The 2020 National Nursing Workforce Survey

Richard A. Smiley, MS, MA

Senior Statistician, Research, National Council of State Boards of Nursing

Clark Ruttinger, MPA, MBA

President, The National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers
Director, Utah Nursing Workforce Information Center

Carrie M. Oliveira, PhD

Associate Specialist for Workforce Research, Hawaii Center for Nursing

Laura R. Hudson, MSN, RN

Associate Director - CE/Workforce, Iowa Center for Nursing Workforce

Richard Allgeyer, PhD

Associate Director – Research Director, Oregon Center for Nursing

Kyrani A. Reneau, MA

Data Project Manager, ICPSR at University of Michigan Institute for Social Research

Josephine H. Silvestre, MSN, RN

Senior Associate, Regulatory Innovations, National Council of State Boards of Nursing

Maryann Alexander, PhD, RN, FAAN

Chief Officer, Nursing Regulation, National Council of State Boards of Nursing

CONTENTS

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Background: Every two years, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) and the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers (Forum) conduct the only national-level survey focused on the entire U.S. nursing workforce. The survey generates data on the supply of registered nurses (RNs) and licensed practical nurses/licensed vocational nurses (LPNs/LVNs). These data are especially crucial in providing information on emerging nursing issues which in 2020 was the significant burden placed on nurses and the healthcare system by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. **Purpose:** To provide data critical to planning for enough adequately prepared nurses and ensuring a safe, diverse, and effective healthcare system. **Methods:** This study used a national, randomized sample survey of 157,459 licensed RNs and 172,045 LPNs/LVNs. Data from 42,021 RN respondents and 39,765 LPN/LVN respondents were collected between February 19, 2020, and June 30, 2020. Data included nurse demographics, educational attainment, employment, practice characteristics, and trends. **Results:** The total number of active RN and LPN/LVN licenses in the United States were 4,198,031 and 944,813, respectively. The median age of RNs was 52 years and 53 years for LPNs/LVNs. The nursing workforce has become more diverse than in any other study year as nurses between 19 and 49 years of age have introduced greater racial diversity. Findings suggest the nursing workforce is becoming increasingly more educated and experienced. An average of 83% of all nurses who maintain licensure are employed in nursing with roughly two-thirds working full-time. Hospitals and nursing/extended care facilities continue to be the primary practice setting for RNs and LPNs, respectively. More than one-fifth of all nurses reported they plan to retire from nursing over the next 5 years. Nursing incomes have remained essentially flat over time. **Conclusion:** Employment setting, age, diversity, and education have all changed over the last 2 years. Challenges will continue in the nursing workforce such as matching workforce diversity to the population, compensation, and opportunities; preparing for the large numbers of nurses retiring; exploring the role of nurses in new practice settings; and changes in healthcare delivery modalities such as telehealth.

Keywords: U.S. nursing workforce, nursing demographics, nursing education, nursing licensure, nursing employment, nursing diversity, telehealth.

Executive Summary

Worldwide, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has simultaneously strained healthcare infrastructures and demonstrated the agility and resilience of frontline healthcare professionals. In the United States, significant demand has been placed on the nursing workforce as cases continue to rise (National Council of State Boards of Nursing [NCSBN], 2020a). The collection of nursing data is especially crucial during this time because of the burden on our healthcare delivery systems. Evidence on the supply of nurses can be used to help curb potential shortages, guide recruitment efforts, influence policy decisions, and plan for future healthcare challenges (Fraher et al., 2020).

Since 2013, the NCSBN and the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers (Forum) have collaborated every 2 years to conduct a national sample survey of registered nurses (RNs) and licensed practical nurses/licensed vocational nurses (LPNs/LVNs) in the United States. A team of scientists from both organizations developed and analyzed the data. The purpose of this study is to provide the most accurate data available on the characteristics of the U.S. nursing workforce. This study presents a national, randomized sample survey of 157,459 licensed RNs and 172,045 LPNs/LVNs. Data were collected between February 19, 2020, and June 30, 2020, from 42,021 RN respondents and 39,765 LPN/LVN respondents. Data collected included nurse demographics, educational attainment, employment, practice characteristics, and trends of the U.S. nursing workforce as of 2020. The data are also compared with data from previous Workforce Surveys. The 2020 data provide a portrait of the current state of the nursing workforce in the United States. Healthcare policy makers and leaders in nursing education and practice can use this evidence-based research when making decisions that impact the future of nursing in America.

Selected Survey Results

Size of the Workforce

As of December 31, 2019, the total number of active RN licenses in the United States was 4,948,914, an increase of 309,366 (6.7%), and active LPN/LVN licenses was 996,154 (NCSBN, 2020b), an increase of 20,166 (2.1%), compared to 2017. After adjusting for nurses with multiple licenses, the total number of active RNs in the United States was 4,198,031, an increase of 246,970 (6.3%), and active LPN/LVNs was 944,813 (NCSBN, 2020b), an increase of 24,070 (2.6%), compared to 2017.

Aging of the Workforce

The median age of RNs was 52 years, up from 51 years in 2017. Nurses aged 65 years or older account for 19.0% of the RN workforce, up from 14.6% in 2017 and 4.4% in 2013. They also comprise the largest age category. The median age of LPNs/LVNs was 53 years, up from 52 years in 2017. LPNs/LVNs who are aged 65 years or older account for 18.2% of the workforce. This cohort has grown by 5.0 percentage points since 2017 and by 8.3 percentage points since 2015. The aging of the nurse workforce is expected to continue: In 2020, more than one-fifth of all nurse respondents replied positively when asked if they plan to retire in the next 5 years.

Gender, Race, and Ethnicity

Males accounted for 9.4% of the RN workforce, an increase of 0.3 percentage points since 2017. Additionally, males accounted for 8.1% of all LPNs/LVNs, an increase of 0.4 percentage points since 2017. In 2020, a third gender response option of "other" was added to the survey and was selected by 0.1% of nurses. Nearly 81% of RNs reported being White/Caucasian. RNs who reported being Asian accounted for 7.2% of the workforce, representing the largest non-Caucasian racial group in the RN workforce. Black/African American RNs increased from 6.0 % in 2013 to 6.7 % in 2020 and the proportion of RNs reporting being Hispanic/Latinx also increased from 2017. LPNs/LVNs who reported being Black/African American represent the second largest racial group in the workforce (17.2%) after White/Caucasian (69.5%). LPNs/LVNs who reported being Hispanic/Latinx account for 10.0% of the workforce, an increase of 2.6 percentage points since 2017.

Education

Approximately 42% of nurses in 2020 reported the baccalaureate nursing degree as their first U.S. nursing license, an increase of 5.8 percentage points from 2013. The percentage of respondents who initially earned a diploma or associate degree decreased by 7.5 points. Diploma (almost 50%) and associate degree (17.2%) were associated with RNs who were aged 65 years or older. Increasingly, a baccalaureate degree is more common in younger age groups for initial licensure (13.5% for RNs younger than 30 years and aged 30–34 years), which suggests the RN workforce is becoming increasingly educated at initial licensure. The most common highest level of nursing education is a baccalaureate degree across all groups (65.2% of RNs), which increased by 7.8 percentage points between 2013 and 2020. RNs achieving a doctorate of nursing practice (DNP) as their highest level of nursing education increased by a full percentage point from 0.4% in 2013 to 1.4% in 2020.

In 2020, 81.5% of LPN/LVN respondents reported a vocational/practical certificate for their first nursing license. Interestingly, the proportion of LPNs/LVNs with an associate or baccalaureate degree increased over the years, while the number of those qualifying with a vocational/practical certificate and diploma has decreased. The highest level of nursing education reported by LPNs/LVNs were vocational/practical certificate (72%), diploma (12.2%), associate degree (12.7%), and baccalaureate degree (3.1%).

Licensure

Less than 1% of RNs also held an LPN/LVN license, while 6.6% held an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) credential, which represents the highest proportion of RNs not credentialed as an APRN since 2013, dropping 3.4 percentage points since 2017. RNs responding to the survey were licensed for a median of 20 years. Most RNs (93.9%) reported receiving their entry-level nursing education in the United States and 24% reported holding a multistate license. Of those nurses reporting possession of a multistate license, 33% use that license for physical crossborder practice.

LPN/LVN respondents reported they were licensed for a median of 17 years. In 2020, 21.2% of LPNs/LVNs reported holding a multistate license. Of those LPNs/LVNs reporting possession of a multistate license, 21.9% use that license for physical crossborder practice.

Employment and Salary

The major portion of responding RNs (84.1%) were actively employed in nursing, with 64.9% employed in nursing full time. This represents a 0.5% decrease in the proportion of RNs working full time from 2017 (65.4%). Hospital was the primary nursing practice setting selected by RNs (54.8%), representing a decrease of 0.9 percentage points from 2017. Ambulatory care setting was the second most frequently selected setting by 9.7% of RNs, followed by home health at 4.5% and the nursing home/extended care setting at 4.4%.

Staff nurse was the title that most closely corresponded to the primary nursing position by 60.1% of respondents, up from 58.0% of 2017 respondents. The APRN title decreased from 10.1% in 2017 to 6.3% in 2020. In 2020, 13.4% of RNs reported their primary practice specialty was acute care/critical care, compared to 14.0% in 2017. The second most frequently selected specialty was medical-surgical at 8.5%, down from 8.6% of RN respondents in 2017. When Survey respondents were asked, "In your primary nursing practice position, do you spend the majority of your time providing direct patient care?" More than two-thirds, (68.6%) of RNs and 77.8% of LPNs/LVNs responded "yes".

The median pretax annual earnings for responding RNs increased from $60,000 in 2015 to $70,000 in 2020, constituting 3.3% growth in earnings during the 5-year period. Categorically, the percentage of respondents earning less than $40,000 annually decreased by 0.4 percentage points, the percentage making between $40,000 and $60,000 decreased by 3.9 percentage points. Since 2015, median earnings have risen in all states.

Among responding LPNs/LVNs, 65.7% reported being actively employed in nursing full time, which is consistent with the 2017 survey (65.0%). The most notable increase was among those who selected retired, which increased from 8.7% in 2017 to 11.3% in 2020.

The median pretax annual earnings for responding LPNs/LVNs increased from $38,000 in 2015 to $40,000 in 2017 and $44,000 in 2020. This constitutes a 3.2% simple annual growth in earnings during the 5-year period (0.1% lower than the growth in reported RN incomes during the same period). The largest increase has been in the $60,000 to $80,000 category, which has increased by 8.4 percentage points since 2015.

Telehealth Utilization

Telehealth utilization by nurses has remained relatively unchanged since 2017, with approximately 50% of RNs and LPNs/LVNs responding that they use telehealth technologies when providing nursing services. Considering that this survey was collected when healthcare delivery systems were transitioning to more telehealth due to the pandemic, it is expected that there will be a future trend toward an increase in time spent by nurses utilizing telehealth.

Conclusion

The nursing workforce in 2020 was more demographically diverse and representative of the country's population than in any other year in which this study was conducted. Although these data indicate that persons of color are still not adequately represented in the RN workforce, as younger nurses have entered the workforce, they have introduced greater racial diversity.

The proportion of nurses reporting a plan to retire from nursing over the next 5 years is on the rise, so the U.S. healthcare system needs to be prepared for large numbers of nurses leaving the profession in the near future. This may be even more critical as we face the COVID-19 pandemic, which may accelerate the retirement rate given that persons older than 60 years are at increased risk for severe symptoms from COVID-19.

The proportion of RNs holding a baccalaureate degree increased for those reporting their highest level of nursing education but remained steady for those reporting the degree held when obtaining their first nursing license. The proportion of RNs holding an associate degree when first licensed increased slightly in 2020. The proportion of LPNs/LVNs earning an associate or baccalaureate degree also increased, while those with a practical/vocational certificate or nursing diploma declined. The proportion of nurses with 10 or fewer years practicing declined according to survey respondents, while the proportion of those with between 11 and 30 years of experience grew in 2020. Evidence here suggests both RNs and LPNs/LVNs are more educated and more experienced now than in previous years.

Nursing incomes have remained essentially flat over time, with increases that just barely beat out inflation. Of concern are greater-than-average drops in reported median income in specialties related to women and maternal-child health.

While telehealth has become a major focus of healthcare delivery during the pandemic, it does not seem that there have been major changes to how nurses use telehealth, which may be due to the timing of this survey. It is anticipated that the use of telehealth will change a great deal in the future as our care delivery systems learn how best to utilize nursing services in this new normal.

Over the next few years, new challenges will continue as the nursing workforce undergoes significant changes and healthcare delivery systems adjust to the pandemic. Ongoing monitoring of nursing data will be more important than ever. Ultimately, nursing will continue pursuing the goals of achieving higher levels of education, promoting diversity, and improving data collection regarding the national healthcare workforce.

Introduction

For the fourth time, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) and the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers (Forum) have collaborated on the biennial national survey of registered nurses (RNs) and licensed practical nurses/licensed vocational nurses (LPNs/LVNs). The purpose of this study is to collect information on the supply of RNs and LPNs/LVNs in the United States. This study presents a national, randomized sample survey of 157,459 licensed RNs and 172,045 LPNs/LVNs. Data were collected between February 19, 2020, and June 30, 2020, from 42,021 RN respondents and 39,765 LPN/LVN respondents. Data collected included details about nurses' demographics, educational attainment, employment, practice characteristics, and trends of the U.S. nursing workforce as of 2020. To illustrate supply trends, study results were compared to national nursing workforce studies from previous years as well as national studies from other entities that utilize different collection methods than the one described below. This consideration should be kept in mind when interpreting the comparison of statistics from various nursing workforce studies.

Methods

Sample

All RNs and LPNs/LVNs with an active license in the United States and its territories were eligible to be survey participants. A portion of the sample was drawn from Nursys, NCSBN's licensure database. This database contains basic demographic and licensure information for RN and LPN/LVN licensees. Licensee lists and addresses were also obtained directly from the following boards of nursing (BONs): California (LPN/LVN), Hawaii, Indiana, Louisiana (LPN), Nevada, New Hampshire, Utah, and Wisconsin. For New York and Michigan, licensee lists and addresses were purchased from Exact Data. American Samoa and Virgin Islands chose not to participate in this survey.

As of December 31, 2019, the total number of active RN licenses in the United States was 4,948,914 and the total number of active LPN/LVN licenses was 996,154 (NCSBN, 2020b). Note that the numbers for Michigan reflect data from July 2017. Separate RN and LPN/LVN samples stratified by state were randomly selected from the RN licensees and LPN/LVN licensees. Surveys were mailed to 157,459 RNs and 172,045 LPNs/LVNs. Table 1 and Table 2 present the sampling by jurisdiction/state. Each jurisdiction is listed with the actual number of active licenses at the time of sampling and the number of surveys that needed to be received from each jurisdiction in order to construct a 95% confidence of plus or minus 3% error. Regardless of jurisdiction size, this calculated to be approximately 1,000 nurses for most states and less for the jurisdictions of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, respectively. To calculate the number of surveys that needed to be mailed out to reach the targeted survey response, response rates for online and paper surveys from the previous 2017 survey administration were used as estimates. For example, for Alaska in 2017 there was a 36.7% response rate for the RN survey. Given this estimated response rate, 2,728 RNs in Alaska were selected to be survey recipients in order to receive the target of 1,000 surveys. Actual response from Alaska RNs to the current survey (i.e., the number of responses returned) was 773, a response rate of 29.1%.

TABLE 1

RN Sampling: Number of Active RN Licenses

Jurisdiction	Number of Active RN Licenses	Target sample	Estimated total response rate	Number of surveys mailed	Undeliverable	Number Delivered	Number of Responses	Total Response Rate
AK	15,487	1,000	36.7%	2,728	69	2,659	773	29.1%
AL	85,746	1,000	27.2%	3,673	30	3,643	952	26.1%
AR	42,487	1,000	28.5%	3,504	298	3,206	761	23.7%
AZ	93,928	1,000	32.4%	3,087	414	2,673	561	21.0%
CA	444,964	1,000	31.5%	3,177	48	3,129	811	25.9%
CO	77,705	1,000	36.6%	2,734	168	2,566	682	26.6%
CT	67,924	1,000	32.9%	3,041	27	3,014	820	27.2%
DC	27,575	1,000	28.3%	3,532	92	3,440	809	23.5%
DE	18,674	1,000	31.8%	3,145	12	3,133	947	30.2%
FL	316,557	1,000	26.1%	3,832	87	3,745	865	23.1%
GA	132,922	1,000	29.8%	3,356	71	3,285	800	24.4%
HI	24,652	1,000	32.8%	3,050	34	3,016	925	30.7%
IA	55,355	1,000	38.4%	2,606	30	2,576	809	31.4%
ID	22,912	1,000	39.6%	2,523	26	2,497	894	35.8%
IL	207,001	1,000	32.3%	3,099	68	3,031	790	26.1%
IN	116,264	1,000	33.5%	2,988	30	2,958	951	32.2%

(continued)

RN Sampling: Number of Active RN Licenses *(continued)*

Jurisdiction	Number of Active RN Licenses	Target sample	Estimated total response rate	Number of surveys mailed	Undeliverable	Number Delivered	Number of Responses	Total Response Rate
KS	58,781	1,000	34.1%	2,930	23	2,907	911	31.3%
KY	71,603	1,000	29.7%	3,371	13	3,358	873	26.0%
LA	69,699	1,000	30.1%	3,319	124	3,195	601	18.8%
MA	138,481	1,000	32.2%	3,107	41	3,066	817	26.6%
MD	82,686	1,000	33.3%	3,000	60	2,940	762	25.9%
ME	25,807	1,000	38.6%	2,592	29	2,563	838	32.7%
MI	149,864	1,000	39.1%	2,558	40	2,518	865	34.4%
MN	115,068	1,000	40.0%	2,500	25	2,475	806	32.6%
MO	113,032	1,000	30.0%	3,333	50	3,283	1,094	33.3%
MS	50,103	1,000	26.5%	3,773	61	3,712	801	21.6%
MT	18,391	1,000	46.3%	2,161	50	2,111	843	39.9%
NC	139,452	1,000	32.2%	3,109	46	3,063	789	25.8%
ND	16,046	1,000	43.7%	2,289	34	2,255	836	37.1%
NE	31,000	1,000	36.7%	2,725	31	2,694	905	33.6%
NH	24,217	1,000	35.4%	2,823	184	2,639	411	15.6%
NJ	133,029	1,000	31.9%	3,134	97	3,037	568	18.7%
NM	28,715	1,000	35.0%	2,861	89	2,772	825	29.8%
NV	45,254	1,000	31.9%	3,138	100	3,038	727	23.9%
NY	358,901	1,000	26.1%	3,832	94	3,738	737	19.7%
OH	211,769	1,000	32.4%	3,085	15	3,070	890	29.0%
OK	51,110	1,000	27.8%	3,595	57	3,538	978	27.6%
OR	65,333	1,000	39.8%	2,510	32	2,478	716	28.9%
PA	225,852	1,000	35.6%	2,807	36	2,771	836	30.2%
RI	25,014	1,000	33.7%	2,970	73	2,897	803	27.7%
SC	71,392	1,000	29.7%	3,368	84	3,284	817	24.9%
SD	18,473	1,000	40.5%	2,471	28	2,443	825	33.8%
TN	104,780	1,000	27.5%	3,633	52	3,581	881	24.6%
TX	336,520	1,000	24.4%	4,106	66	4,040	879	21.8%
UT	35,931	1,000	25.2%	3,976	91	3,885	1,126	29.0%
VA	107,495	1,000	31.4%	3,185	44	3,141	835	26.6%
VT	16,991	1,000	37.5%	2,668	29	2,639	781	29.6%
WA	105,526	1,000	39.3%	2,548	146	2,402	772	32.1%
WI	105,898	1,000	46.0%	2,174	117	2,057	721	35.1%
WV	31,473	1,000	26.7%	3,751	26	3,725	944	25.3%
WY	9,213	1,000	42.3%	2,365	53	2,312	795	34.4%
Guam	1,528	175	23.1%	758	50	708	158	22.3%
Northern Mariana Islands	4,334	164	19.0%	861	72	789	105	13.3%
TOTAL	4,948,914	51,339	32.6%	157,459	3,764	153,695	42,021	27.3%

Note. RN = registered nurse.

TABLE 2

LPN/LVN Sampling: Number of Active LPN/LVN Licenses

Jurisdiction	Number of Active LPN/LVN Licenses	Estimated sample: 95% confidence, 3% error	Estimated total response rate	Number of surveys mailed	Undeliverable	Number Delivered	Number of Responses	Total Response Rate
AK	845	174	24.8%	701	50	651	143	22.0%
AL	18,627	1,000	27.3%	3,660	82	3,578	867	24.2%
AR	14,595	1,000	25.2%	3,961	370	3,591	807	22.5%
AZ	10,506	1,000	26.5%	3,770	651	3,119	527	16.9%
CA	102,851	1,000	23.5%	4,251	142	4,109	779	19.0%
CO	8,423	1,000	30.7%	3,252	276	2,976	628	21.1%
CT	12,757	1,000	21.6%	4,638	98	4,540	946	20.8%
DC	1,957	287	19.9%	1,442	71	1,371	209	15.2%
DE	3,040	703	23.3%	3,015	166	2,849	576	20.2%
FL	61,624	1,000	19.9%	5,023	146	4,877	1,039	21.3%
GA	29,861	1,000	22.6%	4,424	97	4,327	944	21.8%
HI	1,836	587	29.9%	1,961	39	1,922	629	32.7%
IA	9,832	1,000	31.7%	3,158	70	3,088	905	29.3%
ID	3,626	1,000	31.4%	3,183	83	3,100	969	31.3%
IL	26,204	1,000	27.2%	3,670	84	3,586	770	21.5%
IN	24,356	1,000	25.0%	3,996	103	3,893	1,047	26.9%
KS	10,403	1,000	28.6%	3,499	77	3,422	975	28.5%
KY	13,269	1,000	24.4%	4,104	40	4,064	924	22.7%
LA	22,711	1,000	19.4%	5,156	49	5,107	1,051	20.6%
MA	19,721	1,000	23.6%	4,237	52	4,185	912	21.8%
MD	11,699	1,000	23.6%	4,242	143	4,099	824	20.1%
ME	1,994	687	36.0%	1,908	59	1,849	541	29.3%
MI	24,237	1,000	30.8%	3,251	74	3,177	878	27.6%
MN	21,017	1,000	40.2%	2,489	33	2,456	732	29.8%
MO	24,737	1,000	23.3%	4,298	137	4,161	1,222	29.4%
MS	14,333	1,000	23.0%	4,348	114	4,234	1,071	25.3%
MT	2,636	709	43.5%	1,629	52	1,577	595	37.7%
NC	22,543	1,000	30.3%	3,301	76	3,225	808	25.1%
ND	3,584	938	41.2%	2,276	59	2,217	771	34.8%
NE	5,479	1,000	35.7%	2,800	15	2,785	900	32.3%
NH	3,157	277	26.6%	1,041	91	950	151	15.9%
NJ	23,886	1,000	23.3%	4,300	110	4,190	791	18.9%
NM	2,609	733	29.5%	2,487	150	2,337	520	22.3%
NV	4,256	1,000	26.7%	3,742	213	3,529	773	21.9%
NY	82,302	1,000	19.5%	5,121	93	5,028	1,190	23.7%
OH	54,194	1,000	29.3%	3,411	90	3,321	763	23.0%
OK	16,382	1,000	21.4%	4,663	96	4,567	1,030	22.6%
OR	5,801	1,000	29.7%	3,369	112	3,257	798	24.5%
PA	53,891	1,000	30.6%	3,273	55	3,218	879	27.3%
RI	2,286	608	27.0%	2,252	85	2,167	460	21.2%
SC	12,131	1,000	24.8%	4,028	111	3,917	942	24.0%
SD	2,634	896	35.9%	2,498	61	2,437	745	30.6%
TN	30,297	1,000	23.3%	4,293	72	4,221	936	22.2%
TX	107,368	1,000	21.2%	4,718	124	4,594	862	18.8%

(continued)

LPN/LVN Sampling: Number of Active LPN/LVN Licenses *(continued)*

Jurisdiction	Number of Active LPN/LVN Licenses	Estimated sample: 95% confidence, 3% error	Estimated total response rate	Number of surveys mailed	Undeliverable	Number Delivered	Number of Responses	Total Response Rate
UT	2,806	581	21.1%	2,758	91	2,667	652	24.4%
VA	27,383	1,000	22.8%	4,379	110	4,269	848	19.9%
VT	2,533	625	26.0%	2,400	199	2,201	498	22.6%
WA	11,434	1,000	28.8%	3,476	271	3,205	864	27.0%
WI	12,435	1,000	39.7%	2,516	51	2,465	888	36.0%
WV	7,815	1,000	21.9%	4,575	77	4,498	899	20.0%
WY	964	316	33.8%	935	47	888	254	28.6%
Guam	235	23	18.1%	127	5	122	23	18.9%
Northern Mariana Islands	52	8	20.5%	39	5	34	10	29.4%
TOTAL	996,154	45,152	28.0%	172,045	5,828	166,217	39,765	23.9%

Note. LPN/LVN = licensed practical nurse/licensed vocational nurse.

Survey Instrument and Materials

The survey instrument is based on the Forum's Nurse Supply Minimum Data Set (MDS), which was approved in 2009 after an intensive process of consensus-building and data compilation on the nursing workforce at the state level. The Nurse Supply MDS was last updated by the Forum in 2016 to account for the transformations that occurred in healthcare and nursing during the past decade (Forum, 2016). Additionally, the 2020 survey instrument includes three new questions regarding the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC; Appendix A). The survey was a four-page Scantron document with 38 questions. Data elements from the latest revision of the Nurse Supply MDS were incorporated, resulting in the following changes to the survey between the 2017 and 2020 waves of data collection:

- A "Middle Eastern/North African" category was added as a race response option and "other" was added as a gender response option
- Respondents were asked specifically about where they received their entry-level nursing education and where they received their initial license
- A question about plans to leave nursing was added
- A question about whether the nurse provided direct patient care was added
- Questions about the NLC were added.

