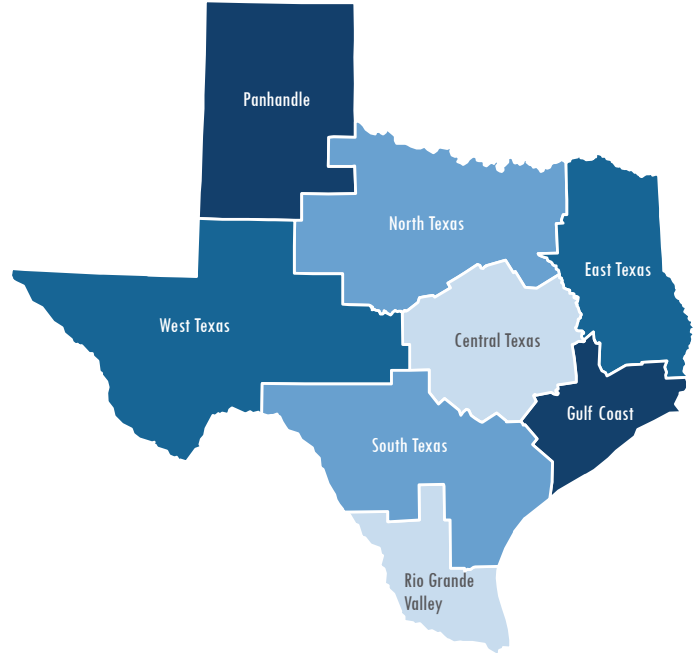




The Hospital Nurse Staffing Survey (HNSS) assesses the size and effects of the nursing shortage in hospitals, Texas' largest employer of nurses. During the spring of 2014, the TCNWS administered the HNSS to 619 Texas hospitals. These included for-profit, non-profit, public, and Texas Department of State Health Services-operated hospitals, as well as hospitals linked to academic institutions; military hospitals were not surveyed. The facilities surveyed were general acute care, psychiatric, special, and rehabilitation hospitals. 428 (69.1%) hospitals responded to the survey. The hospitals that completed the 2014 HNSS were representative of all Texas hospitals by region and bed size.

This report on transition to practice programs for newly licensed registered nurses (RNs) responds to the nursing community's need to understand the challenges new nurses face and develop a means of easing their transition into nursing. Hiring practices of newly licensed nurses, hospitals' efforts to help them acclimate to practice, and the benefits of doing so are presented herein.



Institute of Medicine's *The Future of Nursing*¹

In 2011, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) published *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*. 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. As a means of partially addressing the country's shortage of highly-qualified practicing nurses, the IOM report notes exceptionally high turnover rates among first-year nurses. It recommends that employers of newly licensed RNs seek to ease the transition by implementing transition to practice (residency) programs. Such programs have thus far proven economically prudent

with returns on investment as high as 884%, while also leading to increased first-year nurse satisfaction and improved quality of patient care.

The Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies included several questions regarding transition to practice programs in the 2014 HNSS. These programs may include extended orientations, prolonged preceptorships, and formal residency programs. The 2014 data responses to these questions will allow tracking of future program changes from the 2012 baseline in response to this recommendation.

¹Institute of Medicine, Committee on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Initiative on the Future of Nursing. (2011). *The future of nursing: Leading change, advancing health*. Retrieved from The National Academies Press website: http://books.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=12956

Transition to Practice Programs in Texas

Responding Texas hospitals reported hiring 6,757 newly licensed RNs during their organization's last fiscal year.

Table 1 provides data showing the percentage of hospitals in each region reporting whether or not they had a transition to practice program for newly licensed RNs.



Table 1. Percentage of responding hospitals with and without transition to practice programs by region

		Panhandle	North Texas	East Texas	Gulf Coast	Central Texas	South Texas	Rio Grande Valley	West Texas	Texas
Hospitals with Transition to Practice Programs	n	26	84	30	55	33	28	18	27	301
	%	70.3%	65.6%	85.7%	70.5%	70.2%	68.3%	78.3%	69.2%	70.3%
Hospitals without Transition to Practice Programs	n	11	44	5	23	14	13	5	12	127
	%	29.7%	34.4%	14.3%	29.5%	29.8%	31.7%	21.7%	30.8%	29.7%

- In Texas, 70.3% of responding hospitals offer a transition to practice program for newly licensed RNs.
- In every region, the majority of hospitals reported having a transition to practice program.
- East Texas reported the highest proportion of hospitals with such a program, followed by the Rio Grande Valley. North Texas reported the lowest proportion of hospitals with transition programs.

Table 2 shows the percentage of hospitals with and without transition to practice programs by geographic designation.

