



HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE: NURSES

An Alliance for Health Reform Toolkit produced with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

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Fast Facts

- There are close to 3 million employed, licensed registered nurses in the United States today.
- 266,000 are advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs).
- 260,000 additional nurses will be needed by 2025.
- Close to half the nurses (45%) say they plan to make career changes in the next one to three years
- In a 2010 report, the Institute of Medicine recommended that nurses be allowed to practice to the full extent of their education and training
- As of January 2011, sixteen states plus the District of Columbia had already liberalized and standardized their scope-of-practice regulations allowing nurse practitioners to practice and prescribe independently
- Provisions in the health reform law include nursing workforce development programs, nurse-managed clinics and graduate nurse education.
- Registered nurses play an important role in health reform's ACO model.
- Patients with multiple chronic conditions have a much better outcome when treated through a team approach involving nurses.

Introduction

The U.S. health care system is undergoing a transformation in response to a number of factors. These include but are not limited to provisions in the health reform law, advances in technology and the aging of the population. Whatever the cause and directions of change, many analysts predict a shortage of health care providers in the next decade and beyond. Debates continue in policy circles among researchers, analysts and stakeholders on whether the shortages are due to insufficient numbers of providers, or maldistribution of those providers. There are areas of the country, desirable locations such as big cities and major medical centers, where providers can't find jobs, and others where there are no providers to fill empty slots. This toolkit focuses on nursing, the coming shortages, how they might be avoided, and how health reform is contributing to the changing role of nursing,

Currently there are almost 3 million employed, licensed registered nurses in the United States. Most, about 60 percent, work in hospitals. Almost 266,000 are advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs).

It is projected that 260,000 additional nurses will be needed by 2025 to care for the increased population, the increase in insured population and the explosive care needs for chronic diseases in the population and geriatric care in older age groups.

Several factors are thought to contribute to the projected shortage in nursing. These include a decline in RN earnings relative to other career options, an aging nursing workforce, job dissatisfaction among nurses, and an aging, sicker population that will require more intense health care services.

An October 2010 report by the Institute of Medicine recommended that nurses be allowed to practice to the full extent of their education and training, yet scope of practice laws vary from state to state. Is the time right for states to update these laws to mitigate the shortage of providers, especially in primary care and especially in rural areas?

The resources below are arranged to help readers understand the issues pertaining to the nursing workforce, changes in the nursing profession that may be forthcoming and the challenges to policy makers to address these issues. The first section provides descriptions and links to articles related to health reform. Next listed are descriptions and links to information on nursing workforce shortages. Finally, descriptions and links to articles describing the challenges related to scope of practice issues are presented.

Resources

HEALTH REFORM

Frellick, Marcia. Healthcare Reform Bill: What Nurses Need to Know

NURSE.com, March 30, 2010

<http://news.nurse.com/article/20100330/NATIONAL01/104050041/0/frontpage>.

The author provides a comprehensive view of the provisions in the health reform law that will most directly affect nurses, including nursing workforce development programs, nurse-managed clinics, graduate nurse education and more.

Jones, Patty. The Nurse's Role in Accountable Care.

Milliman Healthcare Reform Briefing Paper April 2011

In this paper, the author explores the notion that registered nurses have a critical role to play in the success of the ACO model as it and care coordination play out in health care reform. Ms. Jones further explains how nurses are in a good position to help carry out the goals of accountable care as policies and best practices of this model are defined.

<http://publications.milliman.com/publications/healthreform/pdfs/nurses-role-accountable-care.pdf>

Katon, Wayne J., et al. Collaborative Care for Patients with Depression and Chronic Illnesses
New England Journal of Medicine; 363:2611-2620 December 30, 2010

<http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1003955>

Following this study, the authors concluded that patients with multiple chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and depression have a much better outcome when treated through a team approach involving nurses.

The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health. *Institute of Medicine. October 5, 2010*

<http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2010/The-Future-of-Nursing-Leading-Change-Advancing-Health.aspx>

This report is the product of a study convened under the auspices of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Initiative on the Future of Nursing, at the Institute of Medicine. The report concludes that with the advent of health care reform, changing demographics in the population, increased patient needs and health workforce requirements to meet them, transformation of the nursing profession is required. The report puts forth several recommendations regarding nursing practice, education and necessary policy changes.