Procedure

The Western Institutional Review Board granted approval for the current study. A unique identification number was generated and assigned to each sampled participant. The identification number was only to be used to record that the survey had been returned. This helped prevent unnecessary and expensive duplicate mailings to those selected to participate in the study. The unique access code identifier was also used for the online survey option. Once materials were developed and the sampling file was complete, surveys were distributed over a 20-week period starting the week of February 17, 2020, that included the following steps:

- Weeks 1-2: A cover letter and paper survey were mailed via first-class U.S. mail to all nurses selected to participate. The letter included a URL and access code to take the survey online.
- Week 6: For nurses who had not responded, a cover letter, paper survey, and pre-paid reply envelope were mailed via first class U.S. mail.
- Week 10: For nurses who still had not responded, an additional cover letter, paper survey, and pre-paid reply envelope were mailed via first-class U.S. mail.
- Week 20: Deadline for receipt of all surveys. Once the survey was closed, the final data file was compiled separately for RNs and LPNs/LVNs.

Survey response data are kept on department-secured servers. NCSBN's research staff, three key members of the Forum, and key personnel at Scantron had initial access to the identifiable data. Scantron no longer has access to the identifiable data.

The functioning of the survey was impacted by COVID-19. Details of the impact are presented in Appendix B.

Analysis

At the close of the survey, 42,021 of 153,695 successfully delivered RN surveys were returned, yielding a response rate of 27.3%. There were 39,765 of 166,217 successfully delivered LPN/LVN surveys returned, resulting in a 23.9% response rate. A formal nonresponse bias analysis was conducted immediately following the close of the survey. An analysis of basic demographic data (i.e., gender, age, and race/ethnicity) for all RN licensees sampled from the Nursys database was used to compare survey respondents to survey nonrespondents. Results revealed White/Caucasian nurses, female nurses, and nurses aged 50 years or older may have been slightly overrepresented in both the RN and LPN/LVN samples. Because of missing or incomplete data on race/ethnicity, only gender and age were used to make nonresponse weighting adjustments. Additionally, since sampling was stratified by state, to prevent smaller states from being overrepresented in the overall analysis, a weighting variable was constructed to adjust for differing nursing population sizes across states. A description of this process can be found in Appendix C.

For an accurate and comprehensive view of the statistics drawn from the sample, the number of actual valid answers to each question is reported for every table. Missing data were not imputed; hence, the presented statistics represent the actual responses from participants who responded to each respective survey item. If a participant did not respond to a certain item, they were not part of the analysis for that item. Additionally, some tables display data for all responding nurse licensees while other tables display data for employed nurses. If a table is specific to nurses employed in nursing, it is explicitly stated. Many tables include bar graphs to help you easily visualize and comprehend the data presented.

Population Estimate

For each question on the survey, frequencies are shown that reflect the nonresponse weighting adjustments. For some of the questions, an additional set of frequencies are shown that display the data scaled up to reflect estimates of the nursing population in the subgroup identified. For example, the 391,141 males reported in the 2020 column of Table 3 reflect the number of male respondents adjusted to the population level of the number of RNs after the nonresponse weighting adjustments were made to the survey results, and after adjusting the population number to account for nurses having licenses in multiple states.

The adjustments for multiple licenses were derived from data in the Nursys database in December 2019. At that time, the database contained 4,948,914 RN licenses, which corresponded to 4,198,031 unique RNs. The number of RN survey responses was 42,021. This produced an RN population adjustment factor of 4,198,031/42,021 = 99.90, which was multiplied by sample counts to produce population estimates.

For LPNs/LVNs, the December 2019 database contained 996,154 licenses, which corresponded to 944,813 unique LPNs/LVNs. The number of LPN/LVN survey responses was 39,765. This produced an LPN/LVN population adjustment factor of 944,813/39,765 = 23.76, which was multiplied by sample counts to produce population estimates.

Registered Nurse Results

Gender

Males accounted for 9.4% of the RN workforce, which is an increase of 0.3 percentage points from 2017 and 2.8 percentage points from 2013. In 2020, respondents were able to select "other" in response to the gender question on the survey, and it was selected by 0.1% of nurses (Table 3).

TABLE 3

Gender Distribution of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020

Weighted Sample Values								
Gender	2013 (n = 40,364.5)		2015 (n = 43,330.9)		2017 (n = 48,084.9)		2020 (n = 41,698.8)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Male	2,678.9	6.6	3,459.6	8.0	4,369.3	9.1	3,915.2	9.4
Female	37,685.6	93.4	39,871.4	92.0	43,715.5	90.9	37,739.9	90.5
Other							43.6	0.1

Estimated Population Values								
Gender	2013		2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Male	221,416	6.6	277,542	8.0	354,453	9.1	391,141	9.4
Female	3,114,767	93.4	3,198,650	92.0	3,546,321	90.9	3,770,336	90.5
Other							4,356	0.1

Note. "Other" was added as a response option with the 2020 survey.

Age

The median age of RNs was 52 years. Although the median age of the workforce has remained approximately the same since 2013, the age distribution of the workforce has changed substantially. Nurses who are aged 65 years or older account for 19% of the RN workforce and comprise the largest age category. The proportion of nurses aged 65 years or older increased by 5.1 percentage points from 2013 and by 4.4 percentage points from 2017 (Table 4 and Figure 1).

TABLE 4

Age Distribution of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020

Weighted Sample Values								
Age in Years	2013 (n = 34,793.9)		2015 (n = 41,258.6)		2017 (n = 47,527.3)		2020 (n = 39.899.2)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
18–29	2,997.9	8.6	3,905.2	9.5	4,594.5	9.7	3,349.5	8.4
30–34	2,615.4	7.5	4,098.0	9.9	4,762.8	10.0	3,792.0	9.5
35–39	2,784.0	8.0	3,928.1	9.5	4,390.6	9.2	4,006.2	10.0
40–44	3,088.6	8.9	4,200.7	10.2	4,356.7	9.2	3,645.9	9.1
45–49	3,379.3	9.7	4,398.2	10.7	5,250.7	11.1	3,956.5	9.9
50–54	4,652.6	13.4	4,724.8	11.5	4,914.9	10.3	4,191.6	10.5
55–59	5,887.7	16.9	5,622.4	13.6	5,834.4	12.3	4,502.0	11.3
60–64	4,570.1	13.1	5,254.9	12.7	6,489.8	13.7	4,884.2	12.2
≥ 65	4,818.4	13.9	5,126.3	12.4	6,932.9	14.6	7,571.3	19.0

Estimated Population Values								
Age in Years	2013		2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
18–29	247,778	8.6	313,291	9.5	372,716	9.7	334,626	8.4
30–34	216,164	7.5	328,759	9.9	386,374	10.0	378,833	9.5
35–39	230,098	8.0	315,127	9.5	356,175	9.2	400,232	10.0
40–44	255,281	8.9	337,000	10.2	353,430	9.2	364,237	9.1
45–49	279,305	9.7	352,843	10.7	425,953	11.1	395,267	9.9

(continued)

Estimated Population Values								
Age in Years	2013		2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
50–54	384,543	13.4	379,041	11.5	398,712	10.3	418,754	10.5
55–59	486,625	16.9	451,051	13.6	473,303	12.3	449,764	11.3
60–64	377,724	13.1	421,574	12.7	526,468	13.7	487,947	12.2
≥ 65	398,247	13.9	411,256	12.4	562,414	14.6	756,397	19.0

FIGURE 1

Age Distribution of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020
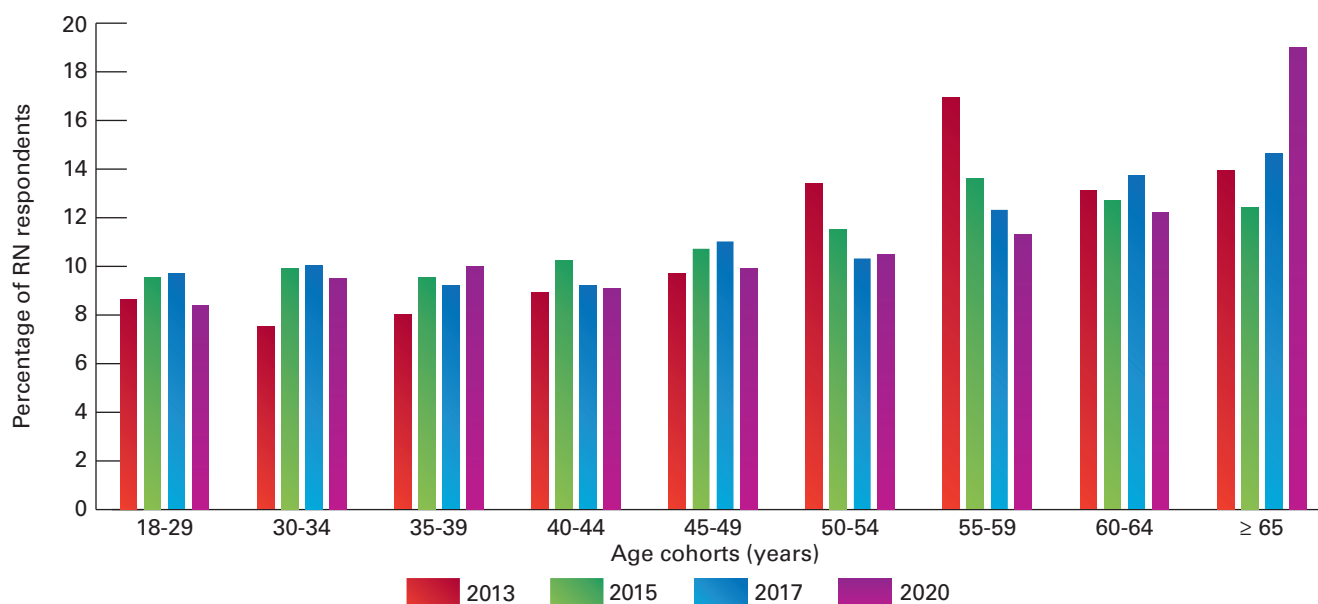
Age by Gender

The proportion of female RNs in the 65 years or older cohort is almost double of total male RNs, while almost half of male RNs are in 35 to 54 aged cohort (Table 5).

TABLE 5

Age Distribution of Registered Nurses by Gender, 2020

Weighted Sample Values								
Age in Years	Male (n =3,690.6)		Female (n = 36,004.7)		Other (n = 36.4)		Total (n = 39,731.7)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
19–29	316.2	8.6	3,021.2	8.4	5.9	16.3	3,343.3	8.4
30–34	353.1	9.6	3,429.4	9.5	7.6	20.8	3,790.1	9.5
35–39	483.3	13.1	3,511.4	9.8	7.3	19.9	4,002.0	10.1
40–44	431.6	11.7	3,207.3	8.9	1.4	3.8	3,640.3	9.2
45–49	449.2	12.2	3,480.5	9.7	8.4	23.2	3,938.1	9.9
50–54	479.8	13.0	3,690.3	10.3	0.0	0.0	4,170.1	10.5
55–59	393.0	10.7	4,088.7	11.4	0.0	0.0	4,481.7	11.3
60–64	355.2	9.6	4,502.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	4,857.7	12.2
≥ 65	429.1	11.6	7,073.4	19.7	5.8	18.9	7,508.4	18.9

Race/Ethnicity

The racial composition of the RN workforce in 2020 is nearly identical to that in 2017. Nearly 81% of nurses reported being White/ Caucasian.

Nurses who reported being Asian accounted for 7.2% of the workforce. Although this is a slight decrease (0.3 percentage points) from 2017, nurses who reported being Asian represent the largest non-White/Caucasian racial group in the workforce. The proportion of RNs who reported being Black/African American accounted for 6.7% of the workforce, which is an increase of 0.5 percentage points from 2017 (Table 6).

TABLE 6

Race of Registered Nurses, 2017–2020

Weighted Sample Values				
Race	2017 (n = 47,966.3)		2020 (n = 41,702.0)	
	n	%	*n*	%
American Indian or Alaska Native	176.0	0.4	194.1	0.5
Asian	3,605.6	7.5	2,996.3	7.2
Black/African American	2,995.9	6.2	2,800.7	6.7
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	226.3	0.5	175.9	0.4
Middle Eastern/North African			89.4	0.2
White/Caucasian	38,766.1	80.8	33,595.1	80.6
Other	1,367.8	2.9	967.7	2.3
More than one race category selected	828.5	1.7	882.8	2.1

Estimated Population Values				
Race	2017		2020	
	n	%	*n*	%
American Indian or Alaska Native	14,276	0.4	19,391	0.5
Asian	292,497	7.5	299,340	7.2
Black/African American	243,032	6.2	279,799	6.7
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	18,362	0.5	17,573	0.4
Middle Eastern/North African			8,931	0.2
White/Caucasian	3,144,812	80.8	3,356,257	80.6
Other	110,960	2.9	96,676	2.3
More than one race category selected	67,214	1.7	88,195	2.1

Note. Respondents were asked to select all that apply. The responses were subsequently recoded to ensure that the race categories were mutually exclusive. Respondents selecting multiple race categories were reclassified into the "More than one race category selected" category. For the 2020 survey, "Middle Eastern/North African" was added as a response category.

Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity

The proportion of RNs reporting being Hispanic/Latinx was 5.6%, which is an increase of 0.3 percentage points compared to 2017 (Table 7).

TABLE 7

Hispanic or Latinx Ethnicity of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020

Weighted Sample Values								
Hispanic or Latinx	2013 (n = 41,876.0)		2015 (n = 45,989.3)		2017 (n = 47,852.6)		2020 (n = 41,483.3)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Yes	1,406.6	3.4	1,654.0	3.6	2,528.1	5.3	2,335.9	5.6
No	40,469.5	96.6	44,335.3	96.4	45,324.5	94.7	39,147.4	94.4

Estimated Population Values								
Hispanic or Latinx	2013		2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Yes	116,257	3.4	136,707	3.6	205,088	5.3	233,364	5.6
No	3,344,857	96.6	3,556,764	96.4	3,676,844	94.7	3,910,949	94.4

Note. In the 2013 and 2015 surveys, the Hispanic/Latino origin and race categories were combined into one question. The categories were separated for the 2017 and 2020 surveys.

Race/Ethnicity by Gender

Although male nurses account for only 9.4% of the RN workforce, male nurses account for a **disproportionately** high proportion of all non-White/Caucasian racial groups: male nurses account for 13.6% of all multiracial nurses and 34.3% of nurses identifying as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders (Table 8).

TABLE 8

Race of Registered Nurses by Gender, 2020

Weighted Sample Values							
Race	***n***	**Male**		**Female**		**Other**	
		n	**%**	***n***	**%**	***n***	**%**
American Indian or Alaska Native	189.5	13.6	7.2	175.9	92.8	0.0	0.0
Asian	2,985.5	470.0	15.7	2,514.3	84.2	1.2	0.0
Black/African American	2,785.1	306.0	11.0	2,477.1	88.9	1.9	0.1
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	175.9	60.4	34.3	115.5	65.7	0.0	0.0
Middle Eastern/North African	88.3	16.9	19.1	71.4	80.9	0.0	0.0
White/Caucasian	33,478.9	2,779.0	8.3	30,672.6	91.6	27.4	0.1
Other	962.2	125.5	13.0	824.9	85.7	11.8	1.2
More than one race category selected	872.5	118.8	13.6	752.5	86.2	1.3	0.2
Total	41,538.0	3,890.2	9.4	37,604.1	90.5	43.6	0.1

Note. Respondents were asked to select all that apply. The responses were subsequently recoded to ensure that the race categories were mutually exclusive. Respondents selecting multiple race categories were reclassified into the "More than one race category selected" category. For the 2020 survey, "Middle Eastern/North African" was added as a response category.

Race by Age

Although younger nurses are generally more racially diverse than older nurses, the youngest RNs (aged 19 to 29 years) are notably less diverse than RNs aged between 30 and 49 years. As compared to the next oldest cohort of nurses (aged 30 to 34 years), the youngest nurses are less likely to be Asian, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or multiracial. The proportion of nurses ages 19-29 years who identify as White/Caucasian (84.1%) is higher than the proportion of White/Caucasian nurses in any other cohort younger than 60 years (mean = 75.1%, highest = 76.8%) and higher than the proportion of White/Caucasian nurses in the RN workforce as a whole (80.7%) (Table 9).

TABLE 9

Race Distribution of Registered Nurses by Age, 2020

Weighted Sample Values									
Age in Years	**n**	***n* (%)**							
		American Indian or Alaska Native	**Asian**	**Black/African American**	**Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander**	**Middle Eastern/North African**	**White/Caucasian**	**Other**	**More Than One Race**
19–29	3,334.0	12.7 (0.4)	204.8 (6.1)	143.0 (4.3)	7.9 (0.2)	5.4 (0.2)	2,804.5 (84.1)	51.9 (1.6)	103.6 (3.1)
30–34	3,787.0	12.4 (0.3)	397.6 (10.5)	205.2 (5.4)	21.6 (0.6)	9.8 (0.3)	2,908.6 (76.8)	103.4 (2.7)	128.4 (3.4)
35–39	3,990.7	22.2 (0.6)	315.5 (7.9)	281.7 (7.1)	44.2 (1.1)	9.3 (0.2)	3,054.7 (76.6)	128.9 (3.2)	134.1 (3.4)
40–44	3,641.3	21.0 (0.6)	328.5 (9.0)	317.8 (8.7)	10.4 (0.3)	14.4 (0.4)	2,781.3 (76.4)	75.7 (2.1)	92.2 (2.5)
45–49	3,939.3	19.8 (0.5)	547.9 (13.9)	342.2 (8.7)	24.5 (0.6)	12.8 (0.3)	2,782.4 (70.6)	142.4 (3.6)	67.4 (1.7)
50–54	4,171.1	26.6 (0.6)	347.7 (8.3)	323.9 (7.8)	23.2 (0.6)	6.4 (0.2)	3,245.2 (77.8)	96.4 (2.3)	101.6 (2.4)
55–59	4,491.4	22.2 (0.5)	195.3 (4.4)	314.2 (7.0)	10.9 (0.2)	11.8 (0.3)	3,772.3 (84.0)	96.5 (2.2)	68.1 (1.5)
60–64	4,849.0	20.0 (0.4)	255.6 (5.3)	283.1 (5.8)	24.5 (0.5)	7.7 (0.2)	4,113.4 (84.8)	76.3 (1.6)	68.4 (1.4)
≥ 65	7,542.5	28.8 (0.4)	275.7 (3.7)	434.8 (5.8)	6.2 (0.1)	7.2 (0.1)	6,606.3 (87.6)	116.3 (1.5)	67.3 (0.9)
Total	39,746.2	185.8 (0.5)	2,868.6 (7.2)	2,646.0 (6.7)	173.5 (0.4)	84.9 (0.2)	32,068.5 (80.7)	887.8 (2.2)	831.2 (2.1)

Note. Respondents were asked to select all that apply. The responses were subsequently recoded to ensure that the race categories were mutually exclusive. Respondents selecting multiple race categories were reclassified into the "More than one race category selected" category. For the 2020 survey, "Middle Eastern/North African" was added as a response category.

Education

Type of Nursing Degree or Credential for First U.S. Nursing License

The percentage of nurses reporting the baccalaureate as the nursing degree that qualified them for their first U.S. nursing license increased by 5.8 percentage points between 2013 and 2020, although this rate remained unchanged from 2017. The percent of respondents who initially earned a diploma or associate degree decreased by 7.5 points during the same period (Table 10 and Figure 2).

TABLE 10

Type of Nursing Degree or Credential of Registered Nurses for First U.S. Nursing License, 2013–2020

Weighted Sample Values								
Nursing Degree or Credential	2013 (*n* = 41,747.9)		2015 (*n* = 45,758.5)		2017 (*n* = 47,650.0)		2020 (*n* = 41,383.6)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Vocational/practical certificate	1,993.8	4.8	2,442.1	5.3	2,850.6	6.0	2,382.8	5.8
Diploma	7,364.6	17.6	6,539.3	14.3	5,708.1	12.0	4,581.2	11.1
Associate degree	16,152.0	38.7	17,625.9	38.5	17,332.5	36.4	15,611.5	37.7
Baccalaureate degree	15,019.5	36.0	17,853.4	39.0	19,922.7	41.8	17,313.6	41.8
Master's degree	1,218.0	2.9	1,297.9	2.8	1,836.0	3.9	1,494.5	3.6

Estimated Population Values								
Nursing Degree or Credential	2013		2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Vocational/practical certificate	164,793	4.8	195,916	5.3	231,247	6.0	238,049	5.8
Diploma	608,692	17.6	524,607	14.3	463,060	12.0	457,676	11.1
Associate degree	1,334,987	38.7	1,414,020	38.5	1,406,062	36.4	1,559,638	37.7
Baccalaureate degree	1,241,379	36.0	1,432,271	39.0	1,616,186	41.8	1,729,683	41.8
Master's degree	100,673	2.9	104,121	2.8	148,942	3.9	149,305	3.6

FIGURE 2

Type of Nursing Degree or Credential of Registered Nurses for First U.S. Nursing License

Type of Nursing Degree or Credential for First U.S. Nursing License by Age

Two degrees are associated with older RNs: diploma (almost 50% are aged 65 years or older) and associate degree (17.2% are aged 65 years or older). A baccalaureate degree is increasingly more common in younger age groups as the education qualifier for initial licensure (13.5% are younger than 30 years; and 13.5% are aged 30 to 34 years). This suggests the workforce is becoming increasingly educated at initial licensure (Table 11).

TABLE 11

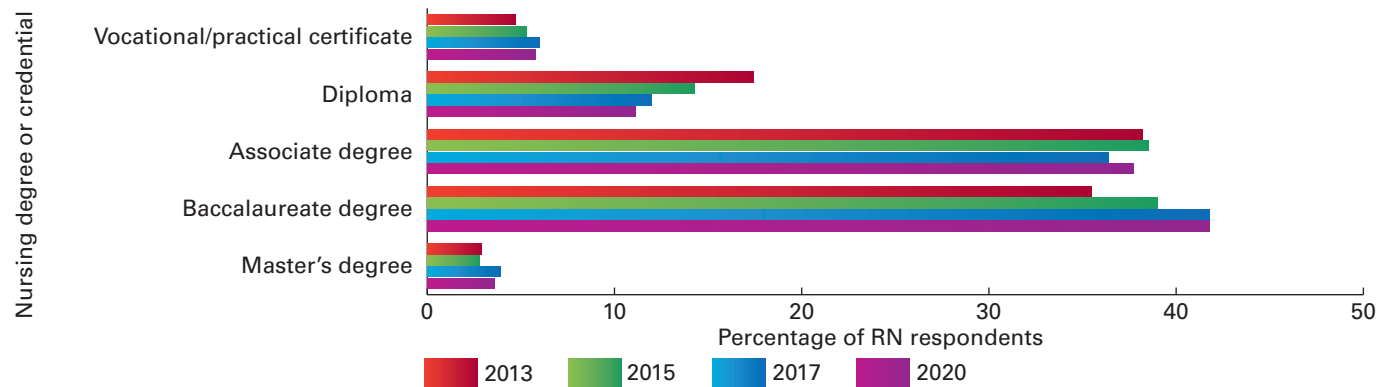### Type of Nursing Degree or Credential of Registered Nurses for First U.S. Nursing License by Age, 2020

Weighted Sample Values										
Nursing Degree or Credential	*n*	*Age in Years, n (%)*								
		19-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	≥ 65
Vocational/practical certificate	2,305.5	95.0 (4.1)	140.7 (6.1)	212.6 (9.2)	239.0 (10.4)	254.6 (11.0)	227.4 (9.9)	280.0 (12.1)	328.5 (14.3)	527.8 (22.9)
Diploma	4,422.5	85.5 (1.9)	89.0 (2.0)	151.1 (3.4)	127.7 (2.9)	198.8 (4.5)	278.5 (6.3)	544.8 (12.3)	748.4 (16.9)	2,198.6 (49.7)
Associate degree	14,947.0	890.8 (6.0)	1,181.7 (7.9)	1,533.2 (10.3)	1,563.1 (10.5)	1,577.7 (10.6)	1,809.1 (12.1)	1,879.9 (12.6)	1,946.6 (13.0)	2,564.9 (17.2)
Baccalaureate degree	16,417.4	2,208.8 (13.5)	2,218.2 (13.5)	1,889.9 (11.5)	1,491.3 (9.1)	1,694.2 (10.3)	1,667.7 (10.2)	1,596.7 (9.7)	1,642.1 (10.0)	2,008.6 (12.2)
Master's degree	1,367.9	50.4 (3.7)	143.9 (10.5)	193.8 (14.2)	180.2 (13.2)	185.2 (13.5)	162.7 (11.9)	141.8 (10.4)	156.4 (11.4)	153.6 (11.2)
Total	39,460.4	3,330.5 (8.4)	3,773.5 (9.6)	3,980.6 (10.1)	3,601.3 (9.1)	3,910.4 (9.9)	4,145.4 (10.5)	4,443.3 (11.3)	4,822.0 (12.2)	7,453.5 (18.9)

Highest Level of Nursing Education

The percentage of RNs reporting a baccalaureate degree as their highest level of nursing education increased by 7.8 percentage points between 2013 and 2020. Additionally, the percentage of RNs reporting a graduate degree as their highest level of nursing education increased by 2.1 percentage points. The percentage of RNs reporting a diploma or associate degree declined by 9.9 percentage points. Overall, 65.2% of RNs report their highest level of nursing education as a baccalaureate degree or higher in 2020. RNs earning a doctorate of nursing practice (DNP) as their highest level of nursing education increased by a full percentage point from 0.4% in 2013 to 1.4% in 2020 (Table 12 and Figure 3).