- The highest percentage of hospitals with transition to practice programs were in metropolitan border counties (85.7%)
- Hospitals in metropolitan, non-border and non-metropolitan, border counties both had lower percentages with transition to practice programs than Texas at-large.
- 74.1% of non-metropolitan, non-border hospitals reported offering transition programs for newly licensed RNs.

Table 2. Percentage of hospitals with and without transition to practice programs by geographic designation

		Metro Border	Metro Non-Border	Non-Metro Border	Non-Metro Non-Border
Hospitals with Transition to Practice Programs	n	24	190	7	80
	%	85.7%	67.4%	70.0%	74.1%
Hospitals without Transition to Practice Programs	n	4	92	3	28
	%	14.3%	32.6%	30.0%	25.9%

Description of Transition to Practice Programs

The 301 hospitals that reported having a transition to practice program in place were asked what kind of programs they had out of six options - orientation, mentoring or preceptor, residency, internship, fellowship, or other (Figure 1). Hospitals could select more than one program type. Since the program types were not defined on the survey, facilities could use their own definitions. For example, what one facility calls a residency, another might call an internship. For this reason, residency, internship, and fellowship were combined into one category.

- Orientation was the most common transition program in use in Texas and in every region (222 hospitals), followed by the use of RN mentors or preceptors (156 hospitals).
- Residency/internship/fellowship programs were used by 121 hospitals. Among these three types, internships were the most common (71 hospitals), followed by residencies (63 hospitals), and fellowships (13 hospitals).

Figure 1. Percentage of hospitals with transition to practice programs by program type

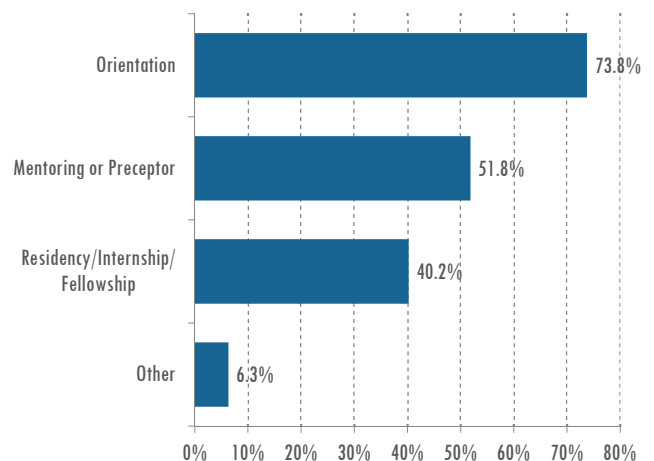
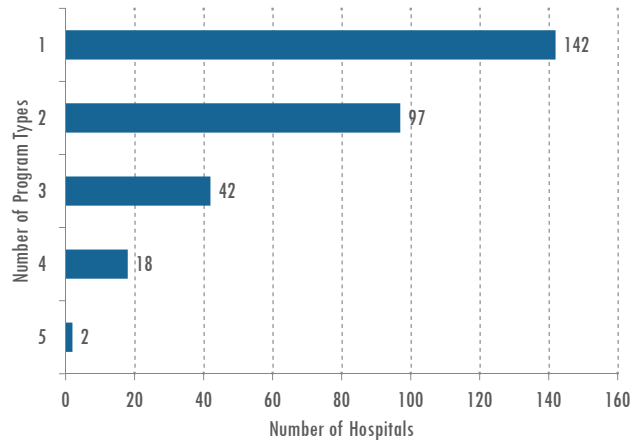


Figure 2 shows the number of hospitals selecting different numbers of program types.

- 142 hospitals reported having one type of program, while just two hospitals reported having all five types. No programs reported having all six program types.
- 141 hospitals had orientation as well as at least one other type of program.
- Among the 121 facilities selecting residency, fellowship, or internship programs, 23 selected two or more of those options.

Figure 2. Number of hospitals selecting different numbers of program types



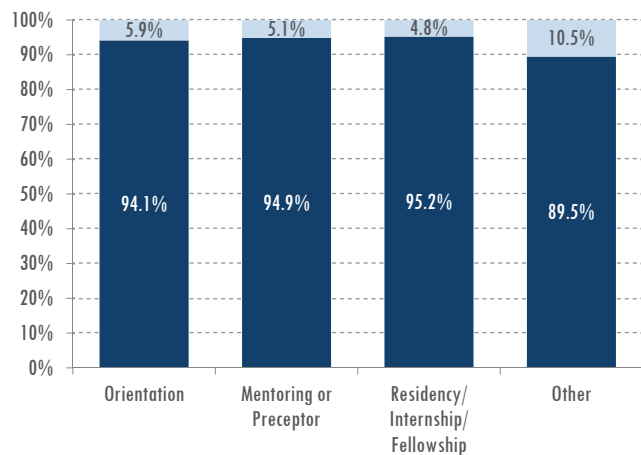
Traits of Transition to Practice Programs in Texas

Employment vs. Non-employment Models

As part of understanding hospitals' transition to practice programs, each was asked whether their program paid transitioning nurses (the employment model) or whether their program was unpaid (the non-employment model), perhaps through participation with a nursing school or as an individual internship (Figure 3).