NURSING WORKFORCE SHORTAGES

Buerhaus, Peter I., David I. Auerbach and Douglas O. Staiger.

The Recent Surge In Nurse Employment: Causes And Implications, *Health Affairs* July/August 2009. vol. 28 no. 4 w657-w668

<http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/28/4/w657.abstract>

The authors conclude that the economic recession contributed to easing or even ending the registered nurse shortage in many areas of the country, as older nurses delayed retirement or returned to the workforce and part-time nurses became full time in response to employment insecurity, theirs or that of their spouses. They maintain that the relief is temporary at best and that a new RN shortage looms as baby boomers retire from the nursing workforce over the next decade.

Auerbach, David, Peter Buerhaus and Douglas Staiger.

Registered Nurse Supply Grows Faster Than Projected Amid Surge In New Entrants Ages 23–26. *Health Affairs*, December 2011.

<http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/30/12/2286.full?ikey=J5O4fFcDBFJTY&keytype=ref&siteid=healthaff>

On a hopeful note, this article points to an increase in a younger cohort of registered nurses. Between 2002 and 2009, the number of full-time equivalent registered nurses ages 23–

26 increased by 62 percent. The authors note that because of this surge in the number of young people entering nursing during the past decade, the nurse workforce is projected to grow faster during the next two decades than previously anticipated. However, the authors caution that it is uncertain whether interest in nursing will continue to grow in the future.

Reinhard, Susan and Susan Hassmiller. Partners in Solutions to the Nurse Faculty Shortage.

Journal of Professional Nursing 2011 Jul-Aug;27(4):197-201

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21767816>

The authors describe a coalition between The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), the AARP Foundation and AARP formed to raise the level of awareness of the nurse faculty shortage and solutions to resolve it in a sustained way. The Center to Champion Nursing in America was forged from this coalition. The article, originally published in 2009, was updated in 2011.

The Registered Nurse Population: Findings from the 2008 National Sample Survey of

Registered Nurses. *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration.* September 2010.

<http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/healthworkforce/rnsurveys/rnsurveyfinal.pdf>

This is a report of the ninth National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses (NSSRN). The survey is conducted every four years and assesses the number of RNs; their educational background; employment setting, position, and specialty areas; job satisfaction; and salaries. In addition, the survey also identifies the geographic distribution of nurses throughout the United States. The report contains information on average salaries and other employment data that is of interest.

New AACN Data Show an Enrollment Surge in Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs amid Call for More Highly Educated Nurses

<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/news/articles/2012/enrollment-data>

This press release provides an overview of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's (AACN) 31st Annual Survey of Institutions with Baccalaureate and Higher Degree Nursing Programs. The survey provides information on trends in nursing school enrollments and graduations, student and faculty demographics, and more. Findings from the survey indicate that enrollment in baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral nursing programs increased in 2011 despite faculty and resource shortages. Though over 100,000 applications were accepted, over 75,000 qualified applicants were turned away due to lack of capacity.

Nine States Receive Grants to Build a More Highly Educated Nursing Workforce

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, August 2012.

<http://www.rwjf.org/humancapital/product.jsp?id=74743>

A new program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, *Academic Progression in Nursing (APIN)*, awarded grants to nine states. California, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Montana,

New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Texas, and Washington State will work with academic institutions and employers on implementing strategies to help nurses get higher degrees. The objective is to improve patient care and help fill faculty and advanced practice nursing roles. The Tri-Council for Nursing leads the program.

2011 Survey Of Registered Nurses: Job Satisfaction And Career Plans

http://www.amnhealthcare.com/pdf/RN_nurses_survey_06.16.11.pdf

Conducted by AMN Healthcare, a staffing organization, this survey reveals that close to half the nurses (45%) say they plan to make career changes in the next one to three years. Only 56 percent say that if they were starting out today they would choose nursing as their career. This and other data in the survey indicate a high and increasing degree of job dissatisfaction.

