	141	32.7%
Master's in nursing	28	6.5%
Bachelor's in field other than nursing	10	2.3%
Master's in field other than nursing	4	0.9%
Other	4	0.9%
Total	431	100.0%



The 2017 LCTNSS introduced a questions asking DONs if they received orientation and how well did the orientation prepare them for the DON role.

- Of the 105 DONs who responded to the question asking if they had received orientation, 78 (74.3%) received orientation to the DON position.
- As reported in table 3, 83.1% of respondents indicated that the orientation at least adequately prepared them for the DON role.
- In an open ended question, DONs were asked to specify why orientation was inadequate and 12 of the 16 (46.2%) DONs specified that orientation was inadequate because they did not receive orientation.

**Table 2. Frequency of how well orientation prepared DONs for role**

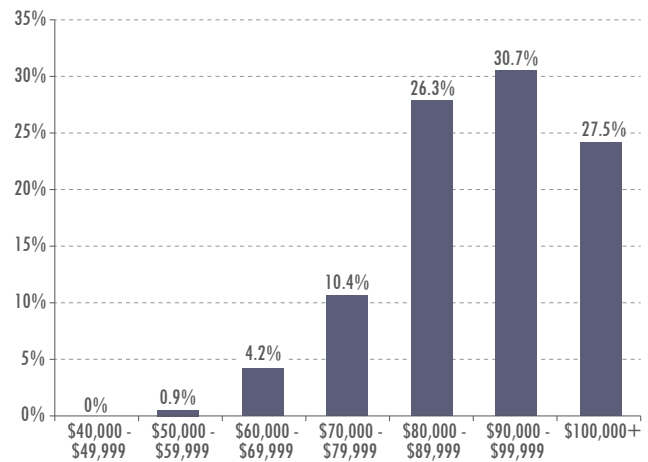
	# of DONs	% of DONs
Very Poorly	6	6.3%
Poorly	10	10.5%
Adequately	44	46.3%
Well	16	16.8%
Very well	19	20.0%

## Salary

433 of 439 (98.6%) survey respondents chose a salary range for the DON, from a minimum of less than \$40,000 to a maximum of \$100,000 and over. None of the survey respondents reported a salary below \$50,000.

- The statewide median DON salary range is between \$90,000 and \$99,999, which was the same in 2016.

**Figure 2. DON salary range distribution (n=433)**



## Conclusion and Recommendations

### Conclusion

65.8% of facilities reported having a DON that held the position for less than 2 years and almost half of responding facilities currently had a DON who was at the facility less than a year. This is an issue that must be addressed because research has shown that quality of care is negatively impacted when long term care facilities employ a DON that does not have long tenure.<sup>1</sup> Staffing issues was the most frequently reported reason for DON turnover. The proportion of DONs with a BSN has decreased since the 2016 LCTNSS, but the number of DONs with a master's degree in nursing increased. The median salary range for DONs has remained the same at \$90,000 and \$99,999 from 2016 to 2017.

### TCNWS Advisory Committee Recommendations

#### DON Support

Owners and administrators must support DONs as they either transition in to the role of the DON for the first time or learn to effectively fulfill their role in a new long term care setting.

#### Provide Adequate Staffing

The most frequently cited reason for DON turnover was staffing issues. As a result, facilities should provide staffing levels and skill mix sufficient to deliver quality care commensurate with resident acuity and quality outcomes at reasonable staff workload levels, so that DON turnover can be reduced.