

Psychiatric Mental Health Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) in Vermont

Summary of Board of Nursing Relicensure Survey, March 2005

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Background

In order to provide Vermonters with useful information on the status of Vermont's nursing workforce, the Office of Nursing Workforce Research, Planning, and Development, in collaboration with the Vermont Board of Nursing, conducted a Relicensure survey which was mailed to Vermont Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs). The survey was included in relicensure materials and was not mandatory. The survey was completed in March, 2005 by 299 APRNs who reported being currently employed in Vermont (62% response rate). This report includes data relating to 37 APRNs (12% of full VT APRN sample) who described their current position as Mental Health.

Basic Demographics (n=37):

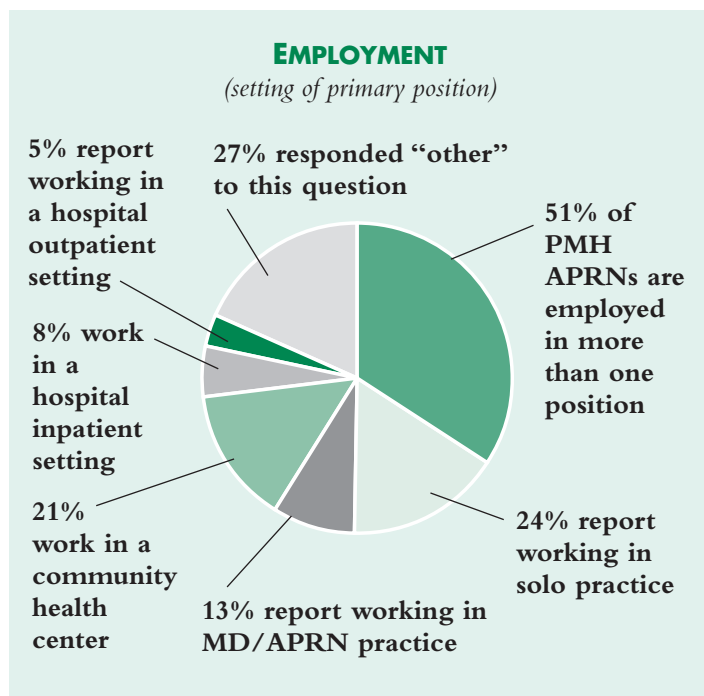
- 84% of PMH APRNs are female; 14% are male
- 92% of Vermont PMH APRNs are Caucasian
- Age range – 30–83 yrs.
- Mean age: 53 years; 92% are 45 years or older

Nursing Education Preparation for PMH APRNs:

- 78% completed a Master's Degree in nursing (or higher)
- 10% completed a post-Master's certificate

Other Educational Information:

- 94% report obtaining their nursing education for APRN in a state other than Vermont
- 13% reported having a doctoral degree (one in nursing; four in non-nursing fields)
- One participant is currently enrolled in a doctoral program



Major Activity:

- 70% of VT PMH APRNs identified patient care as their major activity
- 8% identified nurse administrator as their major activity
- 10% described teaching/instruction as their major activity
- 10% listed "other" as major activity

Current Position:

- 51% report being in their current position for five years or less.
- 16% were somewhat or very likely to leave their principal APRN position over the next year

Reasons Given For Considering Leaving (more than one reason could be chosen):

- Co-workers (n=2)
- Stress (n=1)
- Salary (n=1)
- Supervisor (n=1)
- One respondent reported considering a move to relocate in New Hampshire, where collaborative practice agreements with MDs are not mandated.

Comparison to Full Sample of Vermont APRNs:

- VT PMH APRNs include a higher percentage of men (>13%) compared to full VT APRNs sample (9%)
- Mean age of PMH APRNs is older (53 years) compared to full APRN sample (49 years)
- A higher percentage of PMH APRNs received their master's or post master's certificate out of state (>94%) compared to the full APRN sample (75%)
- Seventy eight percent (78%) of PMH APRNs identified have received either a master's degree or a doctoral degree in nursing compared to 68% of full APRN sample
- The percentage of PMH APRNs who were prepared at the doctoral level (>13%) is proportionately higher than doctorally prepared APRNs from the full sample (4%)
- Fifty one percent (51%) of PMH APRNs report being employed in their current position for five years or less as compared to the full APRN sample (>46%)
- A higher percentage of PMH APRNs (16%) indicated that they were likely to leave their primary position in the next 12 months compared to >11% of the full APRN sample.
- Over forty percent (>40%) of PMH APRNs (N=15) live in two counties; Vermont has 14 counties

Discussion:

This summary report adds to the available information about Psychiatric Mental Health Advanced Practice Nurses in Vermont. Awareness of this group is important, as there continues to be a lack of mental health treatment providers, especially prescribers, in rural states such as Vermont.²

As a group, Vermont PMH APRNs are older, include more men and have more post baccalaureate education as compared to the full sample of Vermont APRNs who responded to the survey. The great majority of these PMH APRN participants (>94%) reported getting their advanced practice degrees in a state other than Vermont. Even though the PMH APRNs from this study report practice locations in 11 counties, over 40% of the PMH APRNs are practicing in only two Vermont counties. The population of PMH APRNs in Vermont is limited with one PMH APRN for every 16,839 people. According to

clinician shortage data, there is a critical shortage of PMH care providers for the Vermont counties of: Grand Isle, Franklin, Essex and Orleans.³ Based on the current report, there is one PMH APRN available for every 28,351 people in these combined rural counties.

Future surveys may address data related to Vermont numbers of PMH APRNs who work with children and adolescents, as a shortage of these providers is recognized nationwide.⁴ In addition, there is growing evidence that the needs of elderly people with mental health concerns are not being adequately met, especially in rural areas.⁵

PMH APRNs have the potential to fill these gaps and subsequently to improve access to mental health services. As one means of addressing the shortage of PMH APRNs in Vermont, the University of Vermont has developed a new PMH APRN Program since this survey was done.⁶

References:

- ¹ U.S. Census Bureau (2006). State and county quick facts Vermont (2006). Retrieved on June 13, 2006 from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/50000.html>
- ² Hartley, D., Hart, V., Hanrahan, N. and Loux, S. (2004). Are advanced practice psychiatric nurses a solution to rural mental health workforce shortages? (Working Paper #31). Portland, ME: University of Southern Maine, Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service, Institute for Health Policy, Maine Rural Health Research Center.
- ³ Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA): Mental Health HPSA Clinician Priority Scores. Retrieved June 13, 2006 from : http://www.raconline.org/maps/mapfiles/hpsa_mentalscore.png
- ⁴ Koppelman, J. (2004). The provider system for children's mental health: Workforce capacity and effective treatment. NHPF Brief, 801. Retrieved on June 13, 2006 from: http://www.nhpf.org/pdfs_ib/IB801_ChildMHPProvider_10-26-04.pdf
- ⁵ *Rural Facts: Rural Mental Health*. (2002). Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities. Retrieved June 13, 2006 from <http://rtc.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/MentalHealth.htm>
- ⁶ Nachbur, J. (2005). New program prepares advanced practice nurses to address mental health provider shortage. University of Vermont. Retrieved on June 5, 2006 from: <http://www.uvm.edu>