TABLE 12

Highest Level of Nursing Education of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020

Weighted Sample Values								
Nursing Education Level	2013 (*n* = 35,016.5)		2015 (*n* = 38,625.9)		2017 (*n* = 48,140.7)		2020 (*n* = 41,571.5)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Diploma	4,319.4	12.3	3,551.3	9.2	3,547.7	7.4	2,782.8	6.7
Associate degree	11,331.6	32.4	11,608.8	30.1	13,729.1	28.5	11,683.2	28.1
Baccalaureate degree	14,097.0	40.3	16,762.5	43.4	21,744.1	45.2	19,998.5	48.1
Master's degree	4,846.0	13.8	6,085.1	15.8	8,238.3	17.1	6,200.5	14.9
Doctoral degree: PhD	217.0	0.6	340.2	0.9	284.1	0.6	281.2	0.7
Doctoral degree: DNP	142.5	0.4	239.1	0.6	551.2	1.1	569.1	1.4
Doctoral degree: nursing other	62.9	0.2	39.0	0.1	46.1	0.1	56.1	0.1

Note. In the 2013 and 2015 surveys a single question "What is your highest level of education?" was asked with the set of possible responses including both nursing and non-nursing degrees. The degree types were separated for the 2017 and 2020 surveys. PhD = doctor of philosophy; DNP = doctor of nursing practice.

FIGURE 3

Highest Level of Nursing Education of Registered Nurses
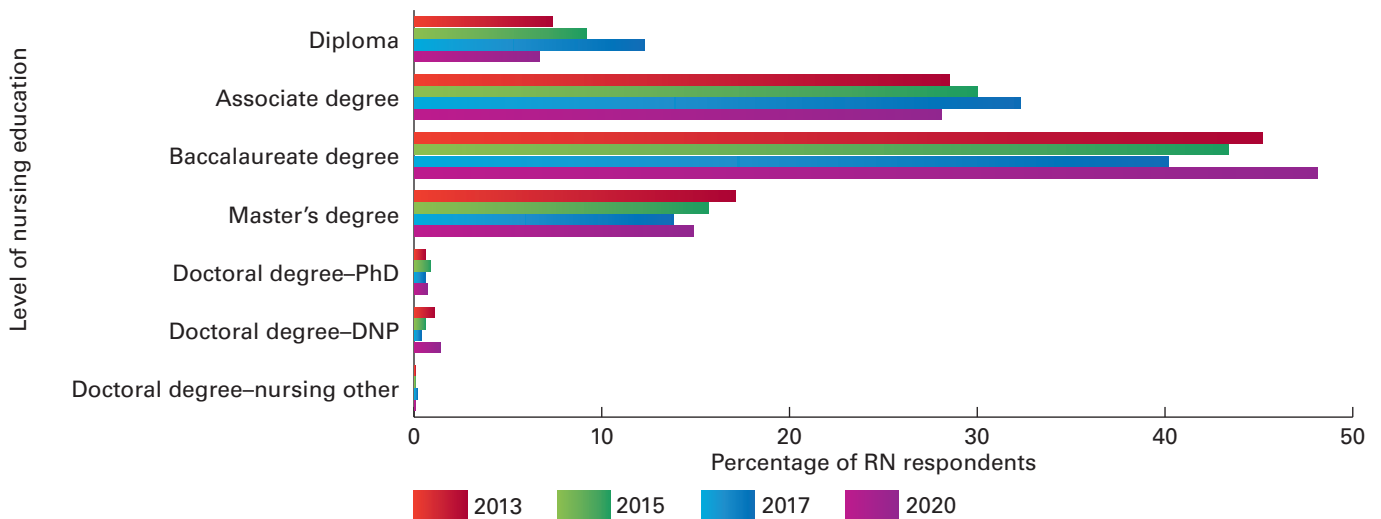
Note. In the 2013 and 2015 surveys a single question "What is your highest level of education?" was asked with the set of possible responses including both nursing and non-nursing degrees. The degree types were separated for the 2017 and 2020 survey. PhD = doctor of philosophy; DNP = doctor of nursing practice.

Highest Level of Nursing Education by Gender

In terms of highest level of education, the education level with the largest proportion of males was those with a DNP at 13.9%. The education levels with the largest proportion of females were those with a Diploma at 95.9% and those with a PhD at 95.7% (Table 13.)

TABLE 13

Gender of Registered Nurses by Highest Level of Nursing Education, 2020

Weighted Sample Values							
Nursing Education Level	n	Male		Female		Other	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
Diploma	2,758.1	111.9	4.1	2,646.2	95.9	0.0	0.0
Associate degree	11,627.6	1,214.8	10.5	10,411.1	89.5	1.7	0.0
Baccalaureate degree	19,934.7	1,804.8	9.1	18,100.1	90.8	29.7	0.2
Master's degree	6,179.2	651.2	10.5	5,515.8	89.3	12.2	0.2
Doctoral degree—PhD	279.7	12.1	4.3	267.6	95.7	0.0	0.0
Doctoral degree—DNP	565.6	78.7	13.9	486.9	86.1	0.0	0.0
Doctoral degree—nursing other	56.1	3.8	6.8	52.3	93.2	0.0	0.0
Total	41,401.0	3,877.3	9.4	37,480.0	90.5	43.6	0.1

Note. In the 2013 and 2015 surveys, a single question "What is your highest level of education?" was asked with the set of possible responses including both nursing and non-nursing degrees. The degree types were separated for the 2017 survey. PhD = doctor of philosophy; DNP = doctor of nursing practice.

Highest Level of Nursing Education by Race

The most common highest level of nursing education is a baccalaureate degree across all groups. Asian RNs are more likely to have a baccalaureate degree (67.0%) as compared to the overall population of RNs (48.1%) (Table 14).

TABLE 14

Highest Level of Nursing Education of Registered Nurses by Race, 2020

Weighted Sample Values								
Race	*n*	Diploma	Associate	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral (PhD)	Doctoral (DNP)	Doctoral (Other)
American Indian or Alaska Native	191.9	15.3 (8.0)	67.4 (35.1)	79.9 (41.7)	24.1 (12.6)	0.0 (0.0)	5.2 (2.7)	0.0 (0.0)
Asian	2,974.7	91.5 (3.1)	420.3 (14.1)	1,991.9 (67.0)	433.8 (14.6)	12.4 (0.4)	17.8 (0.6)	6.9 (0.2)
Black/African American	2,757.6	76.5 (2.8)	676.4 (24.5)	1,335.7 (48.4)	570.6 (20.7)	30.0 (1.1)	60.7 (2.2)	7.7 (0.3)
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	175.9	4.9 (2.8)	30.9 (17.6)	103.5 (58.8)	25.2 (14.3)	0.0 (0.0)	11.4 (6.5)	0.0 (0.0)
Middle Eastern/North African	88.6	1.2 (1.4)	23.2 (26.2)	46.8 (52.8)	13.3 (15.0)	0.0 (0.0)	4.1 (4.6)	0.0 (0.0)
White/Caucasian	33,409.5	2,551.4 (7.6)	9,899.3 (29.6)	15,397.5 (46.1)	4,847.4 (14.5)	227.2 (0.7)	445.2 (1.3)	41.5 (0.1)
Other	933.4	14.9 (1.6)	287.1 (30.8)	500.8 (53.7)	115.3 (12.4)	2.3 (0.2)	13.0 (1.4)	0.0 (0.0)
More than one race category selected	869.5	15.8 (1.8)	224.7 (25.8)	460.5 (53.0)	150.9 (17.4)	8.5 (1.0)	9.0 (1.0)	0.0 (0.0)
Total	41,401.1	2,771.6 (6.7)	11,629.3 (28.1)	19,916.6 (48.1)	6,180.6 (14.9)	280.4 (0.7)	566.5 (1.4)	56.1 (0.1)

Note. In the 2013 and 2015 surveys, a single question "What is your highest level of education?" was asked with the set of possible responses including both nursing and non-nursing degrees. The degree types were separated for the 2017 and 2020 surveys. For the race question, respondents were asked to select all that apply. The responses were subsequently recoded to ensure that the race categories were mutually exclusive. Respondents selecting multiple race categories were reclassified into the "More than one race category selected" category. For the 2020 survey, "Middle Eastern/North African" was added as a response category. PhD = doctor of philosophy; DNP = doctor of nursing practice.

Highest Level of Nursing Education by Age

More than half of respondents whose highest level of nursing education is a diploma are aged 65 years or older. Conversely, those reporting a baccalaureate degree as their highest level of education tend to be younger than 35 years (12.8% are younger than 30 years of age; 12.8% are between 30 and 34 years of age) (Table 15).

TABLE 15

Age of Registered Nurses by Highest Level of Nursing Education, 2020

Weighted Sample Values										
Nursing Education Level	*n*	Age in Years, *n* (%)								
		19-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	≥ 65
Diploma	2,673.7	55.1 (2.1)	30.7 (1.2)	41.3 (1.6)	53.2 (2.0)	107.7 (4.0)	143.9 (5.4)	318.0 (11.9)	469.8 (17.6)	1,453.8 (54.4)
Associate degree	11,154.3	606.2 (5.4)	711.2 (6.4)	1,041.4 (9.3)	1,017.1 (9.1)	1,076.4 (9.7)	1,352.0 (12.1)	1,478.1 (13.3)	1,618.0 (14.5)	2,254.0 (20.2)
Baccalaureate degree	19,006.0	2,434.3 (12.8)	2,436.1 (12.8)	2,125.1 (11.2)	1,816.8 (9.6)	1,995.9 (10.5)	1,933.3 (10.2)	1,885.9 (9.9)	1,921.6 (10.1)	2,456.9 (12.9)
Master's degree	5,907.8	223.3 (3.8)	523.4 (8.9)	694.2 (11.8)	648.8 (11.0)	665.8 (11.3)	644.1 (10.9)	670.8 (11.4)	726.2 (12.3)	1,111.1 (18.8)
Doctoral degree - PhD	272.9	8.8 (3.2)	9.7 (3.5)	6.9 (2.5)	11.9 (4.4)	23.2 (8.5)	35.8 (13.1)	37.4 (13.7)	39.7 (14.6)	99.5 (36.5)
Doctoral degree - DNP	544.8	14.9 (2.7)	64.0 (11.7)	80.8 (14.8)	71.6 (13.2)	66.5 (12.2)	57.6 (10.6)	56.4 (10.4)	66.4 (12.2)	66.7 (12.3)
Doctoral degree - nursing other	51.9	0.0 (0.0)	0.8 (1.6)	1.7 (3.3)	1.6 (3.1)	3.6 (6.9)	6.9 (13.4)	5.6 (10.7)	9.1 (17.5)	22.6 (43.5)
Total	39,611.3	3,342.6 (8.4)	3,775.9 (9.5)	3,991.5 (10.1)	3,621.0 (9.1)	3,939.1 (9.9)	4,173.7 (10.5)	4,452.1 (11.2)	4,850.8 (12.2)	7,464.5 (18.8)

Note. In the 2013 and 2015 surveys, a single question "What is your highest level of education?" was asked with the set of possible responses including both nursing and non-nursing degrees. The degree types were separated for the 2017 and 2020 surveys.

Highest Level of Non-nursing Education

The 2017 survey asked about the highest level of non-nursing education. The percentage of RNs reporting an associate degree as their highest level of non-nursing education increased 1.9 percentage points between 2017 and 2020. Those reporting a baccalaureate degree remained about the same, increasing by 0.2 percentage points. RNs reporting a master's or doctorate degree as their highest level of nursing education decreased slightly, 1.4 and 0.7 percentage points, respectively (Table 16 and Figure 4).

TABLE 16

Highest Level of Non-Nursing Education of Registered Nurses, 2020

Weighted Sample Values				
Non-nursing Education Level	2017 (n = 19,904.5)		2020 (n = 17,698.1)	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*
Associate degree	7,025.9	35.3	6,578.1	37.2
Baccalaureate degree	9,115.4	45.8	8,141.5	46.0
Master's degree	3,150.8	15.8	2,547.4	14.4
Doctoral degree	612.4	3.1	431.1	2.4

Note. In the 2013 and 2015 surveys a single question "What is your highest level of education?" was asked with the set of possible responses including both nursing and non-nursing degrees. The degree types were separated for the 2017 and 2020 surveys.

FIGURE 4

Highest Level of Non-nursing Education of Registered Nurses
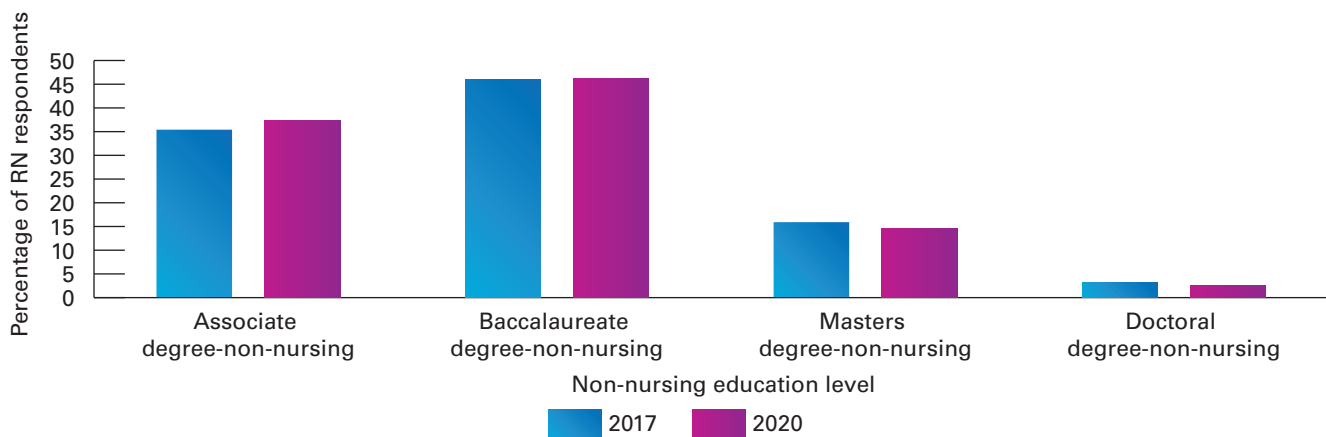
Note. In the 2013 and 2015 surveys a single question "What is your highest level of education?" was asked with the set of possible responses including both nursing and non-nursing degrees. The degree types were separated for the 2017 AND 2020 surveys.

Licensure

Type of License Currently Held

Respondents were asked to report all the nursing licenses they currently hold. Less than 1% of responding RNs also held an LPN/LVN license, while 6.6% held an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) credential. The percentage of RNs also holding an APRN credential is the lowest reported since 2013, dropping 3.4 percentage points since 2017 (Table 17 and Figure 5).

TABLE 17

Type of License Currently Held by Registered Nurses, 2013–2020

Weighted Sample Values								
License	2013 (*n* = 41,658.3)		2015 (*n* = 46,047.8)		2017 (*n* = 48,128.0)		2020 (*n* = 41,601.8)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
RN	39,521.6	94.9	43,730.2	95.0	45,971.3	95.5	40,378.3	97.1
LPN	215.9	0.5	330.8	0.7	386.2	0.8	323.6	0.8
APRN	3,046.4	7.3	3,974.7	8.6	4,788.6	10.0	2,763.2	6.6

Estimated Population Values								
License	2013		2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
RN	3,266,514	94.9	3,508,219	95.0	3,729,318	95.5	4,033,920	97.1
LPN	17,845	0.5	26,534	0.7	31,328	0.8	32,329	0.8
APRN	251,788	7.3	318,870	8.6	388,461	10.0	276,052	6.6

Note. Respondents were asked to select all that apply. RN = registered nurse; LPN = licensed practical nurse; APRN = advanced practice registered nurse.

FIGURE 5

Type of License Currently Held by Registered Nurses, 2013–2020

Note. Respondents were asked to select all that apply. RN = registered nurse; LPN = licensed practical nurse; APRN = advanced practice registered nurse. Some states do not include APRNs in their RN population.
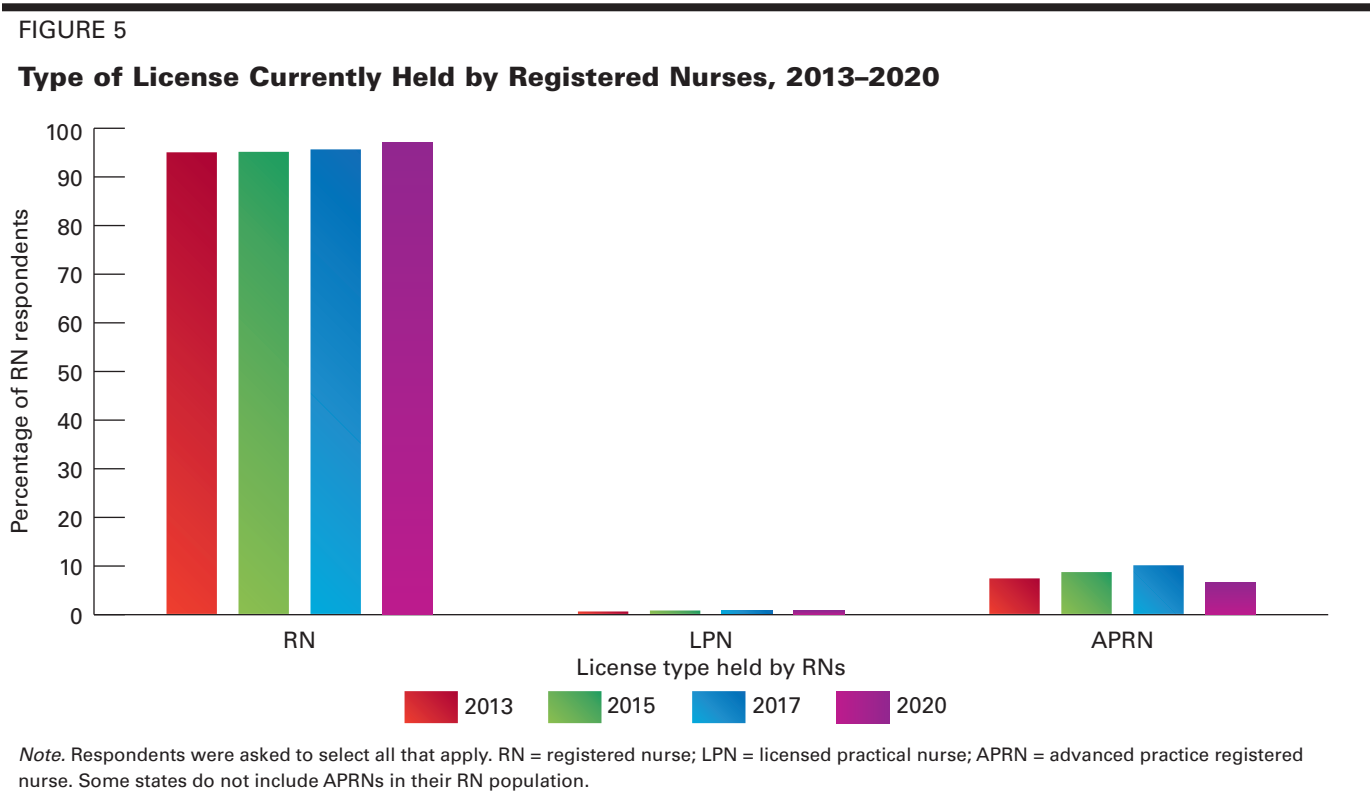
Number of Years Licensed

RNs responding to the survey were licensed for a median of 20 years. Nearly one third (30.5%) were licensed for 10 years or less. An additional 22.1% were licensed between 11 and 20 years. These figures are similar to those reported in 2017 (32.9% and 19.7%, respectively) (Table 18 and Figure 6).

TABLE 18

Number of Years the Registered Nurse Has Been Licensed, 2013–2020

Weighted Sample Values								
Years Licensed	2013 (n = 37,655.3)		2015 (n = 39,771.5)		2017 (n = 46,757.6)		2020 (n = 38,741.0)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
0–10	9,845.5	26.2	13,307.3	33.5	15,397.6	32.9	11,802.6	30.5
11–20	7,156.2	19.0	7,753.4	19.5	9,217.7	19.7	8,577.4	22.1
21–30	7,340.5	19.5	6,855.8	17.2	8,121.6	17.4	6,934.1	17.9
31–40	8,213.0	21.8	7,311.4	18.4	8,226.1	17.6	5,951.6	15.4
> 40	5,100.0	13.5	4,543.7	11.4	5,794.6	12.4	5,475.4	14.1

Estimated Population Values								
Years Licensed	2013		2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
0–10	813,747	26.2	1,067,569	33.5	1,249,096	32.9	1,179,117	30.5
11–20	591,472	19.0	622,009	19.5	747,767	19.7	856,909	22.1
21–30	606,701	19.5	549,997	17.2	658,844	17.4	692,739	17.9
31–40	678,818	21.8	586,547	18.4	667,326	17.6	594,584	15.4
> 40	421,525	13.5	364,511	11.4	470,073	12.4	547,010	14.1

FIGURE 6

Number of Years the Registered Nurse Has Been Licensed, 2013–2020
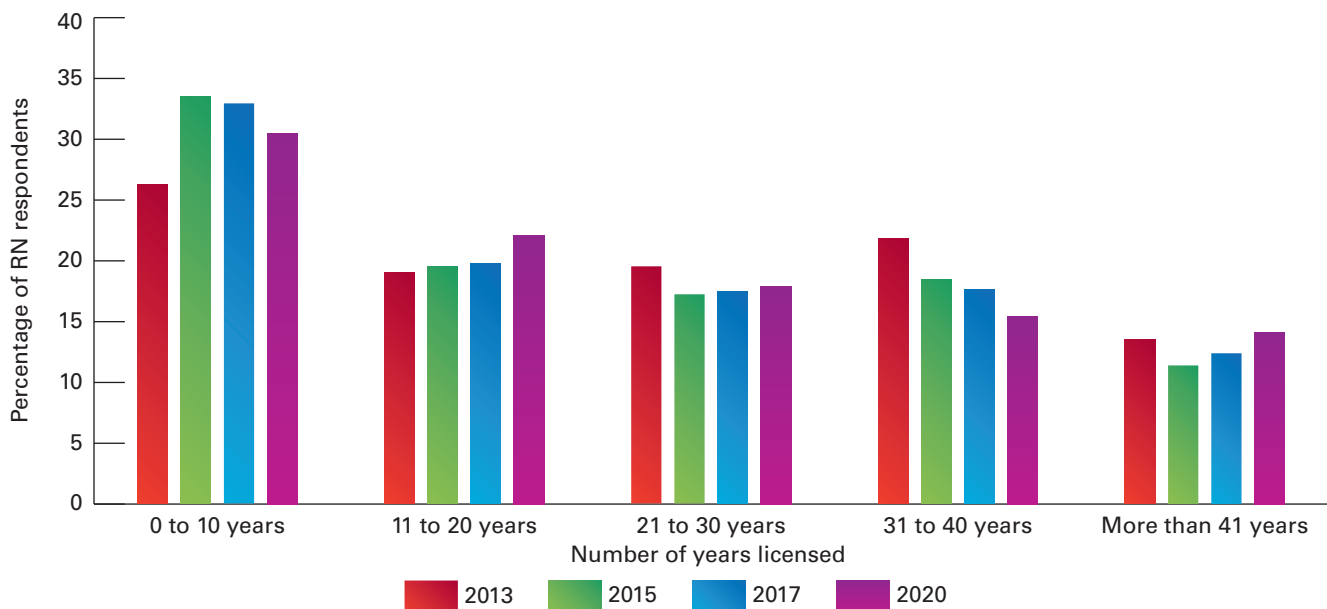
Country Where Entry-Level Nursing Education Was Received

The majority of RNs (93.9%) reported receiving their entry-level nursing education in the United States, while 3.3% reported obtaining their nursing education in the Philippines, 0.5% in Canada, and 0.5% in India (Table 19).

TABLE 19

Country of Entry-Level Nursing Education of Registered Nurses, 2020

Weighted Sample Values		
Country	**2020 (n = 41,745.5)**	
	n	%
United States	31,192.5	93.9
Canada	224.7	0.5
Philippines	1,360.3	3.3
India	212.8	0.5
Other	755.2	1.8

Estimated Population Values		
Country	**2020**	
	n	%
United States	3,116,230	93.9
Canada	22,448	0.5
Philippines	135,898	3.3
India	21,259	0.5
Other	75,447	1.8

Credentialed to Practice as an APRN

Respondents were asked whether they were credentialed in their state as an APRN enabling them to practice in any of the four APRN roles, including nurse practitioner (NP), clinical nurse specialist (CNS), certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA), or certified nurse midwife (CNM). Most respondents (91.6%) indicated they were not credentialed to practice as an APRN. This represents the highest proportion of RNs not credentialed as an APRN since 2013. In 2020, 5.5% of respondents reported being credentialed as an NP, compared with 8.5% in 2017 (Table 20 and Figure 7).

TABLE 20

Registered Nurse Credentials to Practice as an APRN, 2013–2020

Weighted Sample Values								
Credential	**2013 (n = 40,053.2)**		**2015 (n = 43,045.0)**		**2017 (n = 47,713.6)**		**2020 (n = 41,129.2)**	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Nurse practitioner	2,266.4	5.7	3,129.4	7.2	4,067.1	8.5	2,257.1	5.5
Clinical nurse specialist	1,243.1	3.1	576.8	1.3	983.5	2.1	769.2	1.9
Certified registered nurse anesthetist	509.1	1.3	571.9	1.3	728.7	1.5	399.7	0.9
Certified nurse midwife	159.3	0.4	167.7	0.4	242.0	0.5	192.0	0.5
Not licensed/certified as any above	35,875.3	90.8	38,599.3	89.7	42,004.2	88.0	37,677.6	91.6

Estimated Population Values								
Credential	**2013**		**2015**		**2017**		**2020**	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Nurse practitioner	187,325	5.7	251,053	7.2	329,933	8.5	225,491	5.5
Clinical nurse specialist	102,741	3.1	46,275	1.3	79,787	2.1	76,846	1.9
Certified registered nurse anesthetist	42,078	1.3	45,879	1.3	59,114	1.5	39,931	0.9
Certified nurse midwife	13,165	0.4	13,452	0.4	19,636	0.5	19,181	0.5
Not licensed/certified as any above	2,965,145	90.8	3,096,595	89.7	3,407,498	88.0	3,764,112	91.6

Note. Respondents were asked to select all that apply. APRN = advanced practice registered nurse.

