

Registered Nurses in Vermont

Summary of Board of Nursing Relicensure Survey March 2007

Prepared by:

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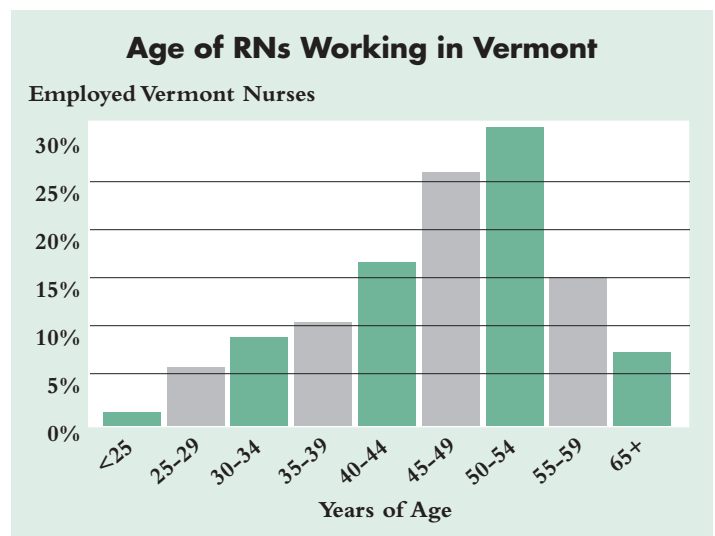
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Background

In order to provide Vermonters with useful information on the status of Vermont's nurse 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 13,321 Vermont registered nurses. The survey was completed in March, 2007 by 5,803 nurses (43% response rate overall, but 51% of active Vermont RNs). This survey was included in relicensure materials and was not mandatory. There are a large number of undeliverable surveys due to incorrect mailing addresses and an increasing number of foreign nurses who apply for Vermont licensure, but never work here after obtaining a license. Of those surveyed, 4,061 reported that they worked as an RN in Vermont. The number of respondents who work in Vermont is very similar to the number reported two years ago. The following describes only registered nurses working in the State of Vermont.

Basic Demographics:

- 94% of RNs are female, 6% are male
- 93% of Vermont RNs are Caucasian
- Age range: 20-88 yrs.
- Mean age: 49 years; 80% are over 40 years old



Nursing Education:

- 18% completed a Diploma program in nursing
- 40% completed an Associate's Degree in nursing
- 34% completed a Bachelor's Degree in nursing
- 4% completed a Master's Degree in nursing
- <1% completed a Doctoral degree

Other Educational Information:

- 28% report other non-nursing degrees
(this is up 4% from 2005)
- 6% are currently enrolled in a nursing education program, 65% report participation in continuing education in past year
- 48% received their basic nursing education in Vermont

Employment (setting of primary position):

- Hospitals employ 50% of VT RNs
- Ambulatory/outpatient and community health centers employ 10%
- Home health agencies employ 9%
- Schools employ 7%
- Long term care facilities employ 7%
- “Other” settings employ 6%
- Independent practice accounts for 3%
- Public health agencies employ 2%
- Mental health centers employ 2%
- Assisted Living employ 2%
- Nursing Education employs 1%
- Correctional facilities employ <1%

Sixty-six (66%) report their major activity is patient care, 13% are managers/administrators, 5% teach nursing, 4% are involved in public health; 2% quality assurance/case review, and 9% “other” activities.

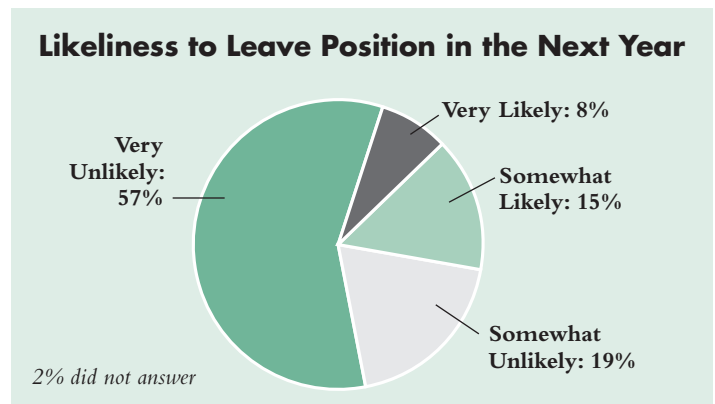
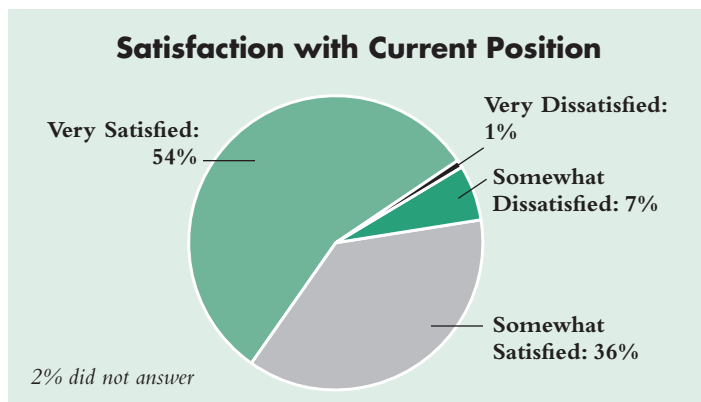
Likelihood to leave primary position:

- 22% indicated that they are “somewhat likely” or “very likely” to leave their primary position in next 12 months.

Top five reasons given for leaving

(more than one reason could be chosen):

- Change positions 57%
- Management 32%
- Job stress 35%
- Salary 24% (down from 31% in 2003 and 26% in 2005)
- Moving 19%
- Retirement 18% (down from 34% in 2003, 2005)



Discussion of These Findings:

The number of nurses who are actually working in Vermont is a much smaller number than those who are licensed in this state during a two-year period. This is due to a large number of foreign nurses who apply to the Vermont Board of Nursing for their initial United States RN license. The additional work of processing these licenses is rarely repaid by additional RNs coming to Vermont.

About half of VT RNs report being educated in Vermont. Incentives to retain nurses who are educated in Vermont are of continuing importance. This is critical for those prepared at the Bachelor’s degree level, who may be more likely to continue their education and become the nursing educators of the future. (Cleary et al, 2007) The number of nurses with graduate degrees remains under 5%, contributing a serious nurse faculty shortage; which has the frustrating effect of not being able to educate all those who have an interest in being a nurse (AACN, 2006).

Although the nurse workforce is aging, a surprising finding from this survey was that fewer are planning to leave their current positions due to retirement (down from 34% in 2003, 2005). This may reflect the larger societal trend of the “Baby Boom” generation wanting to work past the traditional retirement age. It could also mean that some of the state initiatives directed at the older nurse are having an effect. Vermont nurses tend to be satisfied (90%) and the majority of those wanting to leave their positions is simply for a change. Leaving a position because of salary continues to be less common; however, decreasing work stress and improving relations with management may require innovative solutions.

References:

AACN (2006). Student Enrollment Rises in U.S. Nursing Colleges and Universities for the 6th Consecutive Year. Retrieved from <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/06Survey.htm> on September 20, 2007.

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