- The majority of the 301 responding hospitals (94.5%) reported using employment models.
- Residency/internship/fellowship programs had the highest percentage of programs using employment models (95.2%). Among these three types, internships most often used an employment model (97.2%), followed by residencies (95.2%), and fellowships (84.6%).

Figure 3. Transition to practice program type by employment model type

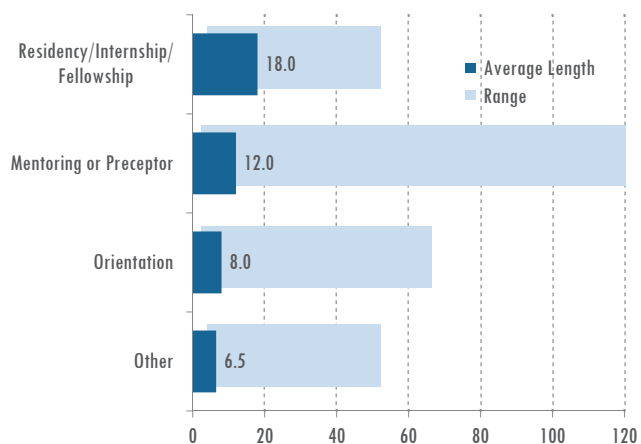


Length of Transition to Practice (in Weeks)

Figure 4 shows the average length in weeks of transition to practice programs by program type.

- Residency/fellowship/internship programs had the longest average length.
- Orientation and other programs had the shortest average length.
- Program lengths varied widely from hospital to hospital. For example, residency programs ranged from 12 to 52 weeks long.
- Mentoring or preceptor programs had the widest range of program lengths, from 1 to 120.

Figure 4. Average length and range in weeks of transition to practice programs by program type



Reported Benefits of Transition to Practice Programs

The same 301 hospitals with transition to practice programs were asked to indicate outcomes resulting from these programs (Table 3).

- A majority of hospitals reported improved clinical competence in patient care among first-year nurses.
- Only one facility listed an “other” outcome - improved camaraderie and teamwork.

Table 3. Percent of responding hospitals reporting outcomes of transition to practice programs

Transition to Practice Program Outcomes	% of Hospitals
Improved clinical competence in patient care among first year nurses	61.5%
Improved clinical decision making abilities among first year nurses	49.5%
Increased number of new graduates applying for RN positions in your organization	40.9%
Decreased turnover of newly licensed RNs in the first year of employment	38.5%
Improved communication skills among first year nurses with physicians, other health professionals, staff, patients, and families	28.6%
Improved organization and prioritizing skills in clinical practice among first year nurses	23.6%
Improved ability to incorporate research-based evidence in clinical practice among first year nurses	8.3%
Other	0.3%

Hiring Practices

Table 4 displays the percentage of newly licensed RNs hired as a percentage by degree type and whether hospitals reported a transition to practice program.

Table 4. Percentage of newly licensed RN hires by degree type and transition to practice status

	Hospitals with Transition Programs	Hospitals without Transition Programs
Diploma	0.9%	13.7%
ADN	35.6%	29.4%
BSN	62.2%	54.4%
MSN - Alternate Entry	1.4%	2.6%

- Hospitals without transition to practice programs rely on greater proportions of diploma hires (13.7%) than do hospitals with transition to practice programs (0.9%).
- Hospitals with transition to practice programs had much higher proportions of ADN (35.6% vs. 29.4%) and BSN hires (62.2% vs. 54.4%) than hospitals without transition to practice programs.
- The presence of a transition to practice program does not seem to greatly affect the proportion of

newly licensed nurses with a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) on a hospital’s staff.

Table 5 provides information on the number of hospitals that reported hiring nurses into their transition to practice programs and the number of total hires by region.

Table 5. Number of hospitals reporting transition to practice hires and the number of hires by region

Region	Number of Hospitals Reporting Transition to Practice Hires	Number of New Nursing Graduates Accepted into Transition to Practice Programs
Panhandle	20	1,090
North Texas	68	2,596
East Texas	23	522
Gulf Coast	47	1,827
Central Texas	28	1,372
South Texas	24	1,872
Rio Grande Valley	12	518
West Texas	18	869