FIGURE 7

Registered Nurses Credentialed as APRNs
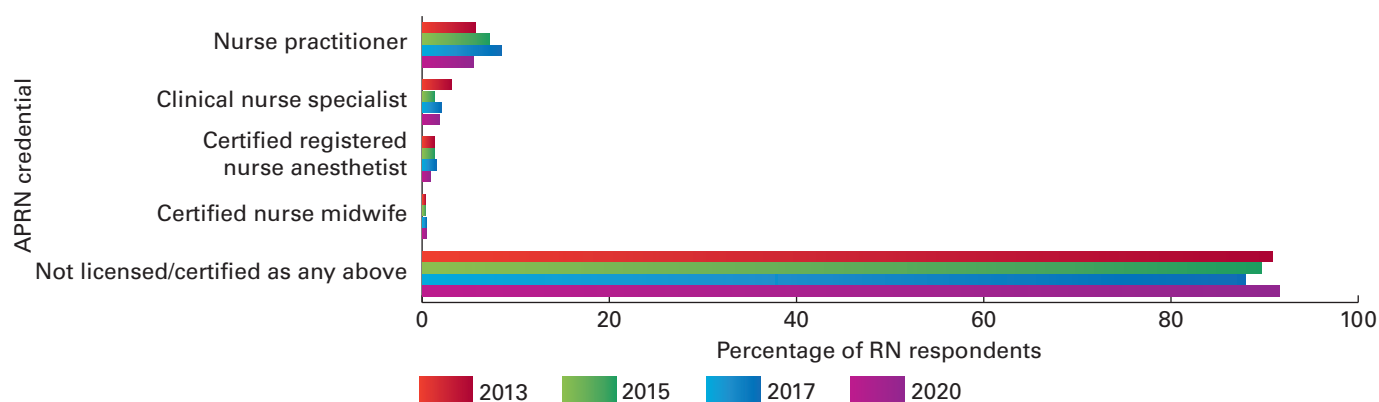
Note. Respondents were asked to select all that apply. APRN = advanced practice registered nurse.

Multistate License

New to the 2020 survey, 24% of nurses reported holding a multistate license (Table 21. The NLC has important implications for how nursing workforce statistics on surplus and shortage of workforce supply are calculated by state. States record the number of nurses' licenses issued; however, care must be taken to account for those nurses licensed in each state who are delivering care elsewhere. The number of licensed nurses in a state does not equal the number of nurses providing services in the state. More work is needed to understand how the NLC contributes to meeting the workforce needs of each state in the nation.

TABLE 21

Registered Nurses Holding a Multistate License, 2020

Weighted Sample Values		
Multistate License	2020 (n = 34,825.9)	
	n	%
Yes	8,367.4	24.0
No	26,458.5	76.0

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

Use of Multistate License. Of nurses reporting possession of a multistate license, 33% use it for physical crossborder practice and 20% of respondents indicated using it for "other" uses (Table 22).

TABLE 22

How a Multistate License is Used by Registered Nurses, 2020

Weighted Sample Values		
Use of Multistate License	2020 (n = 5,481.8)	
	n	%
Physical crossborder practice	1,816.7	33.1
Telehealth	868.0	15.8
Distance education	446.8	8.2
Disaster support	155.7	2.8
Travel nursing	190.1	3.5
Have not used	1,314.8	24.0
Other	1,095.6	20.0

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. Respondents were asked to select all that apply.

Employment

Employment Status

The major portion of responding RNs (84.1%) were actively employed in nursing with 64.9% employed in nursing full time. This represents a slight decrease in the proportion of RNs working full time from 2017 (65.4%) but an increase from 2015 (62.9%) (Table 23 and Figure 8).

TABLE 23

Employment Status of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020

Weighted Sample Values								
Employment Status	2013 (n = 42,145.6)		2015 (n = 46,210.2)		2017 (n = 48,146.9)		2020 (n = 41,783.4)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Actively employed in nursing full-time	25,447.3	60.4	29,088.5	62.9	31,476.6	65.4	27,101.0	64.9
Actively employed in nursing part-time	6,276.1	14.9	6,088.0	13.2	5,820.9	12.1	4,901.7	11.7
Actively employed in nursing per diem	3,069.5	7.3	3,675.2	8.0	3,424.9	7.1	3,133.6	7.5
Actively employed in a field other than nursing full-time	1,713.0	4.1	1,576.1	3.4	1,108.9	2.3	882.4	2.1
Actively employed in a field other than nursing part-time	1,169.0	2.8	850.8	1.8	605.7	1.3	438.5	1.1
Actively employed in a field other than nursing per diem	512.7	1.2	377.7	0.8	267.5	0.6	188.5	0.5
Working in nursing only as a volunteer	810.6	1.9	564.5	1.2	645.6	1.3	517.1	1.2
Unemployed, seeking work as a nurse	1,144.4	2.7	1,070.7	2.3	1,030.2	2.1	809.1	1.9
Unemployed, not seeking work as a nurse	1,463.3	3.5	1,611.6	3.5	1,616.2	3.4	1,362.4	3.3
Retired	4,755.1	11.3	4,993.7	10.8	4,916.9	10.2	4,824.7	11.6

Estimated Population Values								
Employment Status	2013		2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Actively employed in nursing full-time	2,103,254	60.4	2,333,606	62.9	2,553,467	65.4	2,707,476	64.9
Actively employed in nursing part-time	518,727	14.9	488,405	13.2	472,204	12.1	489,695	11.7
Actively employed in nursing per diem	253,696	7.3	294,837	8.0	277,834	7.1	313,057	7.5
Actively employed in a field other than nursing full-time	141,583	4.1	126,445	3.4	89,956	2.3	88,155	2.1
Actively employed in a field other than nursing part-time	96,616	2.8	68,255	1.8	49,139	1.3	43,808	1.1
Actively employed in a field other than nursing per diem	42,379	1.2	30,298	0.8	21,702	0.6	18,832	0.5
Working in nursing only as a volunteer	66,996	1.9	45,288	1.2	52,374	1.3	51,660	1.2
Unemployed, seeking work as a nurse	94,587	2.7	85,896	2.3	83,573	2.1	80,832	1.9
Unemployed, not seeking work as a nurse	120,945	3.5	129,287	3.5	131,114	3.4	136,108	3.3
Retired	393,014	11.3	400,613	10.8	398,871	10.2	482,003	11.6

Note. Respondents were asked to select all that apply.

FIGURE 8

Employment Status of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020
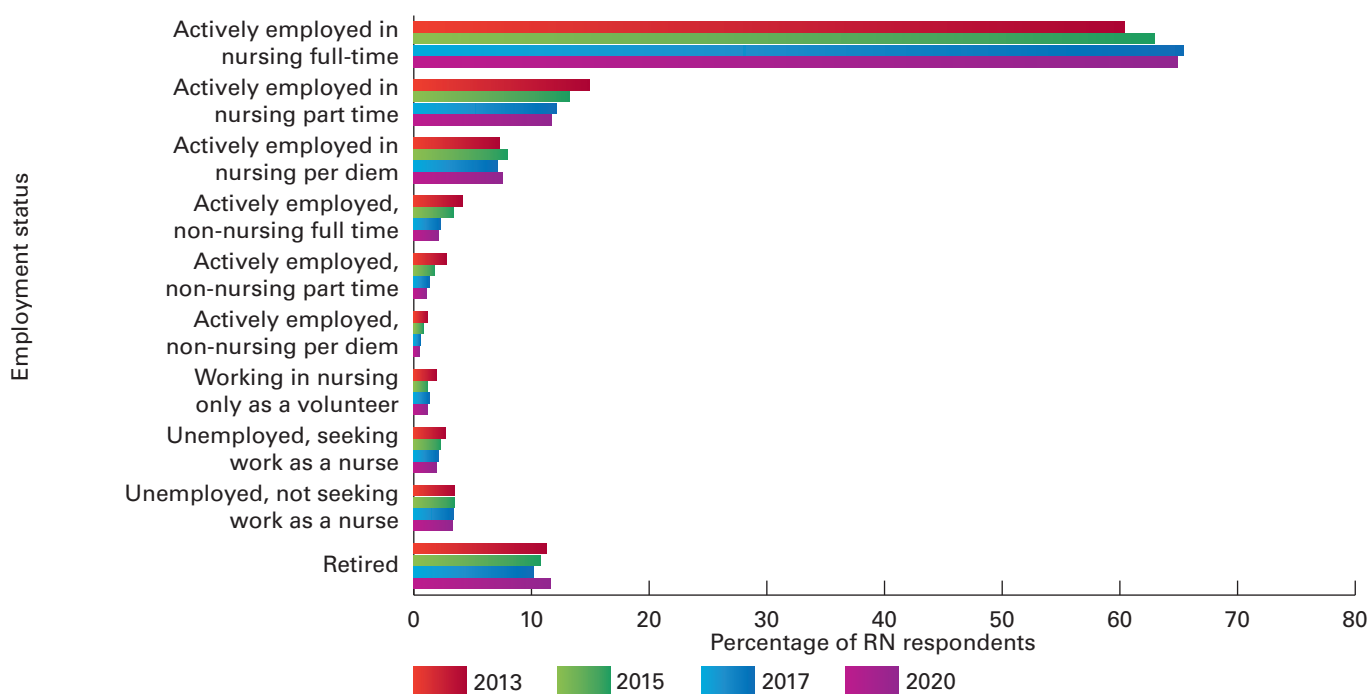
Note. Respondents were asked to select all that apply.

Reasons for Being Unemployed

Respondents were asked to select all the reasons for being unemployed. Taking care of home and family was the most frequently selected reason for being unemployed by 49.0% of respondents. The percentage of RNs who indicated they were unemployed because they experienced difficulty in finding a nursing position was 14.6%, which is down from 15.4% in 2017. The percentage of RNs who indicated they were disabled was 10.7%, and 8.1% listed being in school as the reason for unemployment (Table 24 and Figure 9).

TABLE 24

Reasons for Unemployment of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020

Weighted Sample Values								
	2013 (n = 2,549.0)		2015 (n = 2,272.4)		2017 (n = 2,567.2)		2020 (n = 2,122.1)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Taking care of home and family	1258.7	49.4	1137.3	50.0	1226.8	47.8	1,039.5	49.0
Disabled	486.2	19.1	298.5	13.1	347.6	13.5	226.4	10.7
Inadequate salary	58.4	2.3	48.2	2.1	73.7	2.9	53.7	2.5
School	195.4	7.7	143.1	6.3	186.0	7.2	172.2	8.1
Difficulty in finding a nursing position	672.1	26.4	352.0	15.5	395.0	15.4	310.3	14.6
Other	774.8	30.4	557.4	24.5	758.9	29.6	680.2	32.1

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were unemployed. Respondents were asked to select all that apply.

FIGURE 9

Reasons for Unemployment of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020
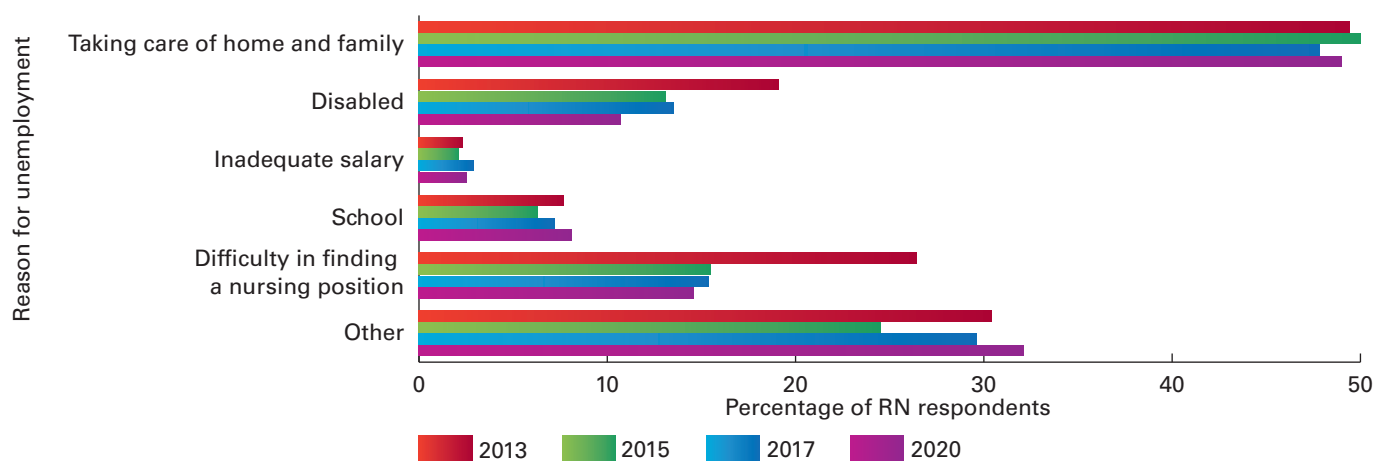
Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were unemployed. Respondents were asked to select all that apply.

Retirement Plans

In the 2020 survey, a new question was added: "Do you plan to retire or leave nursing in the next 5 years?" More than one-fifth (22.1%) intend to retire or leave nursing in the next 5 years (Table 25).

TABLE 25

Registered Nurse Plans to Retire or Leave Nursing, 2020

Weighted Sample Values		
Plan to Retire Within 5 years	2020 (*n* = 34,360.2)	
	n	*%*
Yes	7,584.5	22.1
No	26,775.8	77.9

Estimated Population Values		
Plan to Retire Within 5 years	2020	
	n	*%*
Yes	757,716	22.1
No	2,674,987	77.9

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

Number of Positions Currently Held

Respondents were asked to identify the number of positions in which they were currently employed as a nurse. The majority of respondents (83.9%) reported holding just one position as a nurse, which represents a 0.6 percentage point increase from 2017. The percentage of nurses who reported working in two positions decreased from 13.9% in 2017 to 13.7% in 2020. The percentage of respondents who indicated that they held three or more positions in nursing also slightly decreased from 2.8% in 2017 to 2.4% in 2020 (Table 26).

TABLE 26

Number of Positions Currently Held by Registered Nurses, 2013–2020

Weighted Sample Values								
Number of Positions Held	2013 (n = 33,264.5)		2015 (n = 37,114.2)		2017 (n = 39,414.3)		2020 (n = 33,992.6)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	28,069.1	84.4	31,499.3	84.9	32,827.2	83.3	28,516.3	83.9
2	4,434.6	13.3	4,744.0	12.8	5,496.7	13.9	4,664.1	13.7
≥3	760.8	2.3	870.8	2.4	1,090.5	2.8	812.2	2.4

Estimated Population Values								
Number of Positions Held	2013		2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	2,319,949	84.4	2,527,010	84.9	2,663,030	83.3	2,848,869	83.9
2	366,522	13.3	380,585	12.8	445,905	13.9	465,958	13.7
3 or more	62,883	2.3	69,861	2.4	88,463	2.8	81,141	2.4

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

Number of Hours Worked During a Typical Week in All Nursing Positions

More than half of responding RNs (58.7%) reported working 32 to 40 hours in a typical week in all positions. This is consistent with the results from the 2017 survey (58.6%) and the 2015 survey (58.4%). The second most frequently reported category was 41 to 50 hours (14.5%). This represents a decrease from 2017 (15.8%) and 2015 (16.4%) (Table 27 and Figure 10).

TABLE 27

Number of Hours Registered Nurses Worked During a Typical Week in All Nursing Positions, 2013–2020

Weighted Sample Values								
Hours Worked per Week	2013 (n = 32,645.8)		2015 (n = 36,327.6)		2017 (n = 39,293.3)		2020 (n = 33,847.5)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1–15	1,808.9	5.5	1,697.7	4.7	1,903.7	4.8	1,624.0	4.8
16–23	1,695.4	5.2	1,655.7	4.6	1,728.1	4.4	1,402.3	4.1
24–31	3,397.7	10.4	3,536.9	9.8	3,765.0	9.6	3,251.0	9.6
32–40	18,434.1	56.5	21,174.3	58.4	23,012.6	58.6	19,850.6	58.7
41–50	5,289.3	16.2	5,957.3	16.4	6,198.0	15.8	4,915.1	14.5
51–60	1,369.5	4.2	1,636.9	4.5	1,851.3	4.7	1,479.9	4.4
≥ 61	651.0	2.0	578.8	1.6	834.7	2.1	1,324.5	3.9

Estimated Population Values								
Hours Worked per Week	2013		2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1–15	149,506	5.5	136,200	4.7	154,434	4.8	162,243	4.8
16–23	140,124	5.2	132,826	4.6	140,190	4.4	140,094	4.1
24–31	280,825	10.4	283,745	9.8	305,426	9.6	324,785	9.6
32–40	1,523,600	56.5	1,698,692	58.4	1,866,841	58.6	1,983,138	58.7
41–50	437,171	16.2	477,918	16.4	502,796	15.8	491,034	14.5
51–60	113,192	4.2	131,318	4.5	150,180	4.7	147,847	4.4
≥ 61	53,803	2.0	46,432	1.6	67,712	2.1	132,322	3.9

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

FIGURE 10

Number of Hours Registered Nurses Worked During a Typical Week in All Nursing Positions, 2013–2020
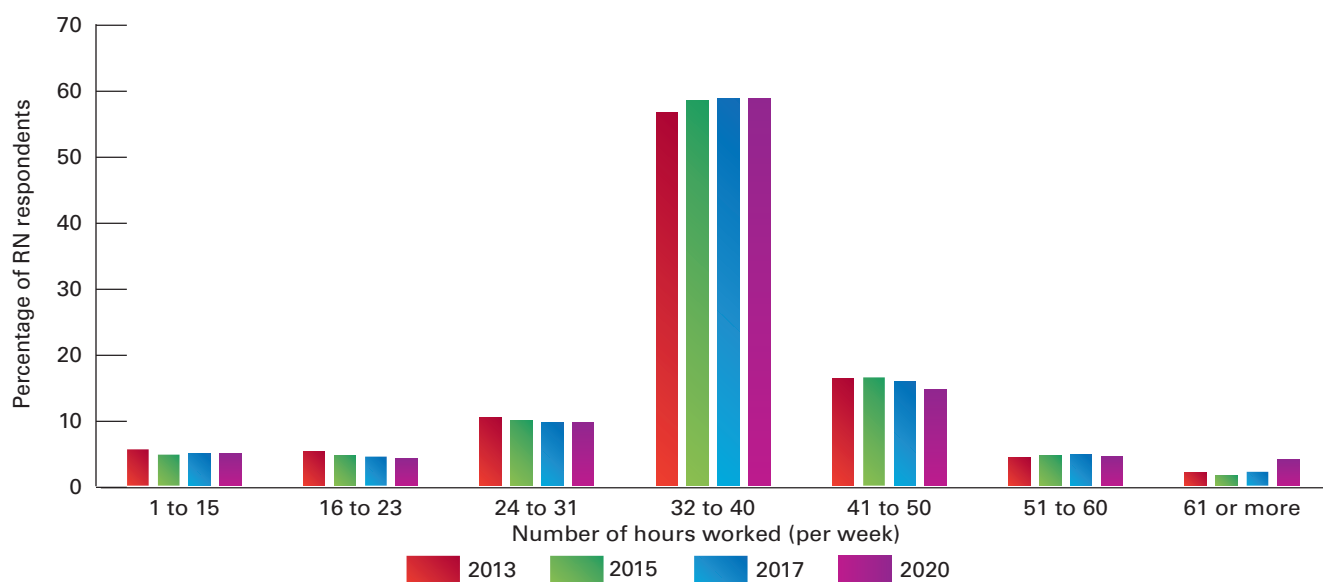
Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

Primary Nursing Practice Position Setting

Of those who responded to the question, 54.8% indicated that a hospital was their primary nursing practice setting. This represents a decrease of 0.9 percentage points from 2017 and is similar to 54.4% of respondents who selected the hospital setting in 2015. Ambulatory care setting was the second most frequently selected setting by 9.7% of RNs, followed by home health at 4.5% and the nursing home/extended care setting selected by 4.4%. School health service as a selection increased to 3.1% up from 2.6% in 2017, and insurance claims/benefits respondents increased to 2.5% from 1.8% in 2017 (Table 28).

TABLE 28

Primary Nursing Practice Position Setting of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020

Weighted Sample Values								
Practice Setting	2013 (*n* = 34,238.0)		2015 (*n* = 37,372.1)		2017 (*n* = 38,870.1)		2020 (*n* = 33,640.6)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Hospital	19,343.5	56.5	20,311.9	54.4	21,646.5	55.7	18,441.8	54.8
Nursing home/extended care	2,210.8	6.5	1,807.2	4.8	1,859.7	4.8	1,486.7	4.4
Assisted living facility			233.3	0.6	211.2	0.5	177.5	0.5
Home health	2,057.7	6.0	2,288.0	6.1	1,685.9	4.3	1,501.7	4.5
Hospice					757.8	2.0	674.3	2.0
Correctional facility	229.0	0.7	259.6	0.7	294.8	0.8	277.7	0.8
School of nursing	1,011.9	3.0	1,357.0	3.6	1,028.9	2.7	954.1	2.8
Public health	609.2	1.8	595.4	1.6	539.3	1.4	407.5	1.2
Dialysis center					493.6	1.3	386.8	1.2
Community health	739.9	2.2	786.9	2.1	780.8	2.0	565.3	1.7
School health service	1,145.9	3.3	1,092.8	2.9	1,025.3	2.6	1,057.8	3.1
Occupational health	224.1	0.7	250.3	0.7	292.6	0.8	230.7	0.7
Ambulatory care setting	2,994.4	8.7	4,201.1	11.2	3,649.2	9.4	3,271.6	9.7
Insurance claims/benefits	477.2	1.4	673.7	1.8	694.1	1.8	841.1	2.5
Policy/planning/regulatory/licensing agency	152.3	0.4	148.7	0.4	86.9	0.2	88.1	0.3
Other	3,042.1	8.9	3,366.3	9.0	3,823.6	9.8	3,278.0	9.7

Estimated Population Values								
Primary Practice Setting	2013		2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Hospital	1,598,768	56.5	1,629,506	54.4	1,756,021	55.7	1,842,394	54.8
Nursing home/extended care	182,724	6.5	144,982	4.8	150,865	4.8	148,526	4.4
Assisted living facility			18,718	0.6	17,132	0.5	17,733	0.5
Home health	170,069	6.0	183,553	6.1	136,765	4.3	150,025	4.5
Hospice					61,471	2.0	67,365	2.0
Correctional facility	18,930	0.7	20,828	0.7	23,918	0.8	27,743	0.8
School of nursing	83,637	3.0	108,863	3.6	83,466	2.7	95,318	2.8
Public health	50,354	1.8	47,763	1.6	43,748	1.4	40,711	1.2
Dialysis center					40,040	1.3	38,643	1.2
Community health	61,150	2.2	63,128	2.1	63,337	2.0	56,475	1.7
School health service	94,708	3.3	87,666	2.9	83,178	2.6	105,678	3.1
Occupational health	18,519	0.7	20,080	0.7	23,736	0.8	23,048	0.7
Ambulatory care setting	247,495	8.7	337,028	11.2	296,030	9.4	326,843	9.7
Insurance claims/benefits	39,445	1.4	54,046	1.8	56,306	1.8	84,029	2.5
Policy/planning/regulatory/licensing agency	12,586	0.4	11,930	0.4	7,050	0.2	8,801	0.3
Other	251,438	8.9	270,057	9.0	310,178	9.8	327,483	9.7

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

FIGURE 11

Primary Nursing Practice Position Setting of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020
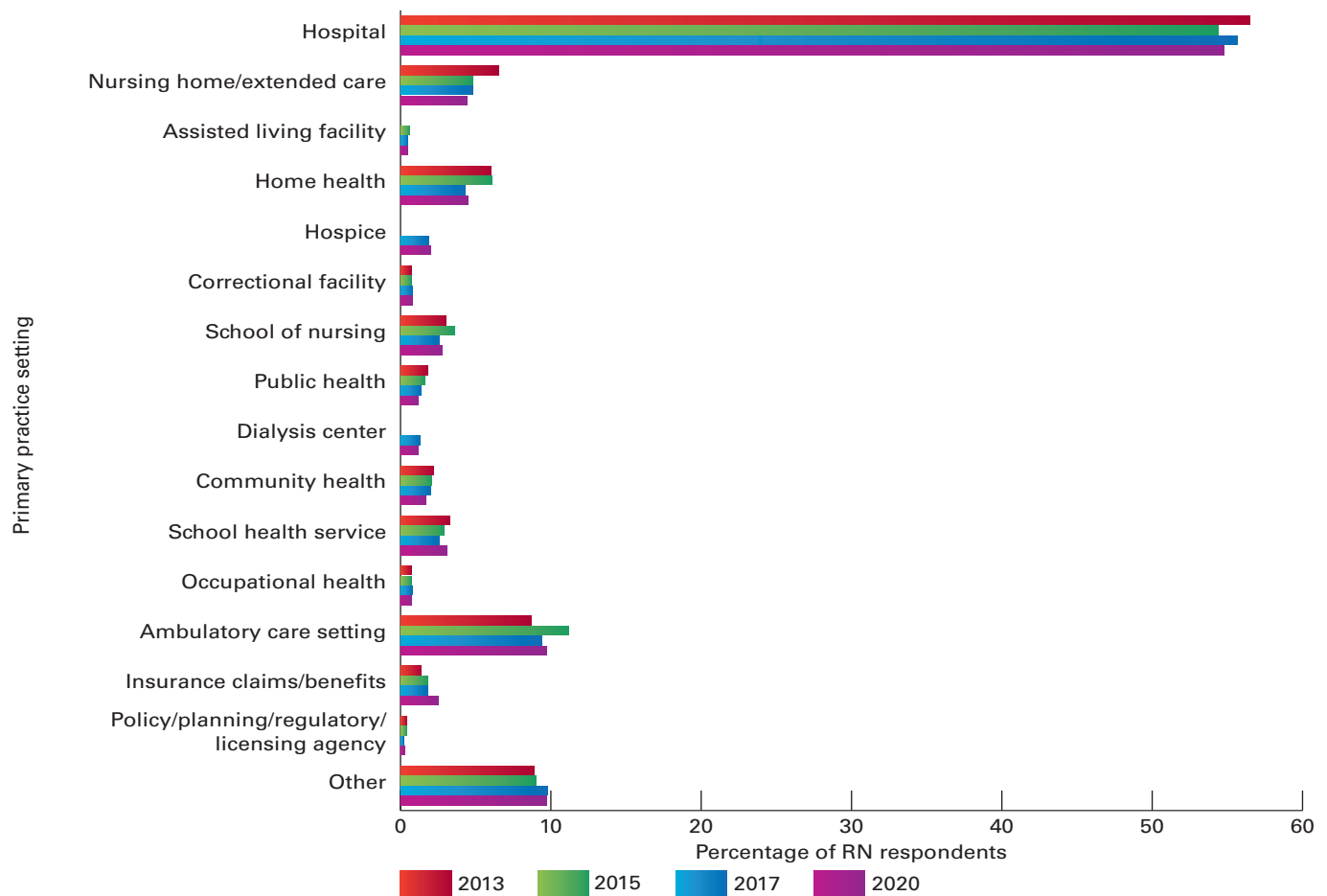
Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

Primary Nursing Position Title

Staff nurse was indicated as the title that most closely corresponds to respondents' primary nursing position and was selected by 60.1% of respondents, up from 58.0% in 2017. "Other—health related" was the next most frequently selected position by 9.7% of respondents. The APRN title decreased from 10.1% in 2017 to 6.3% in 2020. Between 2013 and 2020, there was a 3.1% decrease in respondents who indicated that their primary practice position was nurse manager. RNs selecting case manager as their primary position (7.4%) was an increase from what was reported in 2017 (6.4%). The percentage of respondents who selected nurse faculty/educator increased slightly from 4.0% in 2017 to 4.1% in 2020. Each of the remaining positions were selected by less than 2% of the responding nurses. Additionally, 0.5% selected "other—not health related" (Table 29 and Figure 12).

