NLN Annual Survey of Schools of Nursing Academic Year 2022-2023: Executive Summary

The National League for Nursing (NLN) conducted the 2023 NLN Annual Survey of Schools of Nursing to provide data to policymakers, planners, governmental agencies, regulators, and others who use NLN workforce data to design legislation, plan budgets, and formulate long-range nursing education goals. This summary reports findings about nursing students, nurse educators, and challenges met by participating schools to address the shortage of nurses and nurse educators. The response rate was 37 percent of 980 NLN member schools invited to complete the survey (n = 364). The following findings are compared to findings from the previous NLN annual survey. Details are available online at https://www.nln.org/nlnNews/newsroom/nursing-education-statistics.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Nursing Students

The proportion of underrepresented students enrolled in prelicensure RN programs increased by 7.2 percent, from 41.5 percent in 2022 to 48.7 percent in 2023. Hispanic enrollment increased from 13 percent to 13.8 percent; African American

enrollment decreased from 14.6 percent to 14.2 percent; Asian and Pacific Islander enrollment increased from 9 percent to 9.5 percent; American Indian or Alaska native enrollment increased from 0.5 percent to 0.7 percent; and enrollment of other or unknown race declined from 4.4 percent to 3.7 percent.

The enrollment of men in basic RN programs increased by nearly a full percentage point, from 13.3 percent in 2022 to 14.2 percent in 2023. Enrollment of transgender, genderqueer, or gender nonbinary students in basic RN programs remained unchanged at 0.1 percent. The proportion of doctoral students under age 30 declined slightly, from 22 percent in 2022 to 21.4 percent in 2023. Enrollment of students over age 30 increased from 78 percent in 2022 to 78.6 percent in 2023.

Nurse Educators

The proportion of underrepresented full-time nurse educators increased by 1.3 percent from 2022. Of full-time educators in 2023, 22.1 percent were members of underrepresented populations: African Americans, 11 percent (up 6.8%); Hispanics, 4.6 percent (down 6.4%); Asians, 4.8 percent (up 0.6%); American Indians or Alaska Natives, 0.4 percent (up 0.1%). Only 1.3 percent of nurse educators were multiracial (up 0.2 percent).

Male representation among full-time nurse educators increased by 0.13 percent in 2023 compared to 2022. Of full-time faculty, 8.23 percent were male; 0.1 percent were transgender,

genderqueer, or gender nonbinary; and 0.03 percent were gender unknown. Among part-time faculty, the percentage of male faculty decreased from 11.4 percent in 2022 to 10 percent in 2023. Only 0.01 percent of part-time faculty were transgender, genderqueer, or gender nonbinary, and 2.42 percent were gender unknown.

Most full-time nurse educators continued to be over age 45 (62.2%): 41.4 percent were aged 46 to 60; 20.8 percent were aged 61 or older; and 35.3 percent were aged 30 to 45. The percentage of full-time faculty under age 30 was 2.4 percent.

PROGRAMS TURNING AWAY QUALIFIED APPLICANTS

NLN data indicate that fewer qualified applicants were denied admission to all types of nursing programs in 2023 compared to 2022. Practical/vocation (PN/VN) programs turned away 9 percent of qualified applications, down 10 percent from 2022. Associate degree (ADN) programs turned away 19 percent, down 4 percent; diploma programs turned away 12 percent, down 2 percent; and BSN programs turned away 15 percent, down 2 percent. Six percent of qualified applicants were denied admission to BSRN programs, unchanged from 2022. Master's programs turned away 7 percent of applicants, down by 5 percent, and doctoral programs turned away 16 percent, down by 6 percent.

TENURE, VACANCIES, AND SALARIES

Of 9,509 full-time faculty across all ranks, 16.1 percent were tenured, down by 0.1 percent compared to 2022; 14.7 percent were on a tenure track, an increase of 0.3 percent. Most full-time nurse educators (69.2%) were not tenured or on a tenure track, down 0.2 percent from 2022.

The total number of faculty vacancies for the nursing programs that responded to the survey was 838 in 2023. BSN programs had most of the nursing faculty vacancies (43.3%), followed by ADN programs (23.3%), MSN (13%), doctoral (11.7%), PN/VN (8.6%), and BSRN (1.8%) programs.

The 2023 survey asked deans and directors to indicate if their nursing program sought to hire new faculty. Most respondents (77%) indicated that they did, but 221 nursing programs had difficulty recruiting and hiring faculty. The reasons given were as follows: not enough qualified faculty (33.3%); not being able to offer competitive salaries (38.4%); faculty positions less attractive (12%); not enough available faculty budget lines (8%); and other difficulties (8.3%).