Wakefield, Mary. Remarks to the Joint Forum on Rural Health and Nursing Solutions U.S.

Department of Health & Human Services

Health Resources and Services Administration June 2011.

<http://www.hrsa.gov/about/news/speeches/2011/06132011ruralhealth.html>.

Dr. Wakefield speaks of HRSA renewing its focus on nursing and on rural communities. She paints a picture of the current nursing workforce in rural communities providing data on the health status of rural residents and the shortage of providers to meet their needs. She identifies some provisions in the Recovery Act and in the ACA that authorize funding for nurse education, nurse-managed health centers and advanced practice nurses in the National Health Service Corps.

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

APRNs a "Big Part of the Solution" to the Primary Care Provider Shortage. *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.* August 2011. <http://www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=72775>.

This report provides some background on the growing consumer demand for APRNs. It also looks at barriers that prevent APRNs from practicing to the full extent of their education and training, including state scope of practice laws and reimbursement issues.

Fairman, Julie A., John W. Rowe, Susan Hassmiller, and Donna E. Shalala. Broadening the Scope of Nursing Practice

New England Journal of Medicine 2011; 364:193-196 January 2011

<http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1012121>.

The authors contend that all health care providers should be permitted to practice to the fullest extent of their knowledge and competence in order to make the health care system more efficient, i.e. reduce costs while maintaining high quality care. It would require establishing a standardized and broadened scope of practice for advanced-practice registered nurses — in particular, nurse practitioners — for all states. The authors note that at the time of writing, sixteen states plus the District of Columbia had already liberalized and standardized their scope-of-practice regulations allowing nurse practitioners to practice and prescribe independently.

Dennehy, Patricia. Healthcare reform's missing link -- nurse practitioners. *Los Angeles Times* Feb 2012 <http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-dennehy-nurse-practitioners-20120222,0,7158283.story>

The author speaks of how nurse practitioners can help fill the primary care gap that will widen when 30 million newly insured persons get coverage as a result of provisions in the health reform law. Dennehy, a professor at the UC San Francisco School of Nursing, explains that nurse practitioners are registered nurses with graduate school education and the training to provide a wide range of both preventive and acute healthcare services.

Advanced Practice Registered Nurses: Charts *Center to Champion Nursing in America*
<http://championnursing.org/resources/advanced-practice-registered-nurses-charts>

The first of two charts on this site, "Who are Advanced Practice Registered Nurses?" lists the background, skill level, certification and licensure of APRNs. The second, "Types of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses," lists four categories of APRNs, how many there are in the United States, and the scope of their work.

Improving Access to Primary Care: The Growing Role of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses *Center to Champion Nursing in America*
http://championnursing.org/sites/default/files/2010.FS_ImprovingAccessstoPrimaryCareAPRNs_0.pdf

This brief provides some background on the current and increasing role of nurse practitioners in primary care and chronic care coordination, particularly in rural and underserved areas of the country. It highlights evidence of quality and efficiency of care provided by this segment of the health care workforce and offers some solutions on how to modernize regulations to increase access to care.

Newhouse, Robin, et al. Advanced Practice Nurse Outcomes 1990-2008: A Systematic Review. *NURSING ECONOMICS* September-October 2011.
<http://www.nursingeconomics.net/ce/2013/article3001021.pdf>

Through a systematic review of research literature, the authors find evidence that APRNs provide effective and high-quality patient care, have an important role in improving the quality of patient care in the United States, and could help to address concerns about whether care provided by APRNs can safely augment the physician supply to support reform efforts aimed at expanding access to care.

Selected Experts

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Websites

American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN).....<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/>
American Nurses Association (ANA) <http://www.nursingworld.org/>
Bureau of Labor Statistics.....www.bls.gov/
Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Researchwww.shepscenter.unc.edu
HRSA Bureau of Health Professions.....<http://bhpr.hrsa.gov>
Institute of Medicine.....www.iom.edu
The Future of Nursing Campaign.....<http://thefutureofnursing.org/>
The Center to Champion Nursing in America.....<http://championnursing.org/>