TABLE 29

Primary Nursing Position Title of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020

Weighted Sample Values								
Primary Title	2013 (*n* = 34,356.6)		2015 (*n* = 37,711.1)		2017 (*n* = 39,063.1)		2020 (*n* = 33,713.7)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Consultant	772.5	2.2	672.4	1.8	577.4	1.5	531.7	1.6
Nurse researcher	251.3	0.7	247.2	0.7	235.9	0.6	155.6	0.5
Nurse executive	834.4	2.4	881.4	2.3	725.3	1.9	647.7	1.9
Nurse manager	3,792.0	11.0	3,045.8	8.1	3,126.2	8.0	2,673.3	7.9
Nurse faculty/educator	1,105.4	3.2	1,422.2	3.8	1,558.2	4.0	1,392.5	4.1
Advanced practice registered nurse	2,531.4	7.4	3,069.1	8.1	3,946.1	10.1	2,130.2	6.3
Staff nurse	21,902.1	63.7	21,920.7	58.1	22,673.0	58.0	20,265.9	60.1
Case manager			2,524.8	6.7	2,519.2	6.4	2,485.3	7.4
Other—health related	3,068.9	8.9	3,685.1	9.8	3,561.9	9.1	3,277.4	9.7
Other—not health related	98.7	0.3	242.5	0.6	139.7	0.4	154.2	0.5

Estimated Population Values								
Title	2013		2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Consultant	63,846	2.2	53,944	1.8	46,844	1.5	53,119	1.6
Nurse researcher	20,770	0.7	19,830	0.7	19,139	0.6	15,545	0.5
Nurse executive	68,962	2.4	70,706	2.3	58,836	1.9	64,707	1.9
Nurse manager	313,418	11.0	244,343	8.1	253,609	8.0	267,071	7.9
Nurse faculty/educator	91,360	3.2	114,099	3.8	126,408	4.0	139,115	4.1
Advanced practice registered nurse	209,222	7.4	246,214	8.1	320,121	10.1	212,814	6.3
Staff nurse	1,810,238	63.7	1,758,573	58.1	1,839,294	58.0	2,024,628	60.1
Case manager			202,546	6.7	204,368	6.4	248,289	7.4
Other—health related	253,647	8.9	295,637	9.8	288,950	9.1	327,423	9.7
Other—not health related	8,155	0.3	19,453	0.6	11,332	0.4	15,405	0.5

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

FIGURE 12

Primary Nursing Position Title of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020
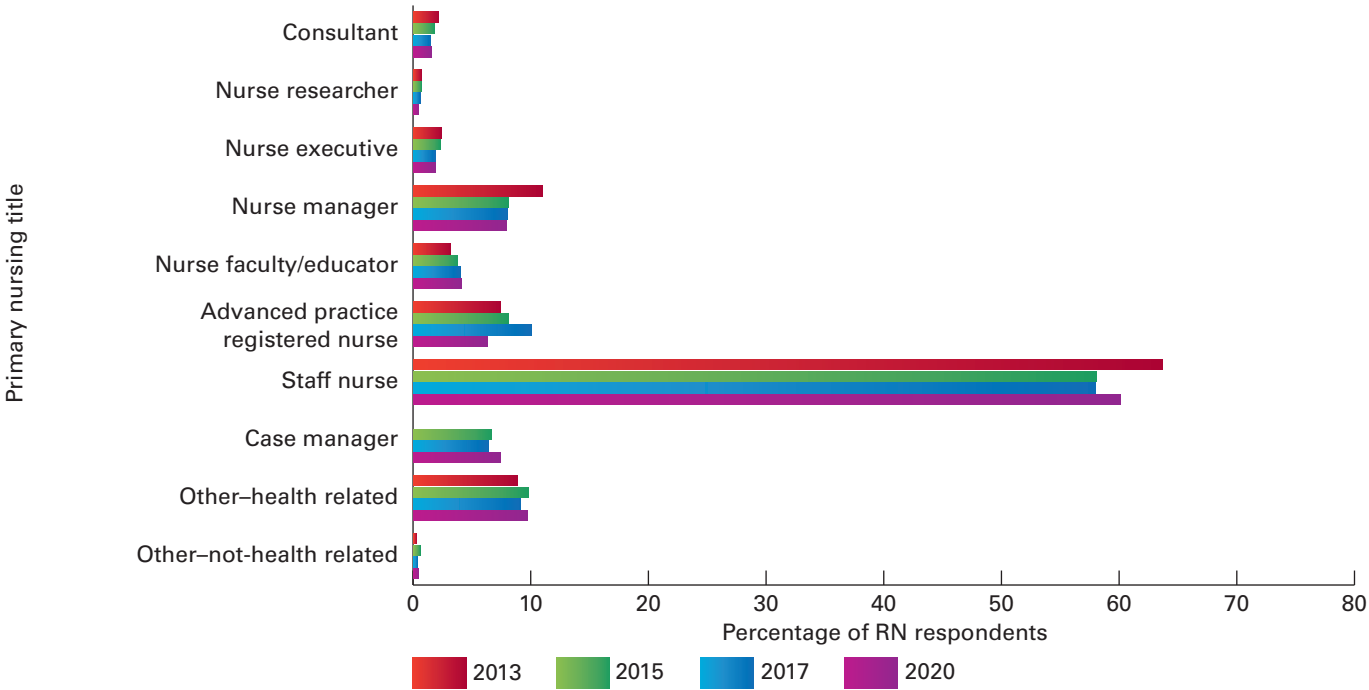
Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

In the 2017 survey, secondary practice specialties were modified. Categories now include adult and family health, cardiology, other—clinical, and other—nonclinical specialties.

In 2020, 13.4% of RNs reported their primary practice specialty was acute care/critical care compared to 14.0% in 2017. The second most frequently selected specialty was medical-surgical at 8.5%, down from 8.6% of RN respondents who selected this specialty in 2017. Perioperative was the third most frequently selected specialty by 6.7% of respondents, up from 5.8% in 2017. RNs selecting other specialties (13.1%) represented an increase from 12.0% in 2017 (Table 30 and Figure 13).

TABLE 30

Primary Nursing Position Specialty of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020

Weighted Sample Values								
Primary Specialty	2013 (*n* = 33,516.5)		2015 (*n* = 36,424.1)		2017 (*n* = 37,484.3)		2020 (*n* = 32,364.8)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Acute care/critical care	5,789.0	17.3	4,159.1	11.4	5,239.2	14.0	4,338.5	13.4
Adult health	871.9	2.6	756.1	2.1	1,447.1	3.9	1,172.9	3.6
Family health					1,243.4	3.3	801.2	2.5
Anesthesia	654.3	2.0	549.9	1.5	705.5	1.9	379.4	1.2
Cardiology					1,291.0	3.4	1,086.0	3.4
Community	335.0	1.0	356.7	1.0	386.6	1.0	300.9	0.9
Geriatric/gerontology	1,988.8	5.9	1,754.7	4.8	1,918.5	5.1	1,614.2	5.0
Home health	1,515.3	4.5	1,604.0	4.4	1,360.1	3.6	1,226.1	3.8
Maternal-child health/obstetrics	1,662.2	5.0	1,633.9	4.5	1,778.1	4.7	1,422.3	4.4
Medical surgical	4,248.6	12.7	3,695.7	10.1	3,203.1	8.6	2,757.8	8.5
Nephrology			476.4	1.3	555.7	1.5	500.7	1.6
Occupational health	333.4	1.0	280.7	0.8	339.8	0.9	314.4	1.0
Oncology	952.7	2.8	1,044.0	2.9	1,046.9	2.8	955.9	3.0
Palliative care/hospice	498.9	1.5	529.1	1.5	643.3	1.7	522.2	1.6
Pediatrics	1,995.8	6.0	1,570.3	4.3	1,774.1	4.7	1,345.9	4.2
Neonatal			808.4	2.2	809.5	2.2	725.4	2.2
Perioperative			2,195.7	6.0	2,187.7	5.8	2,173.2	6.7
Public health	510.6	1.5	466.0	1.3	472.3	1.3	428.9	1.3
Psychiatric/mental health/substance abuse	1,340.5	4.0	1,418.4	3.9	1,534.1	4.1	1,206.8	3.7
Rehabilitation	691.4	2.1	717.3	2.0	725.4	1.9	541.4	1.7
School health	1,097.2	3.3	1,025.1	2.8	945.5	2.5	980.0	3.0
Emergency/trauma	566.0	1.7	2,026.7	5.6	2,027.3	5.4	1,818.4	5.6
Women's health	651.3	1.9	651.7	1.8	567.1	1.5	490.5	1.5
Other—clinical specialties					4,507.7	12.0	4,229.5	13.1
Other—nonclinical specialties					775.1	2.1	1,032.1	3.2
Other	6,568.4	19.6	6,200.8	17.0				
Primary care	1,340.5	2.6	1,092.5	3.0				
Genetics			40.6	0.1				
Informatics			318.2	0.9				
Neurology/neurosurgical			337.1	0.9				
Orthopedic			436.1	1.2				
Radiology			191.2	0.5				
Urology			87.5	0.2				
Telehealth	288.5	1.2						

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

FIGURE 13

Primary Nursing Position Specialty of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020
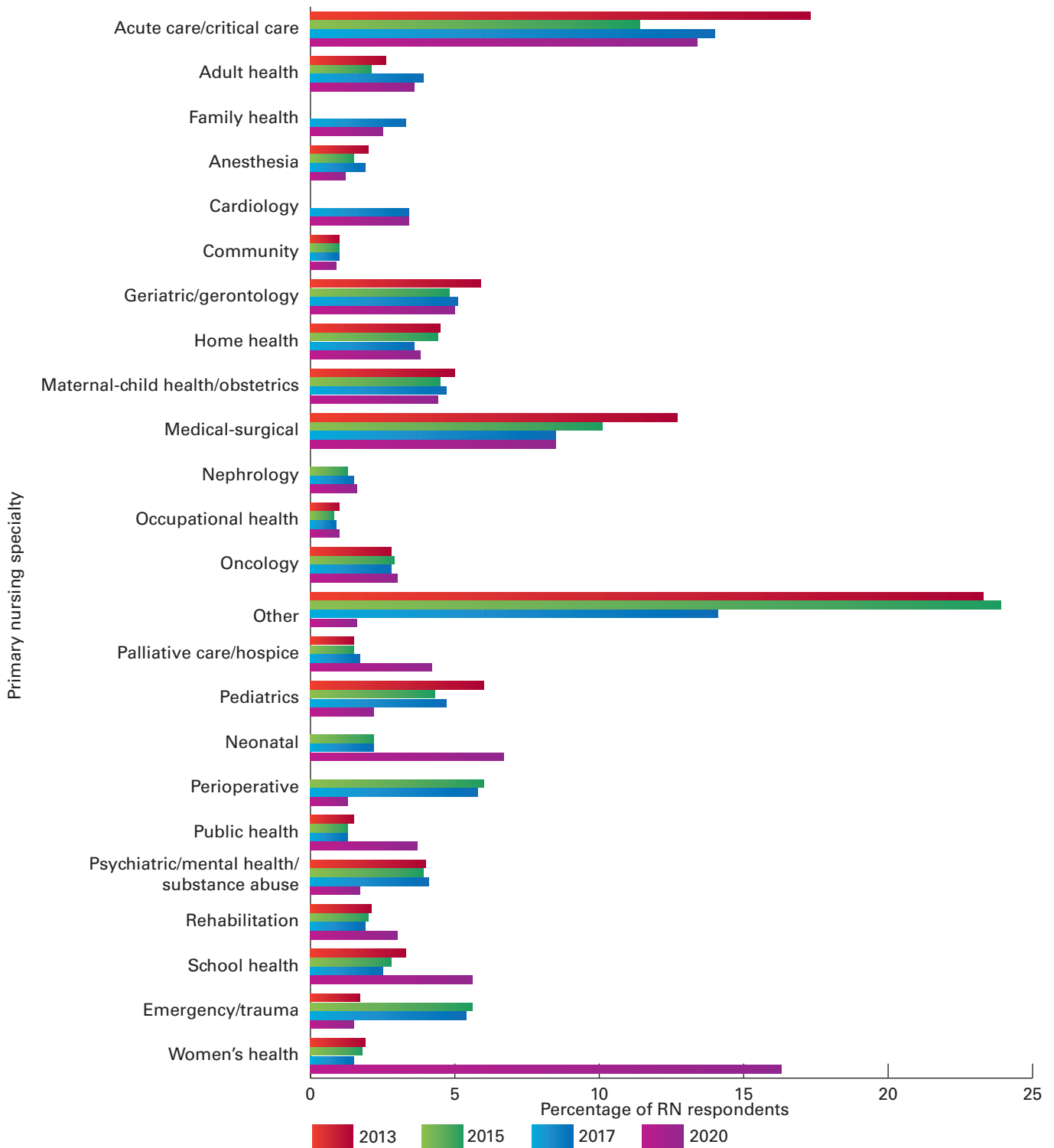
Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

Providing Direct Patient Care—Primary Nursing Position

A new question was added to the 2020 survey regarding direct patient care. Survey respondents were asked, "In your primary nursing practice position, do you spend the majority of your time providing direct patient care?" More than two-thirds (68.6%) responded "yes" (Table 31).

TABLE 31

Registered Nurses Providing Direct Patient Care—Primary Nursing Position, 2020

Weighted Sample Values		
Direct Patient Care	2020 (*n* = 34,080.7)	
	n	%
Yes	23,391.8	68.6
No	10,688.9	31.4

Estimated Population Values		
Direct Patient Care	2020	
	n	%
Yes	2,336,915	68.6
No	1,067,855	31.4

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

Secondary Nursing Practice Position Setting of Registered Nurses

More than one-third of RN respondents (36.7%) identified their secondary nursing practice position setting as being in a hospital, which has been consistent during the past three surveys. The second most frequently selected setting for secondary nursing positions was ambulatory care (9.6%) followed by school of nursing (8.7%), home health (8.4%), and nursing home/extended care (7.1%) (Table 32 and Figure 14).

TABLE 32

Secondary Nursing Practice Position Setting of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020

Weighted Sample Values								
Secondary Practice Setting	2013 (*n* = 4,415.5)		2015 (*n* = 4,877.3)		2017 (*n* = 6,153.3)		2020 (*n* = 5,121.6)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Hospital	1,061.5	24.0	1,632.6	33.5	2,213.4	36.0	1,879.1	36.7
Nursing home/extended care	502.9	11.4	277.2	5.7	456.7	7.4	363.8	7.1
Assisted living facility			58.9	1.2	58.4	1.0	58.3	1.1
Home health	560.5	12.7	577.5	11.8	555.7	9.0	430.1	8.4
Hospice					185.9	3.0	139.3	2.7
Correctional facility	52.1	1.2	72.2	1.5	68.3	1.1	46.2	0.9
School of nursing	439.7	10.0	519.7	10.7	493.6	8.0	446.2	8.7
Public health	66.8	1.5	38.1	0.8	89.2	1.5	68.9	1.3
Dialysis center					87.7	1.4	54.7	1.1
Community health	188.0	4.3	191.1	3.9	209.6	3.4	121.6	2.4
School health service	191.3	4.3	171.7	3.5	173.0	2.8	113.2	2.2
Occupational health	90.2	2.0	39.0	0.8	57.1	0.9	36.3	0.7
Ambulatory care setting	506.7	11.5	451.2	9.3	556.7	9.1	492.6	9.6
Insurance claims/benefits	38.8	0.9	39.4	0.8	51.7	0.8	44.1	0.9
Policy/planning/regulatory/licensing agency	19.0	0.4	6.1	0.1	7.1	0.1	22.5	0.4
Other	698.0	15.8	802.5	16.5	889.3	14.5	806.9	15.8

FIGURE 14

Secondary Nursing Practice Position Setting of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020
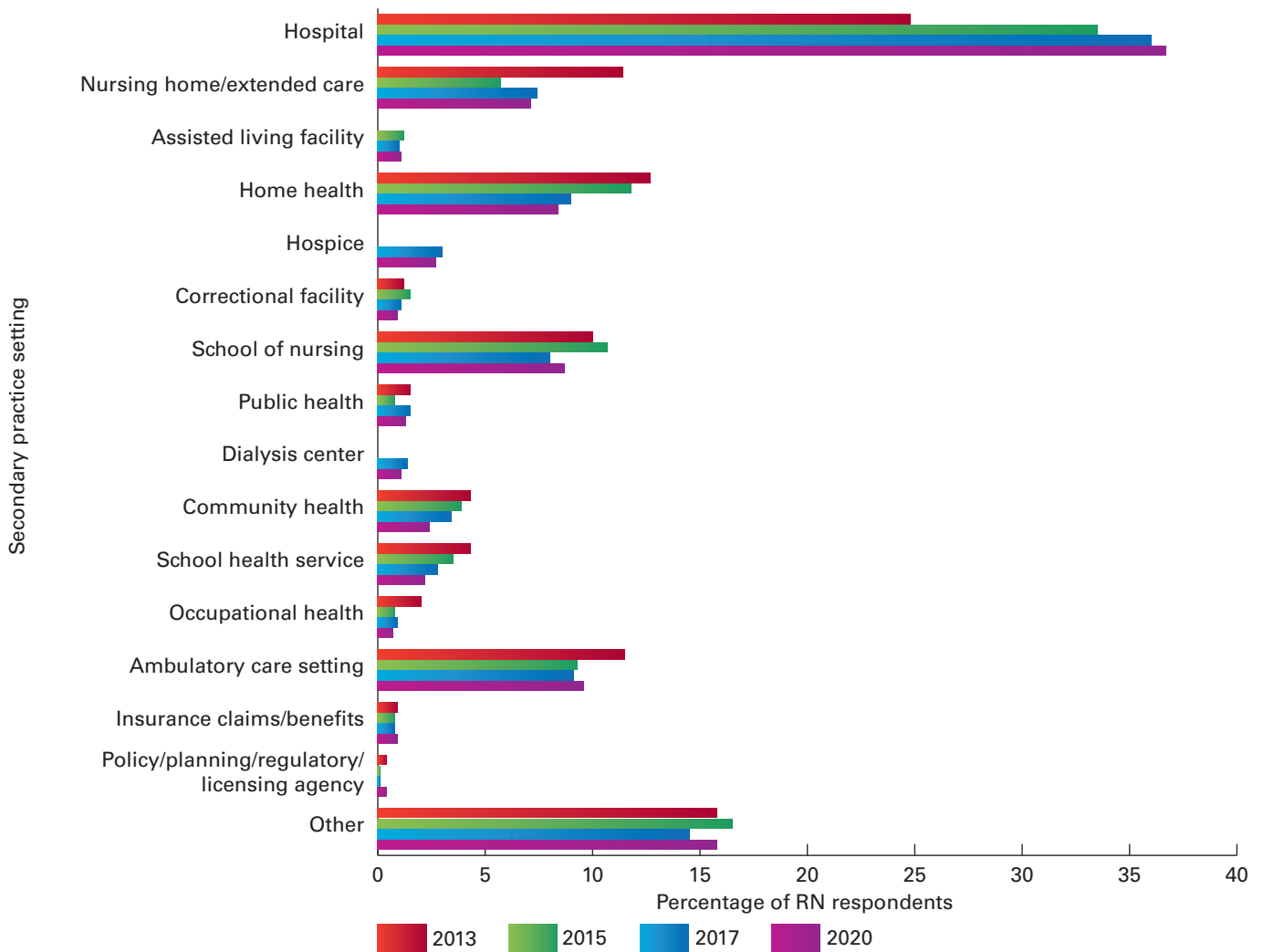
Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

Secondary Nursing Position Title

The most frequently selected position title that corresponds to secondary nursing practice position was staff nurse at 57.6%, up from 55.8% in 2017, followed by nurse faculty/educator at 10.8%. APRN respondents were at 8.7%, down from 12.1% in the 2017 survey. Respondents who selected the "other—health related" category were at 9.7%, similar to the past two surveys (Table 33 and Figure 15).

TABLE 33

Secondary Nursing Practice Position Title of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020

Weighted Sample Values								
Secondary Title	2013 (*n* = 5,370.9)		2015 (*n* = 4,857.8)		2017 (*n* = 6,145.9)		2020 (*n* = 5,080.8)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Consultant	244.2	4.6	216.0	4.5	201.2	3.3	165.6	3.3
Nurse researcher	41.6	0.8	28.9	0.6	36.2	0.6	21.9	0.4
Nurse executive	77.0	1.4	46.6	1.0	34.6	0.6	40.3	0.8
Nurse manager	301.1	5.6	143.2	3.0	235.4	3.8	196.2	3.9
Nurse faculty/educator	469.4	8.7	482.0	9.9	601.5	9.8	547.0	10.8
Advanced practice registered nurse	520.6	9.7	521.8	10.7	743.0	12.1	443.9	8.7
Staff nurse	3,050.7	56.8	2,767.9	57.0	3,430.8	55.8	2,924.9	57.6
Case manager			157.8	3.4	256.3	4.2	205.5	4.1
Other—health related	628.1	11.7	475.0	9.8	573.7	9.3	490.2	9.7
Other—not health related	38.1	0.7	18.6	0.4	33.3	0.5	45.3	0.9

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

FIGURE 15

Secondary Nursing Practice Position Title of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020
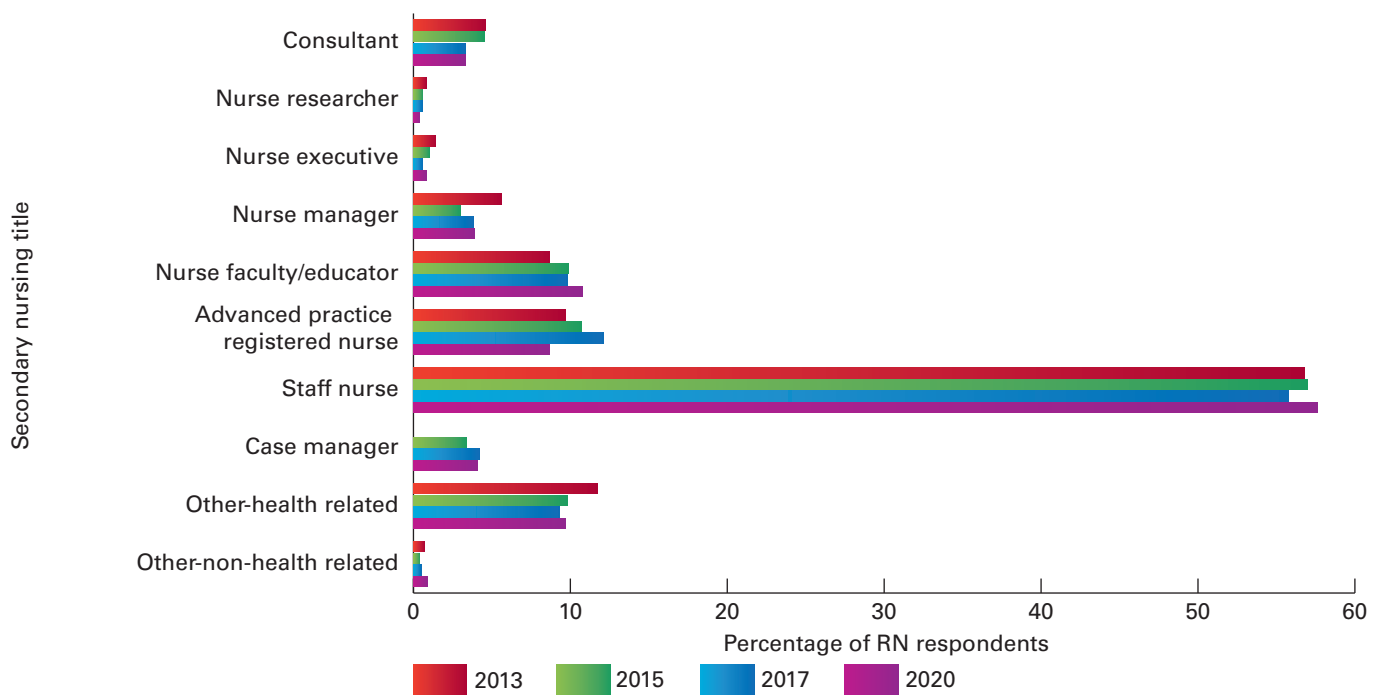
Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

Secondary Nursing Position Specialty

Acute care/critical care was the highest reported specialty for the secondary nursing position (10.7%), followed by the medical surgical specialty (7.7%) and the geriatric/gerontology specialty (7.3%) (Table 34 and Figure 16).