In all ranks, 50.9 percent of full-time nurse educators had doctorate degrees; 45 percent had master's degrees; and 4.1 percent had bachelor's degrees. There is still a high demand for more qualified nurse educators to enable nursing programs to admit more students.

Salary distributions, according to Carnegie classification (https://carnegieclassifications.acenet.edu), did not change a great deal. Doctoral/research education institutions continued to pay nurse educators the highest average full-time salaries, followed by master's and baccalaureate institutions. Colleges offering an associate degree in nursing paid, on average, the lowest salaries for full-time faculty.

SUMMARY

The survey found an increase in underrepresented nursing students and nurse educators. There was a slight increase in student gender diversity. Most nurse educators continue to be older, hence the need to recruit younger educators to meet the growing demand.

The survey found that some qualified applicants were still not accepted in nursing schools due to a lack of qualified faculty to fill the vacancies and a shortage of clinical placements. Many nursing schools are still struggling to recruit qualified faculty. Over two-thirds of nursing school respondents had sought to hire new faculty. However, the survey indicated a decline in the proportion of qualified applicants who were turned away from nursing programs. This finding is consistent with the overall drop in post-secondary enrollment in the United States. According to the National Student Clearing House (2022),

5

overall postsecondary enrollment decreased by about 7.4 percent in spring 2022 compared to the same period a few years ago.

According to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN, 2023), the US nursing workforce is at a critical crossroads. The shortage has long been a challenge (Aiken et al., 2022), but problems were exacerbated by COVID-19. Pandemic-related stress, burnout, and retirement are driving high rates of projected turnover (Berlin et al., 2022). The 2022 National Nursing Workforce Survey reported that more than one quarter of all nurses planned to leave nursing or retire by 2027 (Simley et al., 2023). Another study revealed that one third of nurse faculty active in 2015 would be set to retire by 2025 (Fang and Kesten, 2017)

Budgeted, unfilled faculty positions continue to exist in most nursing programs due to factors including a shortage of qualified faculty candidates and the inability to offer competitive salaries. The nursing faculty shortage is still a major obstacle to expanding the capacity to educate more nurses, contributing to the nursing workforce shortage.

The retirement of nurse faculty will enormously impact the nurse faculty workforce, worsening the current shortage (National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice, 2021). Support for Title VIII funding must continue to address

the faculty shortage in nursing programs and increase capacity to meet the demand for qualified nurses.

REFERENCES

Aiken, L. H., Sloane, D. M., McHugh, M. D., Pogue, C. A., & Lasater, K. B. (2022). A repeated cross-sectional study of nurses immediately before and during the Covid-19 pandemic: Implications for action. *Nursing Outlook, 71* (1), 1011903, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2022.11.007

Berlin, G., Lapointe, M., Murphy, M., & Wexler, J. (2022, May 11). Assessing the lingering impact of COVID-19 on the nursing workforce. McKinsey & Company. https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/healthcare-systemsand-services/our-insights/assessing-the-lingering-impact-of-COVID-19- on-the-nursing-workforce

National Student Clearinghouse (2022). Undergraduate enrollment falls 662,000 students in spring 2022 and 1.4 million during the pandemic. https://www.studentclearinghouse.org/nscblog/undergraduate-enrollment-falls-662000-students-in-spring-2022-and-1-4-million-during-the-pandemic/

Fang, D., & Kesten, K. (2017). Retirements and succession of nursing faculty in 2016-2025. *Nursing Outlook, 5,* 633-642. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2017.03.003

Smiley, R. A., Allgeyer, R. L., Shobo, Y., Lyons, K. C.,

Letourneau, R., Zhong, E., Kaminski-Ozturk, N., &

Alexander, M. The 2022 National Nursing Workforce Survey.

(2023). *Journal of Nursing Regulation, 14*(1, Suppl.), S1-

S90.

National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice.

(2021). *Preparing nurse faculty and addressing the shortage*

of nurse faculty and clinical preceptors: 17th Report to

the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the U.S.

Congress.

https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/advisory-

committees/nursing/reports/nacnep-17report-2021.pdf

National Council of State Boards of Nurses. (2023, February 24).

Number of nurses in U.S. and by jurisdiction: A profile of

nursing licensure in the U.S.

https://www.ncsbn.org/nursingregulation/national-nursing-

database/licensure-statistics.page