



Healthcare Association
of New York State

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STUDY: NEW YORK'S NURSING SHORTAGE PERSISTED IN 2008

Multi-Year Trend Continues; Crisis Looms Across State

ALBANY, N.Y. — New York's nursing shortage persisted in 2008, adding to a multi-year trend of challenging shortages that, if left unaddressed, will worsen significantly over the next decade, a study by the Healthcare Association of New York State (HANY) has found.

HANY's recent Workforce Advocacy Survey of 117 hospitals across New York found that the statewide vacancy rate for registered nurses (RNs) was 7.1% in 2008, down slightly from 8.8% in 2007, but higher than the 6.38% rate recorded in 2006.

More troubling is a State University of New York Center for Workforce Studies finding that the supply of nurses is expected to grow by just 0.4% per year over the next decade—a rate far too low to meet the 8% growth in nursing supply that will be necessary to maintain current levels of patient care over that period.

“This study makes clear that existing shortages are setting the stage for a far more serious nursing crisis that will endanger patient care in communities across the state,” HANY's President Daniel Sisto said. “Policy makers must act now to provide the educational and material resources necessary to increase the nursing supply. We must not be lulled into complacency by current economic and job market conditions that have provided temporary relief in some areas of the state. All the data make clear that the alarm must continue to sound. There is little time left to take action that will prevent the coming crisis.”

New York State's population age 65 and older increased by 25% between 1980 and 2000. The population over age 80 is expected to double by 2020. According to the New York State Department of Labor, the total number of jobs needed in health care is expected to grow 18% by 2012—more than twice the rate of growth of all other occupations. The federal Bureau of Health Professions projects a shortage of nearly 37,000 nurses in New York by 2015.

New York Must Increase Nurse Supply by Investing in Nursing School Capacity

A major factor behind the shortage is nursing schools' inability to admit qualified applicants due to capacity limitations. In fact, despite the ongoing shortage of nurses, New York's nursing schools

are forced to turn away thousands of applicants each year due to a lack of faculty, facilities, or resources.

In addition to nursing shortages, several other allied health professions are experiencing significant vacancy and turnover rates. Respondents reported shortages in every other health professional area that was included in the survey. These included licensed practical nurses; patient care technicians/certified nurse aides; nurse practitioners; pharmacists; radiologic technologists and technicians; clinical laboratory technologists, technicians, and cytotechnologists; physical therapists; dieticians and nutritionists; and coders.

HANYS, the only statewide hospital and continuing care association in New York State, represents more than 550 non-profit and public hospitals, nursing homes, home care agencies, and other health care organizations.