TABLE 34

Secondary Nursing Practice Position Specialty of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020

Weighted Sample Values								
Secondary Specialty	2013 (n = 5,285.6)		2015 (n = 4,791.1)		2017 (n = 5,895.2)		2020 (n = 4,887.2)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Acute care/critical care	673.1	12.7	386.2	8.1	602.6	10.2	523.2	10.7
Adult health	187.5	3.6	124.7	2.6	309.0	5.2	229.6	4.7
Family health					149.1	2.5	116.7	2.4
Anesthesia	115.2	2.2	76.2	1.6	161.2	2.7	95.1	2.0
Cardiology					119.8	2.0	97.0	2.0
Community	120.5	2.3	72.1	1.5	116.2	2.0	69.4	1.4
Geriatric/gerontology	421.1	8.0	295.7	6.2	433.2	7.4	355.0	7.3
Home health	414.2	7.8	404.4	8.4	378.9	6.4	332.9	6.8
Maternal-child health/obstetrics	234.4	4.4	182.8	3.8	168.7	2.9	133.4	2.7
Medical surgical	485.9	9.2	324.5	6.8	451.5	7.7	360.6	7.4
Nephrology			37.9	0.8	112.6	1.9	40.8	0.8
Occupational health	86.4	1.6	44.2	0.9	59.0	1.0	36.2	0.7
Oncology	83.4	1.6	37.5	0.8	66.6	1.1	55.1	1.1
Palliative care/hospice	83.6	1.6	55.9	1.2	140.7	2.4	91.1	1.9
Pediatrics	243.0	4.6	219.6	4.6	242.7	4.1	226.8	4.6
Neonatal			87.5	1.8	86.3	1.5	58.9	1.2
Perioperative			227.1	4.7	269.8	4.6	222.1	4.5
Public health	81.0	1.5	46.2	1.0	87.4	1.5	69.5	1.4
Psychiatric/mental health/substance abuse	237.8	4.5	265.7	5.5	317.4	5.4	266.2	5.5
Rehabilitation	121.5	2.3	109.7	2.3	150.3	2.6	119.8	2.5
School health	200.0	3.8	177.7	3.7	146.0	2.5	123.7	2.5
Emergency/trauma	98.1	1.9	291.5	6.1	375.1	6.4	290.8	6.0
Women's health	68.0	1.3	53.1	1.1	79.8	1.4	60.3	1.2
Other—clinical specialties					714.4	12.1	744.6	15.2
Other—nonclinical specialties					156.9	2.7	168.4	3.5
Other	1155.4	21.9	1,033.7	21.6				
Primary care	134.7	2.6	144.7	3.0				
Genetics			11.0	0.2				
Informatics			20.0	0.4				
Neurology/neurosurgical			21.0	0.4				
Orthopedic			21.5	0.5				
Radiology			13.9	0.3				
Urology			5.2	0.1				
Telehealth	40.9	0.8						

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

FIGURE 16

Secondary Nursing Practice Position Specialty of Registered Nurses, 2013–2020
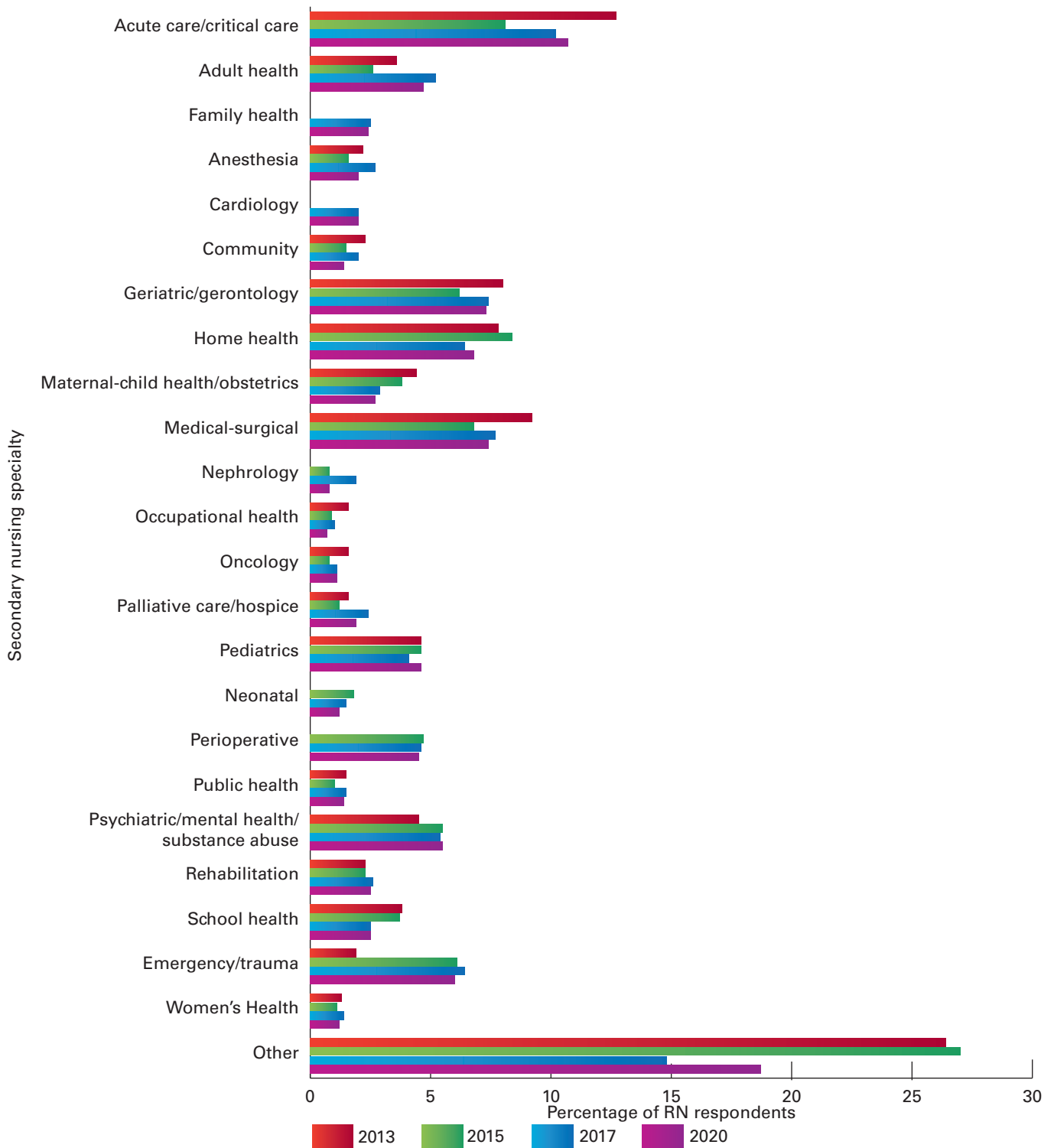
Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

Providing Direct Patient Care—Secondary Nursing Practice Position

A new question was added to the 2020 survey regarding direct patient care. Survey respondents were asked, "In your secondary nursing practice position, do you spend the majority of your time providing direct patient care?" Nearly three-fourths (72.0%) responded "yes" (Table 35).

TABLE 35

Providing Direct Patient Care—Secondary Nursing Position of Registered Nurses, 2020

Weighted Sample Values		
	2020 (*n* = 5,076.1)	
	n	%
Yes	3,653.3	72.0
No	1,422.7	28.0

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

Salary/Earnings

2020 Pretax Annual Earnings From Primary Nursing Position

The median pretax annual earnings for responding RNs have slowly increased from $60,000 in 2015 to $70,000 in 2020. This constitutes a 3.3% simple annual growth in earnings during the 5-year period. Categorically, the percentage of respondents earning less than $40,000 annually decreased by 0.4 percentage points, the percentage making between $40,000 and $60,000 decreased by 3.9 percentage points in 2020 from 2017. The percentage of respondents in categories earning more than $60,000 per year all saw small increases in 2020 from 2017 (1.3% for those between $60,000 to $80,000, 1.2% for those earning more than $80,000 but less than $100,000, and 1.8% in those earning more than $100,000) (Table 36 and Figure 17).

TABLE 36

Annual Earnings of Registered Nurses, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Annual Earnings	2015 (*n* = 32,455.7)		2017 (*n* = 35,745.6)		2020 (*n* = 29,453.8)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
< $40,000	4,711.3	14.5	4,217.8	11.8	3,355.6	11.4
$40,000 to < $60,000	8,436.8	26.0	8,243.4	23.1	5,639.5	19.2
$60,000 to < $80,000	9,202.0	28.4	10,213.3	28.6	8,808.0	29.9
$80,000 to < $100,000	5,279.8	16.3	6,386.3	17.9	5,617.0	19.1
≥ $100,000 or more	4,825.7	14.9	6,684.8	18.7	6,033.8	20.5

Estimated Population Values						
Annual Earnings	2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
< $40,000	377,964	14.5	342,160	11.8	335,235	11.4
$40,000 to < $60,000	676,837	26.0	668,729	23.1	563,404	19.2
$60,000 to < $80,000	738,224	28.4	828,530	28.6	879,947	29.9
$80,000 to < $100,000	423,568	16.3	518,071	17.9	561,156	19.1
≥ $100,000	387,136	14.9	542,292	18.7	602,796	20.5

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. Salary includes overtime and bonuses but does not include sign-on bonuses.

FIGURE 17

Annual Earnings of Registered Nurses, 2015–2020
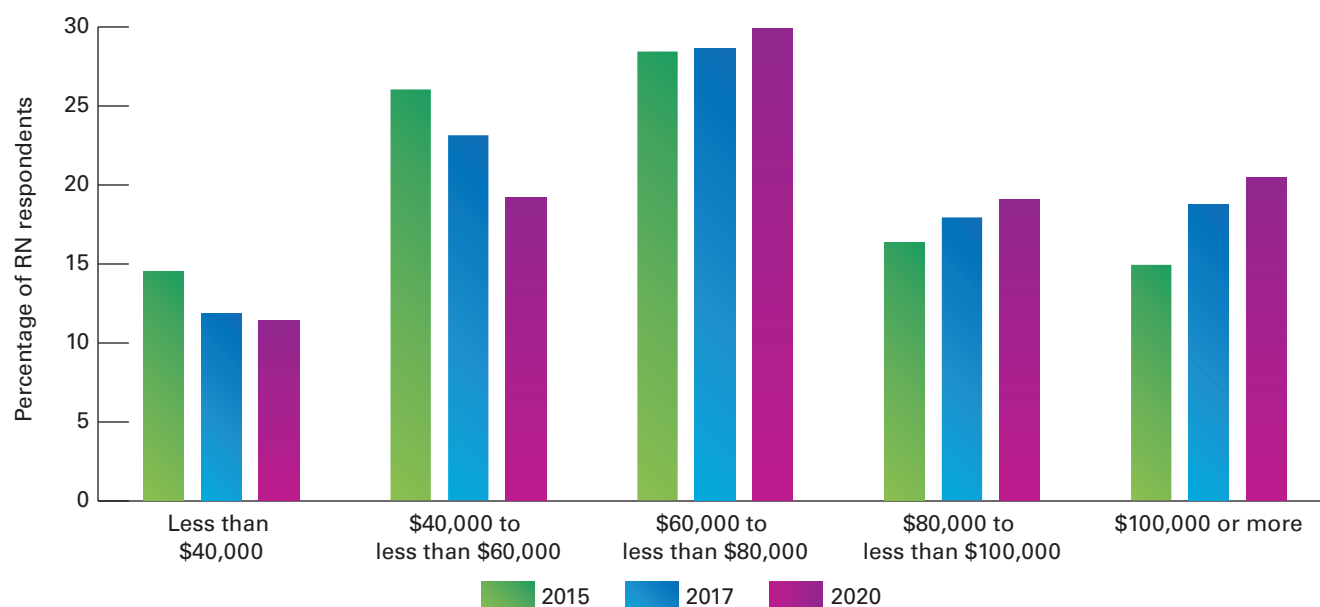
Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. Salary includes overtime and bonuses but does not include sign-on bonuses.

Earnings by Gender and Specialty

Looking across all the specialties, the specialty with the highest median salary remains anesthesia ($170,000 overall). Across nearly all specialties, men have a higher median salary than women. In 2017, the only specialty where women reported higher earnings was oncology. In 2020, women reported higher median earnings in the specialties of nephrology, palliative care/hospice, and rehabilitation. Of note, out of 23 specialties (not including the "other" categories), 16 reported a drop in median incomes at an average of –$3,200 since 2017. Greater-than-average drops in reported median income occurred in family health (–$9,250), maternal-child health/obstetrics (–$4,000), pediatrics (–$5,000), neonatal (–$5,250), and women's health (–$7,425) (Table 37).

TABLE 37

Median Annual Earnings by Gender and Specialty of Registered Nurses, 2020

Specialty	Male		Female		Other		Total	
	n	*Earnings*	*n*	*Earnings*	*n*	*Earnings*	*n*	*Total*
Acute care/critical care	523	$75,000	3,109	$70,000	1	$60,000	3,633	$71,000
Adult health	74	$80,130	909	$74,000			983	$74,000
Family health	53	$94,000	863	$75,000			916	$75,000
Anesthesia	128	$184,500	237	$160,000			365	$170,000
Cardiology	96	$83,836	815	$69,000			911	$70,000
Community	22	$77,134	260	$67,040			282	$68,578
Geriatric/gerontology	92	$70,850	1,455	$65,000	2	$68,240	1,549	$66,000
Home health	75	$73,000	978	$65,000	2	$38,413	1,055	$65,000
Maternal-child health/obstetrics	4	$64,500	1,251	$64,000	2	$74,000	1,257	$64,000
Medical-surgical	206	$65,000	2,219	$62,000	1	$75,000	2,426	$62,000
Nephrology	63	$70,000	379	$74,000	1	$71,721	443	$73,000
Occupational health	21	$99,500	259	$76,000	1	$88,000	281	$78,000
Oncology	36	$75,468	784	$70,000			820	$70,000
Palliative care/hospice	29	$70,000	435	$70,000	1	$76,000	465	$70,000
Pediatrics	50	$77,000	1,115	$62,000	1	$20,587	1,166	$62,000
Neonatal	7	$80,000	586	$66,800	1	$690,000	594	$67,750

(continued)

Specialty	Male		Female		Other		Total	
	n	*Earnings*	*n*	*Earnings*	*n*	*Earnings*	*n*	*Total*
Perioperative	142	$78,700	1,693	$68,640			1,835	$70,000
Public health	27	$80,000	384	$60,951			411	$62,180
Psychiatric/mental health/substance abuse	175	$75,000	926	$70,000	2	$109,000	1,103	$71,000
Rehabilitation	33	$64,400	388	$65,000			421	$65,000
School health	14	$67,000	789	$50,000			803	$50,000
Emergency/trauma	256	$77,500	1,220	$69,000	3	$72,000	1,479	$70,000
Women's health	1	$120,000	441	$62,150			442	$62,575
Other—clinical specialties	251	$81,000	3,605	$70,000	2	$45,500	3,858	$71,000
Other—nonclinical specialties	63	$88,000	892	$77,000			955	$78,000
Total	2,441	$78,000	25,992	$68,291	20	$71,861		

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. Salary includes overtime and bonuses but does not include sign-on bonuses.

Earnings by Highest Education

As expected, higher-level degrees result in increases in median earnings, with those reporting DNP as their highest degree receiving the highest earnings. Overall, reported earnings by education category have dropped by an average of $3,700 since 2017. Respondents with a diploma report a decrease of $7,900 in median earnings since 2017. Other decreases include those with an associate degree ($2,000), baccalaureate degree ($1,000), master's degree ($5,000), doctoral degree - PhD ($6,400), and doctoral degree - DNP ($4,000). Respondents with a doctoral degree in other nursing reported no change in median earnings since 2017 (Table 38).

TABLE 38

Median Annual Earnings of Registered Nurses by Highest Education, 2017 and 2020

Highest Education	2017		2020	
	n	*Earnings*	*n*	*Earnings*
Diploma	1,358	$72,900	1,318	$65,000
Associate degree	8,303	$65,000	8,308	$63,000
Baccalaureate degree	12,714	$68,000	14,964	$67,000
Master's degree	4,999	$95,000	4,617	$90,000
Doctoral degree—PhD	200	$100,000	209	$93,600
Doctoral degree—DNP	413	$104,000	519	$100,000
Doctoral degree—nursing other	37	$96,000	40	$96,000

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. Salary includes overtime and bonuses but does not include sign-on bonuses. In the 2013 and 2015 surveys, a single question, "What is your highest level of education?" was asked with the set of possible responses including both nursing and non-nursing degrees. The degree types were separated for the 2017 and 2020 surveys. PhD = doctor of philosophy; DNP = doctor of nursing practice.

Earnings by State

Since 2015, median earnings have risen in all states. States with the highest median earnings for RNs continue to be California ($90,000), Hawaii ($90,000), New York ($80,000), Oregon ($80,000), and Washington ($80,000). The following states with the lowest median earnings have also remained unchanged over time: South Dakota ($62,000), Iowa ($63,000), Kansas, and North Dakota ($65,000). Despite no changes in the rankings by state, the states with the lowest reported median earnings reported much higher increases in earnings over time since 2015 than the states with the largest reported median earnings. The lowest ranked states reported an average increase in annual earnings of 4.2% since 2015. While the states with the highest reported annual earnings averaged an increase of just 1.4 percentage points in reported earnings during the same period. The states with the highest increase in median wages since 2015 are Indiana (6.0%), Utah (5.7%), Tennessee (5.5%), Nebraska (5.2%), and Virginia (5.0%). Also, of note, the Northern Mariana Islands saw the highest increase (14.3%) in reported median earnings since 2015 (Table 39).

TABLE 39

Median Annual Earnings in Primary Nursing Position by State(s) Where Registered Nurses Are Currently Practicing, 2015–2020

State/Jurisdiction	2015	2017	2020	State/Jurisdiction	2015	2017	2020
Alabama	$55,000	$60,000	$68,000	Nebraska	$54,000	$60,000	$68,000
Alaska	$70,000	$76,000	$79,000	Nevada	$72,000	$77,000	$78,000
Arizona	$69,000	$70,500	$75,000	New Hampshire	$64,000	$66,500	$75,000
Arkansas	$56,000	$61,605	$68,000	New Jersey	$76,000	$75,915	$80,000
California	$90,000	$88,000	$90,000	New Mexico	$62,000	$69,500	$73,000
Colorado	$63,000	$65,000	$74,030	New York	$77,000	$80,000	$80,000
Connecticut	$75,000	$75,000	$80,000	North Carolina	$58,890	$61,000	$69,000
Delaware	$71,000	$71,900	$75,000	North Dakota	$54,000	$60,000	$65,000
District of Columbia	$75,000	$79,000	$80,000	Ohio	$58,000	$65,000	$70,000
Florida	$60,000	$65,500	$72,000	Oklahoma	$58,326	$64,000	$70,000
Georgia	$64,000	$68,000	$75,000	Oregon	$75,000	$80,000	$80,000
Hawaii	$82,000	$85,000	$90,000	Pennsylvania	$62,000	$70,000	$75,000
Idaho	$60,000	$62,000	$70,000	Rhode Island	$70,000	$70,000	$77,400
Illinois	$65,000	$67,000	$73,169	South Carolina	$57,000	$64,000	$69,609
Indiana	$53,000	$64,000	$69,000	South Dakota	$51,000	$54,000	$62,000
Iowa	$51,662	$58,000	$63,000	Tennessee	$55,000	$62,000	$70,000
Kansas	$54,000	$64,000	$65,000	Texas	$68,700	$72,000	$75,000
Kentucky	$60,000	$64,000	$68,000	Utah	$53,000	$65,000	$68,000
Louisiana	$60,000	$65,000	$68,000	Vermont	$62,000	$61,000	$73,492
Maine	$60,000	$63,000	$68,800	Virginia	$60,000	$69,000	$75,000
Maryland	$70,000	$74,466	$78,000	Washington	$70,000	$75,000	$80,000
Massachusetts	$75,633	$76,000	$79,655	West Virginia	$55,000	$62,000	$68,000
Michigan	$60,000	$67,000	$73,000	Wisconsin	$60,000	$63,000	$70,500
Minnesota	$64,870	$66,000	$74,000	Wyoming	$64,000	$65,000	$70,000
Mississippi	$58,000	$60,000	$68,000	Guam	$52,000	$60,000	$61,604
Missouri	*	*	$68,640	Northern Mariana Islands	$35,000	$41,600	$60,000
Montana	$58,000	$60,000	$66,000				

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. Salary includes overtime and bonuses but does not include sign-on bonuses.

*Missouri did not participate in the 2015 and 2017 surveys.

Earnings by Years Licensed and Age

Median annual wages increase with both experience and age; however, wage increases are more dependent on experience than age (Table 40).

TABLE 40

Median Annual Earnings of Registered Nurses by Years Licensed and Age, 2020

| Age in Years | Number of Years Licensed | | | | | | | | | |
| | 0–1 | | 2–5 | | 6–10 | | ≥ 11 | | Total | |
	n	Earnings	n	Earnings	n	Earnings	n	Earnings	n	Earnings
19-29	555	$49,000	1,780	$58,573	455	$60,000	8	$55,000	2,798	$56,000
30-34	166	$50,000	814	$60,000	1,754	$65,000	410	$65,000	3,144	$62,000
35-39	102	$50,000	523	$60,000	913	$68,000	1,646	$70,000	3,184	$66,000
40-44	74	$51,708	347	$60,000	576	$67,000	1,894	$74,767	2,891	$70,000
45-49	47	$54,000	210	$62,200	402	$70,500	2,212	$76,000	2,871	$74,000
50-54	21	$57,300	172	$64,329	363	$70,000	2,444	$78,000	3,000	$75,000
55-59	11	$48,000	81	$62,400	208	$65,500	3,207	$79,000	3,507	$77,000
60-64	2	$66,000	24	$62,500	118	$69,500	3,448	$76,000	3,592	$75,000
≥ 65	9	$70,000	25	$65,000	66	$62,500	2,996	$65,000	3,096	$65,000
Total	987	$50,000	3,976	$60,000	4,855	$65,000	18,265	$75,000	20,083	

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. Salary includes overtime and bonuses but does not include sign-on bonuses.

Earnings by APRNs

CRNAs continue to report the highest salaries among ARPNs (median $180,000 in 2020). Reported salaries from APRN professions have remained relatively stable since 2017 (Table 41).

TABLE 41

Median Annual Earnings by APRN Role, 2017 and 2020

| APRN Role | 2017 | | 2020 | |
	n	Earnings	n	Earnings
CNP	2,982	$100,000	1,958	$100,000
CNS	644	$88,000	448	$80,000
CRNA	557	$171,000	341	$180,000
CNM	186	$97,750	116	$86,000

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. Salary includes overtime and bonuses but does not include sign-on bonuses. APRN = advanced practice registered nurse; CNP = certified nurse practitioner; CRNA = certified registered nurse anesthetist; CNM = certified nurse midwife.

Telehealth Utilization

Percentage of Time Providing Telehealth

Telehealth utilization by nurses seems to have remained relatively unchanged since 2017, However, since 2015, there has been a 4.7 percentage point decrease in nurses providing telehealth services up to 25% of their time and a 4.2 percentage point increase in nurses providing telehealth more than 75% of their time. Considering that this survey was collected right at the time that healthcare delivery systems were been transitioning to more telehealth due to the pandemic, it is expected that there will be an increase in time spent by nurses utilizing telehealth. However, considering that most nurses work in inpatient hospital settings, the increase in telehealth may only be seen in nurses with advanced practice degrees working in ambulatory and primary care settings (Table 42 and Figure 18).

TABLE 42

Percentage of Time Registered Nurses Report Providing Telehealth, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Provides Telehealth	2015 (*n* = 37,354.6)		2017 (*n* = 39,441.6)		2020 (*n* = 33,582.4)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Never	19,119.1	51.2	18,095.1	45.9	17,460.2	52.0
1%–25%	11,710.7	31.4	12,490.6	31.7	8,960.8	26.7
26%–50%	2,560.5	6.9	2,851.2	7.2	2,184.9	6.5
51%–75%	1,785.3	4.8	2,201.6	5.6	1,634.5	4.9
76%–100%	2,179.1	5.8	3,803.2	9.6	3,341.9	10.0

Estimated Population Values						
Provides Telehealth	2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Never	1,533,811	51.2	1,467,920	45.9	1,744,329	52.0
1%–25%	803,549	31.4	1,013,268	31.7	895,212	26.7
26%–50%	175,691	6.9	231,294	7.2	218,278	6.5
51%–75%	122,502	4.8	178,602	5.6	163,292	4.9
76%–100%	149,519	5.8	308,529	9.6	333,866	10.0

FIGURE 18

Percentage of Time Registered Nurses Report Providing Telehealth, 2015–2020
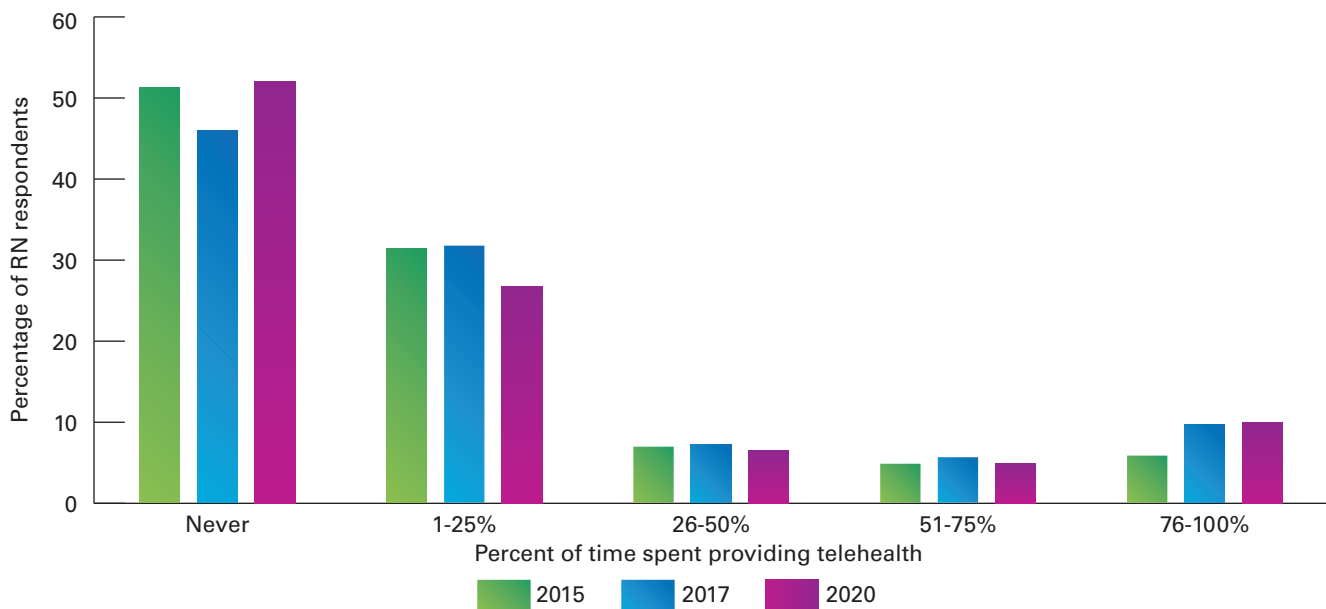
Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

Telehealth Across State Borders

Compared with previous years, in 2020, more nurses report providing telehealth services across state borders. In 2015, 39% of nurses reported providing telehealth services across state borders compared to 47% in 2020. While more nurses report providing this service, there has been minimal change in the percent of the time nurses spend in this activity since 2017. The only change of note is that those reporting above 75% of their time spent providing telehealth services across state borders had the largest change since 2015 with a 3.5 percentage point increase (Table 43 and Figure 19).

TABLE 43

Percentage of Time Registered Nurses Spend Providing Telehealth Across State Borders, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Provides Telehealth	**2015 (*n* = 18,456.1)**		**2017 (*n* = 17,573.3)**		**2020 (*n* = 13,965.3)**	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Never	11,186.7	60.6	9,535.0	54.3	7,395.6	53.0
1%–25%	5,843.2	31.7	6,294.5	35.8	4,663.6	33.4
26%–50%	626.8	3.4	692.2	3.9	678.0	4.9
51%–75%	298.5	1.6	414.0	2.4	366.9	2.6
76%–100%	500.9	2.7	637.6	3.6	861.2	6.2

FIGURE 19

Percentage of Time Registered Nurses Spend Providing Telehealth Across State Borders, 2015–2020

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

A small percentage of nurses in the United States provide services across international borders. This percentage has changed little from 2015 to 2020 going from 7.7% in 2015 to 8.6% in 2020 (Table 44 and Figure 20).

TABLE 44

Percentage of Time Registered Nurses Spend Providing Telehealth Across International Borders, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Provides Telehealth	2015 (*n* = 18,096.1)		2017 (*n* = 16,369.8)		2020 (*n* = 13,208.2)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Never	16,707.2	92.3	14,548.6	88.9	12,087.2	91.5
1%–25%	1,194.7	6.6	1,488.2	9.1	965.9	7.3
26%–50%	96.3	0.5	129.4	0.8	74.0	0.6
51%–75%	33.7	0.2	103.7	0.6	32.9	0.3
76%–100%	64.3	0.4	99.8	0.6	48.3	0.4

FIGURE 20

Percentage of Time Registered Nurses Spend Providing Telehealth Across National Borders, 2015–2020
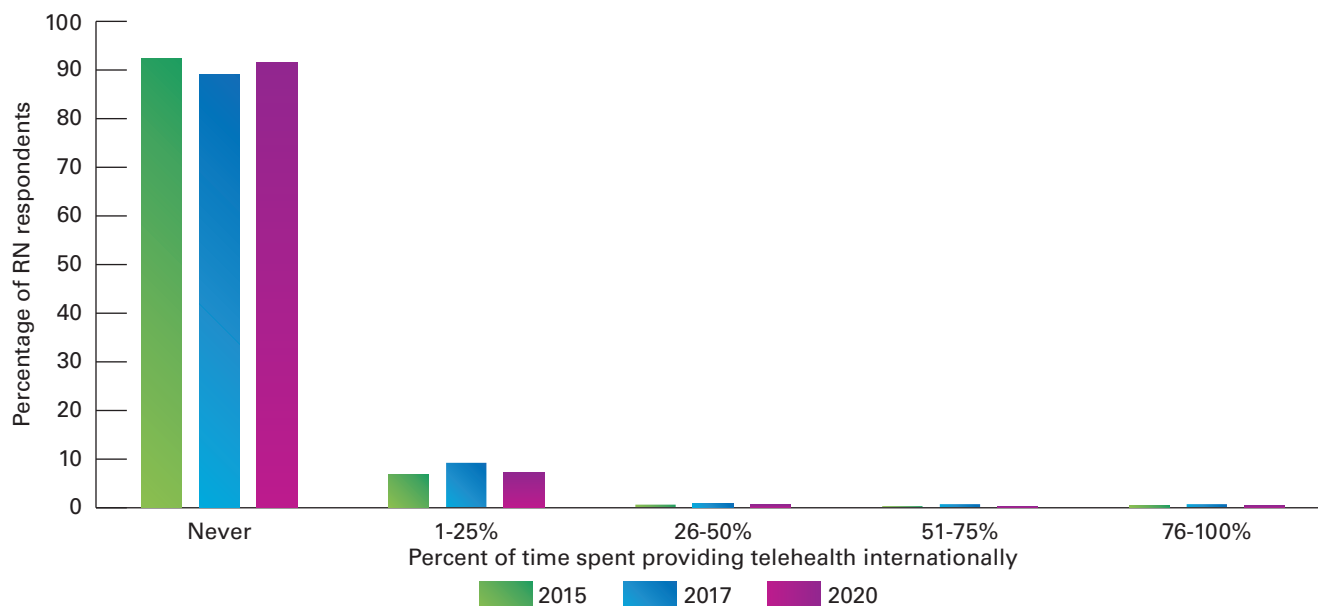
Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

Modes of Communication Used for Telehealth

The use of telephones continues to be the most common method of communication for telehealth provision. However, telephone use has declined 3.5 percentage points since 2015 in favor of video calls, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), and electronic messaging (increases of 8.1, 5.4, and 5.9 percentage points, respectively, since 2015) (Table 45 and Figure 21).

TABLE 45

Modes of Communication Used for Telehealth by Registered Nurses, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Mode of Telehealth	2015 (*n* = 15,864.1)		2017 (*n* = 17,066.0)		2020 (*n* = 13,775.4)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Electronic messaging	2,954.0	18.6	3,599.6	21.1	3,379.3	24.5
VoIP	528.7	3.3	817.3	4.8	11,297.7	8.7
Virtual ICU	167.7	1.1	276.9	1.6	316.3	2.3
Telephone	15,406.7	97.1	16,143.9	94.6	12,893.3	93.6
Email	5,128.2	32.3	5,574.4	32.7	4,497.9	32.7
Video call	463.7	2.9	619.8	3.6	1,517.1	11.0
Other	1,070.9	6.8	926.4	5.4	753.5	5.5

Note. VOIP = Voice over Internet Protocol; ICU = intensive care unit.

FIGURE 21

Modes of Communication Used for Telehealth by Registered Nurses, 2015–2020
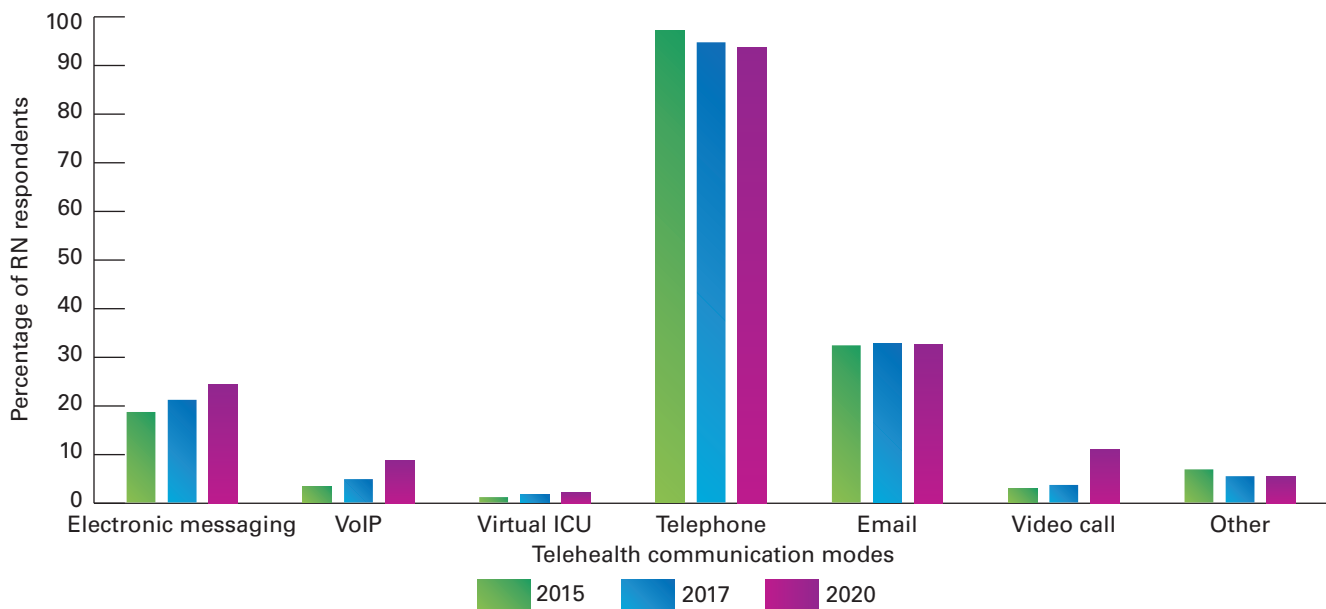
Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. Respondents were asked to select all that apply. VoIP = Voice over Internet Protocol; ICU= intensive care unit.

Licensed Practical Nurse/Licensed Vocational Nurse Results

Gender

Males accounted for 8.1% of all LPNs/LVNs, which is an increase of 0.4 percentage points since 2017. In 2020, a third category, "other" was added to the response options to the gender question on the survey and was selected by 0.1% of LPNs/LVNs (Table 46).

TABLE 46

Gender Distribution of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Gender	2015 (n = 28,891.0)		2017 (n = 34,616.8)		2020 (n = 39,530.0)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Male	2,169.7	7.5	2,670.9	7.7	3,195.8	8.1
Female	26,721.3	92.5	31,945.9	92.3	36,303.1	91.8
Other					31.1	0.1

Estimated Population Values						
Gender	2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Male	65,246	7.5	61,064	7.7	75,932	8.1
Female	803,559	92.5	730,383	92.3	862,559	91.8
Other					739	0.1

Note. "Other" was added as an option with the 2020 survey.

Age

The median age of LPNs/LVNs was 53 years. LPNs/LVNs who are aged 65 years or older account for 18.2% of the workforce. This cohort has grown by 5.0 percentage points since 2017 and by 8.3 percentage points since 2015 (Table 47 and Figure 22).

TABLE 47

Age Distribution of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Age in Years	2015 (n = 27,172.4)		2017 (n = 34,454.1)		2020 (n = 37,868.7)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
17–29	2,652.5	9.8	3,072.7	8.9	2,816.1	7.4
30–34	2,579.5	9.5	2,930.1	8.5	3,163.8	8.4
35–39	2,689.3	9.9	3,541.2	10.3	3,710.1	9.8
40–44	3,331.8	12.3	3,539.4	10.3	3,885.0	10.3
45–49	3,375.1	12.4	4,052.6	11.8	4,253.5	11.2
50–54	3,076.4	11.3	3,875.0	11.2	4,056.5	10.7
55–59	3,516.3	12.9	4,428.0	12.9	4,305.6	11.4
60–64	3,264.9	12.0	4,476.9	13.0	4,770.8	12.6
≥ 65	2,686.6	9.9	4,538.3	13.2	6,907.3	18.2

Estimated Population Values						
Age in Years	2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
17–29	79,764	9.8	70,251	8.9	66,910	7.4
30–34	77,569	9.5	66,991	8.5	75,172	8.4
35–39	80,873	9.9	80,962	10.3	88,152	9.8
40–44	100,194	12.3	80,921	10.3	92,307	10.3
45–49	101,495	12.4	92,654	11.8	101,063	11.2
50–54	92,513	11.3	88,595	11.2	96,382	10.7
55–59	105,742	12.9	101,239	12.9	102,301	11.4

(continued)

Estimated Population Values						
Age in Years	2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
60–64	98,182	12.0	102,356	13.0	113,354	12.6
≥ 65	80,791	9.9	103,759	13.2	164,117	18.2

FIGURE 22

Age Distribution of LPNs/LVNs, 2015–2020
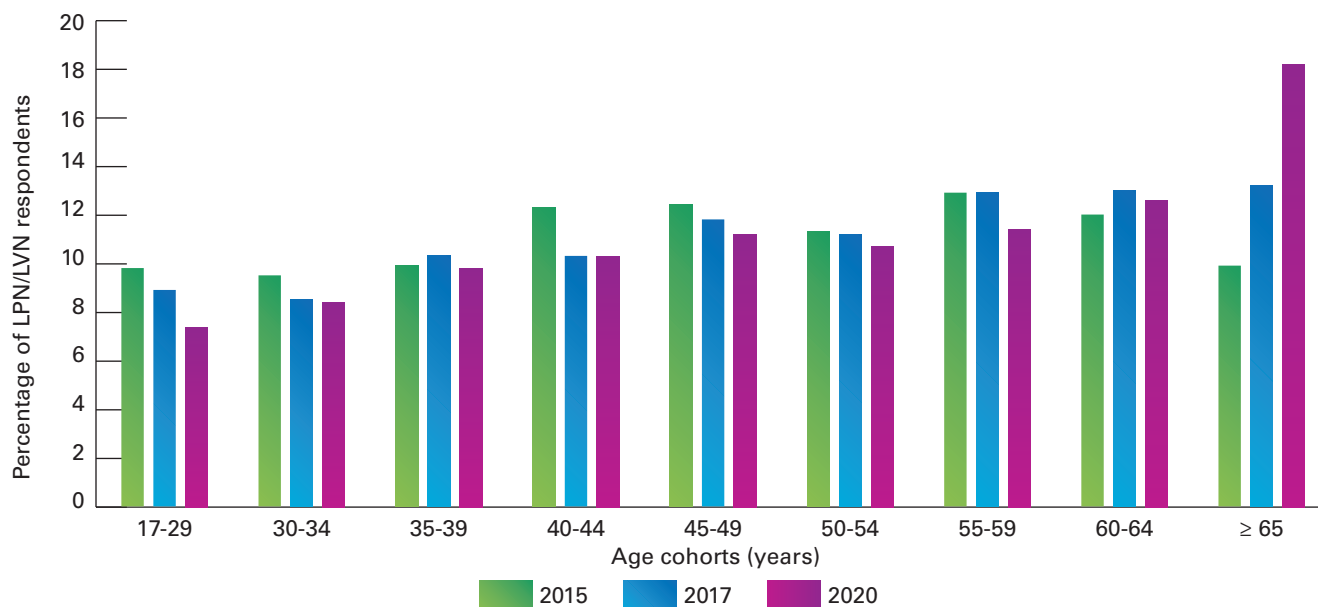
Note. LPN/LVN = licensed practical nurse/licensed vocational nurse.

Age by Gender

The age distribution of male LPNs/LVNs differs from the age distribution of female LPNs/LVNs. The proportion of female LPNs/LVNs aged 65 years or older is almost double that of male LPNs/LVNs in that age cohort, while a larger proportion of male LPNs/LVNs are in the 40–59 age range (Table 48).

TABLE 48

Age Distribution of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses by Gender, 2020

Weighted Sample Values								
Age in Years	Male (n =3,046.1)		Female (n = 34,652.2)		Other (n = 21.8)		Total (n = 37,720.1)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
17–29	256.0	8.4	2,556.3	7.4	1.6	7.5	2,813.9	7.5
30–34	251.4	8.3	2,905.1	8.4	0.5	2.4	3,157.0	8.4
35–39	263.8	8.7	3,438.3	9.9	0.4	1.7	3,702.4	9.8
40–44	395.6	13.0	3,454.9	10.0	15.8	72.5	3,866.3	10.3
45–49	413.4	13.6	3,831.6	11.1	1.0	4.5	4,246.0	11.3
50–54	408.3	13.4	3,633.9	10.5	0.8	3.9	4,043.0	10.7
55–59	412.6	13.5	3,876.8	11.2	0.4	1.6	4,289.7	11.4
60–64	287.1	9.4	4,439.1	12.8	0.6	2.9	4,726.8	12.5
≥ 65	357.9	11.8	6,516.2	18.8	0.7	3.2	6,874.8	18.2

Race/Ethnicity

LPNs/LVNs who reported being White/Caucasian account for 69.5% of the workforce. LPNs/LVNs who reported being Black/African American represent the second largest racial group in the workforce (17.2%). Between 2017 and 2020, the proportion of LPNs/LVNs identifying as Asian increased by 2.4 percentage points to account for 5.0% of the workforce (Table 49).

TABLE 49

Race/Ethnicity of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, 2017 and 2020

Race	2017 (*n* = 34,467.5)		2020 (*n* = 39,397.4)	
	n	%	*n*	%
American Indian or Alaska Native	219.8	0.6	316.6	0.8
Asian	897.4	2.6	1,980.6	5.0
Black/African American	6,372.4	18.5	6,790.7	17.2
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	62.4	0.2	225.2	0.6
Middle Eastern/North African			33.7	0.1
White/Caucasian	24,604.0	71.4	27,385.1	69.5
Other	1,568.5	4.6	1,743.9	4.4
More than one race category selected	743.1	2.2	921.6	2.3

Race	2017		2020	
	n	%	*n*	%
American Indian or Alaska Native	5,024	0.6	7,522	0.8
Asian	20,517	2.6	47,059	5.0
Black/African American	145,692	18.5	161,346	17.2
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	1,427	0.2	5,351	0.6
Middle Eastern/North African			801	0.1
White/Caucasian	562,524	71.4	650,668	69.5
Other	35,860	4.6	41,435	4.4
More than one race category selected	16,990	2.2	21,897	2.3

Note. Respondents were asked to select all that apply. The responses were subsequently recoded to ensure that the race categories were mutually exclusive. Respondents selecting multiple race categories were reclassified into the "More than one race category selected" category. For the 2020 survey, "Middle Eastern/North African" was added as a response category.

Hispanic/Latinx Ethnicity

LPNs/LVNs who reported being of Hispanic/Latinx ancestry account for 10.0% of the workforce. The proportion of LPNs/LVNs identifying as Hispanic/Latinx increased by 2.6 percentage points since 2017 (Table 50 and Figure 23).

TABLE 50

Hispanic or Latinx Ethnicity of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Ethnicity	2015 (*n* = 30,620.8)		2017 (*n* = 34,449.3)		2020 (*n* = 39,335.6)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Hispanic or Latinx ancestry	1,964.6	6.4	2,558.6	7.4	3,912.8	10.0
Not of Hispanic or Latinx ancestry	28,656.3	93.6	31,890.6	92.6	35,422.9	90.0

Estimated Population Values						
Ethnicity	2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Hispanic or Latinx ancestry	59,079	6.4	58,498	7.4	92,968	10.0
Not of Hispanic or Latinx ancestry	861,746	93.6	729,119	92.6	841,645	90.0

FIGURE 23

Hispanic or Latinx Ethnicity of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, 2015–2020
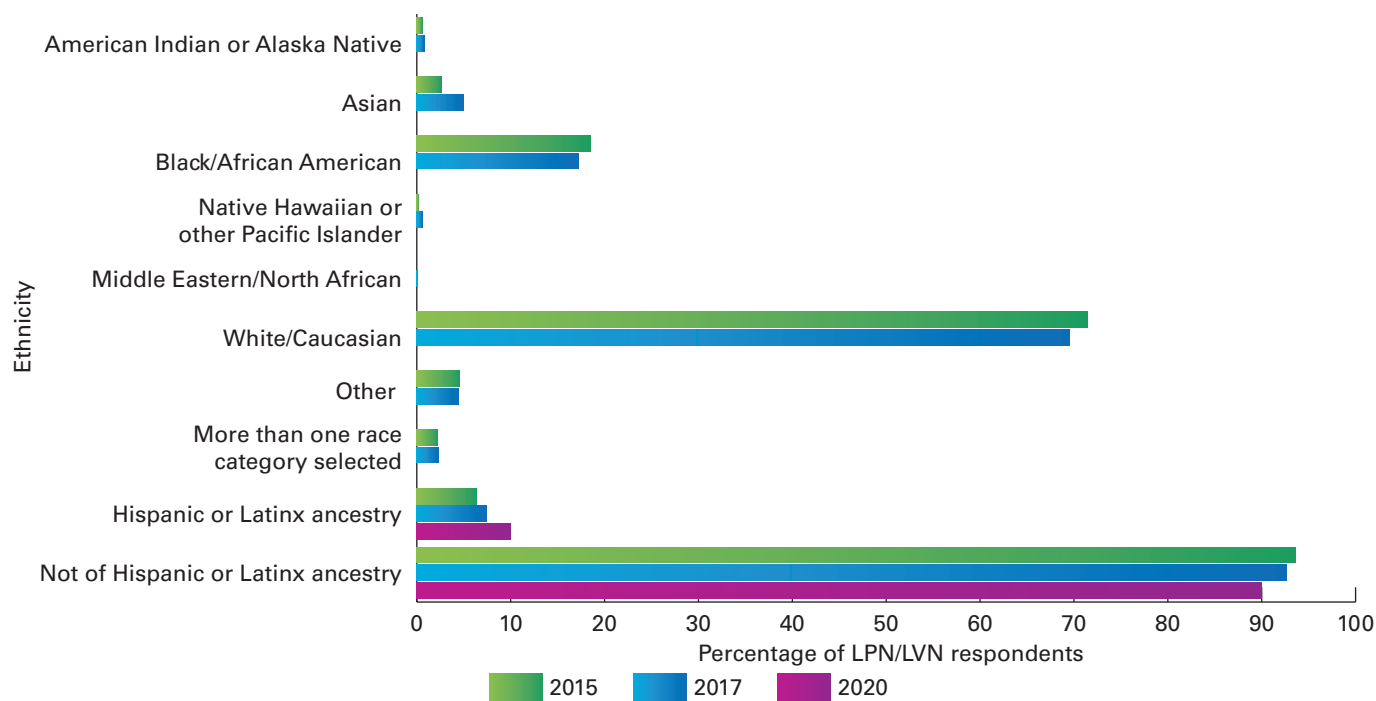
Note. In the 2013 and 2015 surveys, the Hispanic/Latino origin and race categories were combined into one question. The categories were separated for the 2017 survey. LPN/LVN = licensed practical nurse/licensed vocational nurse.

Race/Ethnicity by Gender

In comparison to their overall representation in the workforce, LPNs/LVNs who are male are disproportionately likely to identify as racial minorities. Males account for 8.1% of all LPNs/LVNs, but account for substantially larger proportions of LPNs/LVNS who identify as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (22.1%), Asian (17.2%), and Black/African American (11.0%) (Table 51).

TABLE 51

Race/Ethnicity of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses by Gender, 2020

Weighted Sample Values							
Gender	*n*	Male		Female		Other	
		n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
American Indian or Alaska Native	316.3	18.4	5.8%	296.3	93.7%	1.6	0.5%
Asian	1,970.7	339.5	17.2%	1,624.6	82.4%	6.6	0.3%
Black/African American	6,758.3	742.6	11.0%	6,015.7	89.0%	0.0	0.0%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	225.2	49.8	22.1%	175.3	77.9%	0.0	0.0%
Middle Eastern/North African	33.3	3.5	10.5%	29.8	89.5%	0.0	0.0%
White/Caucasian	27,284.7	1,674.1	6.1%	25,604.7	93.8%	6.0	0.0%
Other	1,736.4	244.2	14.1%	1,475.9	85.0%	16.3	0.9%
More than one race category selected	919.3	101.9	11.1%	817.3	88.9%	0.1	0.0%
Total	39,244.2	3,174.0	8.1%	36,039.6	91.8%	30.6	0.1%

Note. Respondents were asked to select all that apply. Responses were subsequently recoded to ensure that the race categories were mutually exclusive. Respondents selecting multiple race categories were reclassified into the "More than one race category selected" category.

Race/Ethnicity by Age

Although LPNs/LVNs younger than 50 years account for a larger proportion of minority nurses, the youngest cohort of LPNs/LVNs (age 19 to 29 years) is more racially similar to nurses between the ages of 50 and 59 years. Compared to the next oldest cohort (age 30 to 34), the youngest LPNs/LVNs are more likely to be White/Caucasian (73.6% vs. 66.3%) and less likely to identify as Asian, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or multiracial. As compared to the entire LPN/LVN workforce, a smaller proportion of LPNs/LVNs younger than 30 years identify as belonging to a racial minority group (26.6% vs. 30.3%) (Table 52).

TABLE 52

Race/Ethnicity of Licensed Practical Nurses and Licensed Vocational Nurses by Age, 2020

Weighted Sample Values									
Age in Years	n	n (%)							
		American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black/ African American	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Middle Eastern/ North African	White/ Caucasian	Other	More Than One Race
17–29	2,789.0	34.0 (1.2)	174.9 (6.3)	286.0 (10.3)	5.5 (0.2)	4.7 (0.2)	2,051.2 (73.6)	144.2 (5.2)	88.4 (3.2)
30–34	3,131.4	32.7 (1.1)	214.2 (6.8)	481.1 (15.4)	27.5 (0.9)	1.4 (0.1)	2,075.6 (66.3)	177.0 (5.7)	121.9 (3.9)
35–39	3,680.0	21.1 (0.6)	239.1 (6.5)	725.5 (19.7)	56.7 (1.5)	10.9 (0.3)	2,335.8 (63.5)	173.7 (4.7)	117.2 (3.2)
40–44	3,850.2	38.3 (1.0)	189.3 (4.9)	815.7 (21.2)	32.9 (0.9)	0.0 (0.0)	2,468.5 (64.1)	195.1 (5.1)	110.5 (2.9)
45–49	4,233.6	35.5 (0.8)	247.3 (5.8)	993.4 (23.5)	29.7 (0.7)	2.0 (0.1)	2,625.3 (62.0)	204.0 (4.8)	96.5 (2.3)
50–54	4,028.6	27.3 (0.7)	199.6 (5.0)	752.0 (18.7)	31.8 (0.8)	2.7 (0.1)	2,714.0 (67.4)	220.0 (5.5)	81.3 (2.0)
55–59	4,274.1	28.9 (0.7)	190.4 (4.5)	708.2 (16.6)	23.7 (0.6)	4.3 (0.1)	3,076.0 (72.0)	178.8 (4.2)	63.9 (1.5)
60–64	4,748.9	37.2 (0.8)	206.5 (4.4)	699.6 (14.7)	7.0 (0.2)	1.7 (0.0)	3,570.8 (75.2)	134.7 (2.8)	91.4 (1.9)
≥ 65	6,855.9	44.7 (0.7)	234.9 (3.4)	950.2 (13.9)	7.9 (0.1)	1.9 (0.0)	5,293.4 (77.2)	201.1 (2.9)	121.6 (1.8)
Total	37,591.7	299.7 (0.8)	1,896.1 (5.0)	6,411.7 (17.1)	222.9 (0.6)	29.7 (0.1)	26,210.6 (69.7)	1,628.5 (4.3)	892.6 (2.4)

Note. Respondents were asked to select all that apply. Responses were subsequently recoded to ensure that the race categories were mutually exclusive. Respondents selecting multiple race categories were reclassified into the "More than one race category selected" category.

Education

Type of Nursing Degree or Credential for First U.S. Nursing License

In 2020, 81.5% of respondents reported that a vocational/practical certificate in nursing qualified them for their first U.S. nursing license. An additional 10.1% reported that a diploma was their qualifying degree, while 7.2% and 1.3% reported it was an associate or baccalaureate degree, respectively. Interestingly, the proportion of LPNs/LVNs with an associate or baccalaureate degree increased over the years, while those qualifying with a vocational/practical certificate and diploma has decreased (Table 53).

TABLE 53

Type of Nursing Degree or Credential of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses for First U.S. Nursing License, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Degree or Credential	2015 (n = 30,223.3)		2017 (n = 34,108.8)		2020 (n = 38,868.2)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Vocational/practical certificate	25,257.4	83.6	28,395.0	83.2	31,665.6	81.5
Diploma	3,661.3	12.1	4,098.6	12.0	3,914.4	10.1
Associate degree	1,168.8	3.9	1,521.3	4.5	2,793.3	7.2
Baccalaureate degree	135.8	0.4	93.9	0.3	495.0	1.3

Estimated Population Values						
Degree or Credential	2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Vocational/practical certificate	759,537	83.6	649,197	83.2	752,371	81.5
Diploma	110,101	12.1	93,707	12.0	93,006	10.1
Associate degree	35,146	3.9	34,782	4.5	66,368	7.2
Baccalaureate degree	4,085	0.4	2,146	0.3	11,760	1.3

Type of Nursing Degree or Credential for First U.S. Nursing License by Age.

LPNs/LVNs whose initial education to receive their license was an associate degree were more likely to be younger than those whose initial education was a vocational/practical certificate. Additionally, those whose initial education was a baccalaureate degree tended to be slightly older than those with an associate degree, but younger than those with a vocational/practical certificate (Table 54 and Figure 24).

TABLE 54

Type of Nursing Degree or Credential of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses for First U.S. Nursing License by Age, 2020

Weighted Sample Values										
Degree or Credential	n	Age in Years, n (%)								
		18–29	30–34	35–39	40–44	45–49	50–54	55–59	60–64	≥ 65
Vocational/ practical certificate	30,275.1	2,280.9 (7.5)	2,489.1 (8.2)	2,844.3 (9.4)	3,002.7 (9.9)	3,251.0 (10.7)	3,190.2 (10.5)	3,494.9 (11.5)	3,956.4 (13.1)	5,765.4 (19.0)
Diploma	3,714.4	248.8 (6.7)	318.5 (8.6)	439.2 (11.8)	445.4 (12.0)	505.4 (13.6)	447.8 (12.1)	404.7 (10.9)	348.6 (9.4)	556.1 (15.0)
Associate degree	2,649.6	212.3 (8.0)	263.1 (9.9)	337.0 (12.7)	312.4 (11.8)	355.2 (13.4)	278.8 (10.5)	272.5 (10.3)	284.0 (10.7)	334.3 (12.6)
Baccalaureate degree	470.3	33.0 (7.0)	49.4 (10.5)	37.6 (8.0)	48.2 (10.2)	63.7 (13.6)	79.4 (16.9)	31.2 (6.6)	69.2 (14.7)	58.7 (12.5)
Total	37,109.4	2,774.9 (7.5)	3,120.1 (8.4)	3,658.1 (9.9)	3,808.8 (10.3)	4,175.4 (11.3)	3,996.2 (10.8)	4,203.3 (11.3)	4,658.2 (12.6)	6,714.5 (18.1)

FIGURE 24

Type of Nursing Degree or Credential of LPNs/LVNs for First U.S. Nursing License by Age, 2020
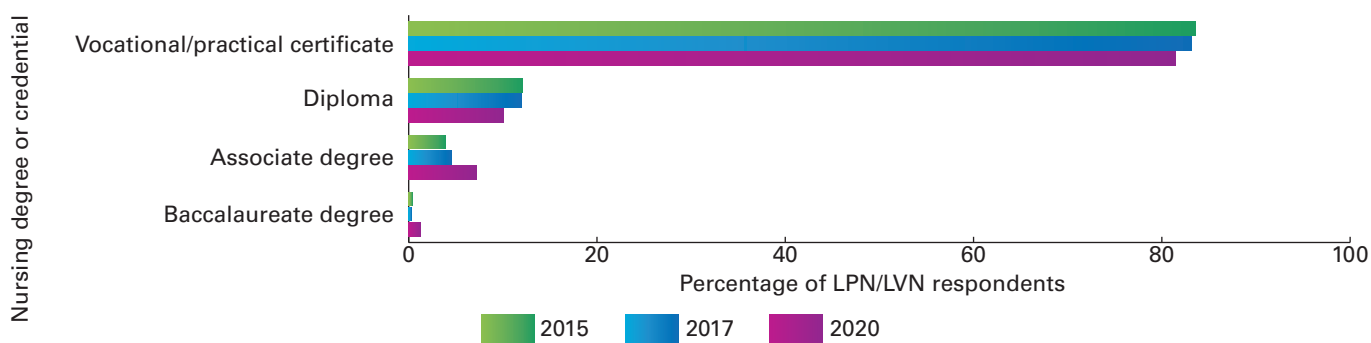
Note. LPN/LVN = licensed practical nurse/licensed vocational nurse.

Highest Level of Nursing Education

When asked about the highest level of nursing education earned, 72.0% reported a vocational/practical certificate, 12.2% reported a diploma, 12.7% reported an associate degree, and 3.1% indicated a baccalaureate degree. The percentage of LPNs/LVNs who reported an associate or baccalaureate degree increased markedly since 2015, while those earning a vocational/practical certificate or diploma declined (Table 55 and Figure 25).

TABLE 55

Highest Level of Nursing Education Among Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Education Level	2015 (*n* = 25,626.5)		2017 (*n* = 34,208.6)		2020 (*n* = 38,746.1)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Vocational/practical certificate	19,481.3	76.0	26,615.3	77.8	27,899.9	72.0
Diploma	3,882.5	15.2	4,900.8	14.3	4,732.5	12.2
Associate degree	1,888.6	7.4	2,509.6	7.3	4,910.1	12.7
Baccalaureate degree	308.5	1.2	182.8	0.5	1,203.5	3.1

Note. In the 2013 and 2015 surveys a single question "What is your highest level of education?" was asked with the set of possible responses including both nursing and non-nursing degrees. The degree types were separated for the 2017 and 2020 surveys.

FIGURE 25

Highest Level of Nursing Education Among LPNs/LVNs, 2015–2020

Note. In the 2013 and 2015 surveys a single question "What is your highest level of education?" was asked with the set of possible responses including both nursing and non-nursing degrees. The degree types were separated for the 2017 and 2020 surveys. LPN/LVN = licensed practical nurse/licensed vocational nurse.

Highest Level of Nursing Education by Race

Across all race/ethnicity groups, the highest level of nursing education was reported as the vocational/practical certificate. Asian LPNs/LVNs are more likely to hold a baccalaureate degree (23.6%) than all other groups (3.1% for all other groups combined) (Table 56).
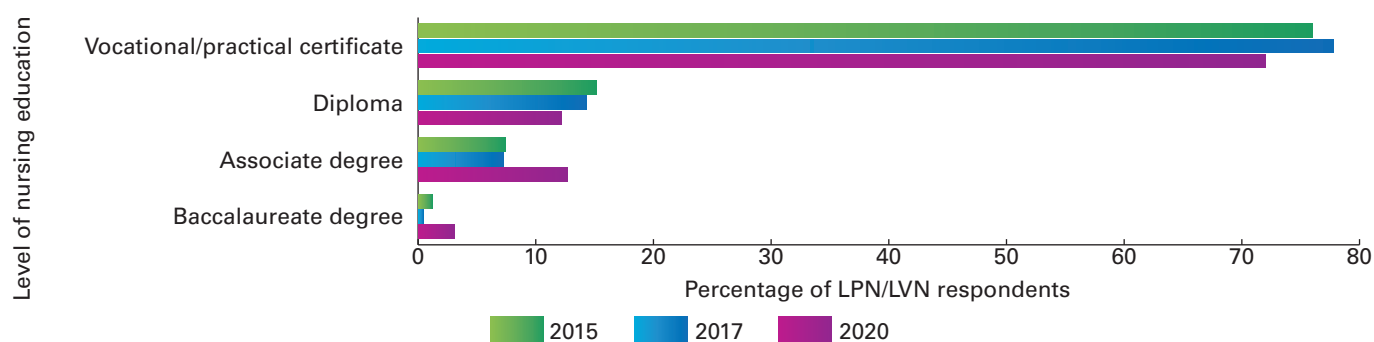

TABLE 56

Highest Level of Nursing Education of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses by Race, 2020

Weighted Sample Values								
Race	*n*	Vocational/ Practical Certificate		Diploma		Associate Degree		Baccalaureate Degree	
		n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
American Indian or Alaska Native	306.6	224.2	73.1	34.7	11.3%	47.1	15.4%	0.7	0.2%
Asian	1,922.9	1,074.6	55.9	166.4	8.7%	228.7	11.9%	453.2	23.6%
Black/African American	6,629.0	4,345.0	65.6	1,164.0	17.6	905.1	13.7	214.9	3.2
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	222.2	173.4	78.0	3.2	1.4	12.0	5.4	33.6	15.1
Middle Eastern/North African	33.2	21.3	64.2	3.6	10.7	4.8	14.4	3.6	10.7
White/Caucasian	26,768.0	20,026.0	74.8	3,027.5	11.3	3,320.3	12.4	394.2	1.5
Other	1,695.7	1,177.8	69.5	210.3	12.4	231.6	13.7	76.1	4.5
More than one race category selected	890.3	638.6	71.7	101.2	11.4	127.4	14.3	23.1	2.6

(continued)

Weighted Sample Values								
Race	n	Vocational/ Practical Certificate		Diploma		Associate Degree		Baccalaureate Degree
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total	38,467.9	27,680.9	72.0	4,710.8	12.2	4,877.0	12.7	1,199.3	3.1

Note. In the 2013 and 2015 surveys, a single question "What is your highest level of education?" was asked with the set of possible responses including both nursing and non-nursing degrees. The degree types were separated for the 2017 and 2020 surveys. For the race question, respondents were asked to select all that apply. The responses were subsequently recoded to ensure that the race categories were mutually exclusive. Respondents selecting multiple race categories were reclassified into the "More than one race category selected" category. For the 2020 survey, "Middle Eastern/North African" was added as a response category.

Highest Level of Non-nursing Education

About a third (32.3%) of LPNs/LVNs indicated they earned a non-nursing degree. Of those reporting a non-nursing degree, 69.8% reported an associate degree and 24.1% reported a baccalaureate degree. An additional 6.2% indicated they had earned a non-nursing graduate degree (Table 57).

TABLE 57

Highest Level of Non-Nursing Education of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, 2017 and 2020

Weighted Sample Values				
Non-Nursing Education	2017 (n = 9,832.6)		2020 (n = 12,497.8)	
	n	%	n	%
Associate degree	6,762.0	68.8	8,719.7	69.8
Baccalaureate degree	2,460.1	25.0	3,008.1	24.1
Master's degree	515.6	5.2	674.0	5.4
Doctoral degree	95.0	1.0	95.9	0.8

Licensure

Number of Years Licensed

LPN/LVN respondents reported they were licensed for a median of 17 years. A little more than a third of respondents (36.9%) were licensed for 0-10 years, as compared to 43.7% in 2015 and 40.7% in 2017. An additional 23.4% were licensed between 11 and 20 years, which represents an increase from previous years (Table 58 and Figure 26).

TABLE 58

Number of Years Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses Have Been Licensed, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Years Licensed	2015 (n = 26,138.0)		2017 (n = 33,652.6)		2020 (n = 36,311.8)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
0–10	11,417.8	43.7	13,694.1	40.7	13,401.4	36.9
11–20	5,258.9	20.1	6,674.0	19.8	8,502.2	23.4
21–30	4,018.0	15.4	5,483.9	16.3	6,028.3	16.6
31–40	3,552.0	13.6	4,531.9	13.5	4,213.2	11.6
≥ 41	1,891.4	7.2	3,268.6	9.7	4,166.7	11.5

Estimated Population Values						
Years Licensed	2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
0–10	343,353	43.7	313,090	40.7	318,416	36.9
11–20	158,145	20.1	152,589	19.8	202,012	23.4
21–30	120,828	15.4	125,379	16.3	143,232	16.6
31–40	106,815	13.6	103,614	13.5	100,105	11.6

(continued)

Estimated Population Values						
Years Licensed	2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
≥ 41	56,877	7.2	74,730	9.7	99,000	11.5

FIGURE 26

Number of Years LPNs/LVNs Have Been Licensed, 2015–2020
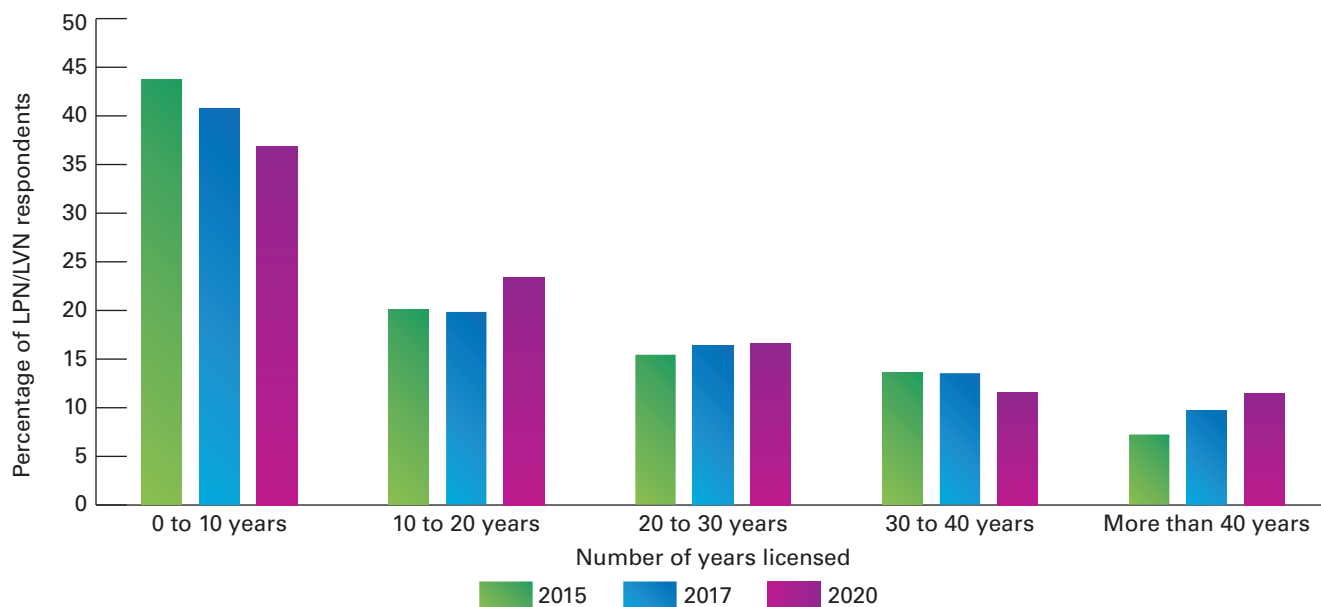
Initially Licensed in the United States

Almost 99% of LPN/LVN respondents were initially licensed in the United States, while 0.6% were initially licensed in the Philippines, 0.1% in Canada, and 0.1% in India (Table 59).

TABLE 59

Country in Which Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses Were Initially Licensed, 2020

Weighted Sample Values		
Country	2020 (*n* = 39,472.5)	
	n	%
United States	38,959.1	98.7
Canada	48.2	0.1
Philippines	237.9	0.6
India	28.9	0.1
Other	198.4	0.5

Estimated Population Values		
Country	2020	
	n	%
United States	925,665	98.7
Canada	1,145	0.1
Philippines	5,652	0.6
India	687	0.1
Other	4,714	0.5

Multistate License

In 2020, 21.2% of LPNs/LVNs reported holding a multistate license (Table 60).

TABLE 60

Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses Holding a Multistate License, 2020

Weighted Sample Values		
Multistate License	2020 (*n* = 32,235.9)	
	n	%
Yes	6,847.5	21.2
No	25,388.3	78.8

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

Use of Multistate License

Of those LPNs/LVNs reporting possession of a multistate license, 21.9% use it for physical crossborder practice. The largest majority of respondents indicated using it for "other" purposes (Table 61).

TABLE 61

How Multistate License is Used by Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, 2020

Weighted Sample Values		
Use of Multistate License	2020 (*n* = 4,378.1)	
	n	%
Physical crossborder practice	959.1	21.9
Telehealth	286.0	6.5
Distance education	202.6	4.6
Disaster support	147.2	3.4
Travel nursing	52.7	1.2
Have not used	1,573.5	35.9
Other	1,309.1	29.9

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. Respondents were asked to select all that apply.

Employment

Employment Status

Among responding LPNs/LVNs, 65.7% reported being actively employed in nursing full time, which is consistent with the 2017 survey (65.0%). The most notable increase was among those who selected retired, which increased from 8.7% in 2017 to 11.3% in 2020. Approximately 11% of LPNs/LVNs reported working in nursing part-time (Table 62 and Figure 27).

TABLE 62

Employment Status of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Employment Status	2015 (*n* = 30,766.0)		2017 (*n* = 34,570.2)		2020 (*n* = 39,579.6)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Actively employed in nursing full-time	18,823.4	61.2	22,476.5	65.0	26,020.5	65.7
Actively employed in nursing part-time	3,714.0	12.1	4,151.9	12.0	4,275.9	10.8
Actively employed in nursing per diem	2,179.4	7.1	2,227.5	6.4	2,326.0	5.9
Actively employed in a field other than nursing full-time	1,504.3	4.9	1,306.6	3.8	1,257.8	3.2
Actively employed in a field other than nursing part-time	868.5	2.8	756.7	2.2	600.9	1.5
Actively employed in a field other than nursing per diem	386.7	1.3	193.6	0.6	230.5	0.6
Working in nursing only as a volunteer	366.1	1.2	408.9	1.2	383.6	1.0
Unemployed, seeking work as a nurse	1,558.7	5.1	1,162.0	3.4	1,260.9	3.2

Weighted Sample Values						
Employment Status	2015 (*n* = 30,766.0)		2017 (*n* = 34,570.2)		2020 (*n* = 39,579.6)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Unemployed, not seeking work as a nurse	1,588.9	5.2	1,595.0	4.6	1,614.7	4.1
Retired	2,927.1	9.5	2,991.2	8.7	4,457.7	11.3

Estimated Population Values						
Employment Status	2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Actively employed in nursing full-time	566,053	61.2	513,884	65.0	618,245	65.7
Actively employed in nursing part-time	111,686	12.1	94,925	12.0	101,595	10.8
Actively employed in nursing per diem	65,540	7.1	50,928	6.4	55,266	5.9
Actively employed in a field other than nursing full-time	45,236	4.9	29,874	3.8	29,885	3.2
Actively employed in a field other than nursing part-time	26,116	2.8	17,301	2.2	14,277	1.5
Actively employed in a field other than nursing per diem	11,629	1.3	4,427	0.6	5,477	0.6
Working in nursing only as a volunteer	11,008	1.2	9,350	1.2	9,114	1.0
Unemployed, seeking work as a nurse	46,873	5.1	26,566	3.4	29,959	3.2
Unemployed, not seeking work as a nurse	47,782	5.2	36,467	4.6	38,365	4.1
Retired	88,024	9.5	68,387	8.7	105,915	11.3

Note. Respondents were asked to select all that apply.

FIGURE 27

Employment Status of LPNs/LVNs, 2015–2020
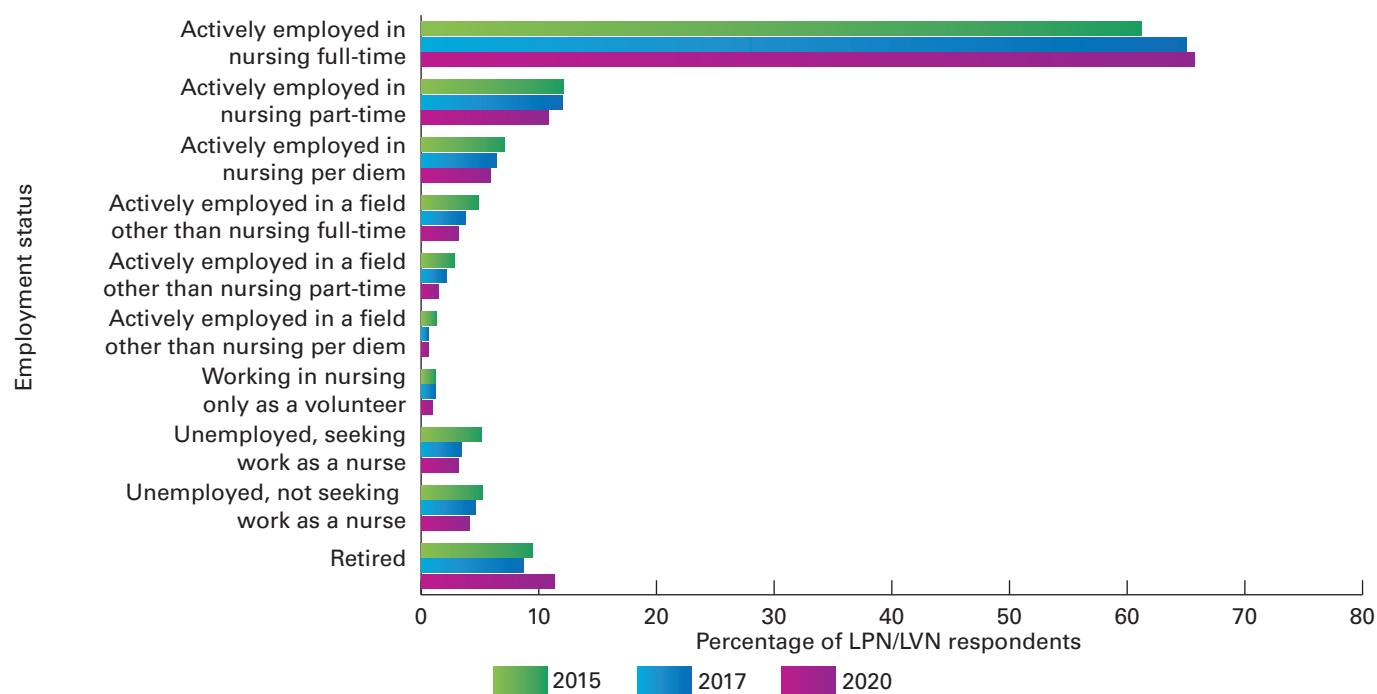
Note. Respondents were asked to select all that apply.

Reason for Being Unemployed

Respondents were asked to select all the applicable reasons for being unemployed. Taking care of home and family was the most frequently selected reason for being unemployed (43.3%) in 2020, which is an increase from 2017 (41.4%) and from 2015 (39.1%). The second and third most frequently selected reasons were "other" by 29.2% of respondents and 'disabled' at 16.9%. By comparison, in 2017, 21.1% of respondents reported disability, 15.6% responded difficulty in finding a nursing position, and 26.4% reported the other category (Table 63 and Figure 28).

TABLE 63

Reasons for Unemployment Among Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Unemployment Reaso	2015 (n = 2,644.5)		2017 (n = 2,696.8)		2020 (n = 2,781.4)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Taking care of home and family	1,033.0	39.1	1,117.4	41.4	1,203.2	43.3
Disabled	463.3	17.5	570.0	21.1	470.5	16.9
Inadequate salary	77.9	3.0	111.5	4.1	133.7	4.8
School	393.9	14.9	288.4	10.7	336.5	12.1
Difficulty in finding a nursing position	610.4	23.1	419.6	15.6	384.5	13.8
Other	600.1	22.7	713.0	26.4	812.3	29.2

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were unemployed. Respondents were asked to select all that apply.

FIGURE 28

Reasons for Unemployment Among LPNs/LVNs, 2015–2020
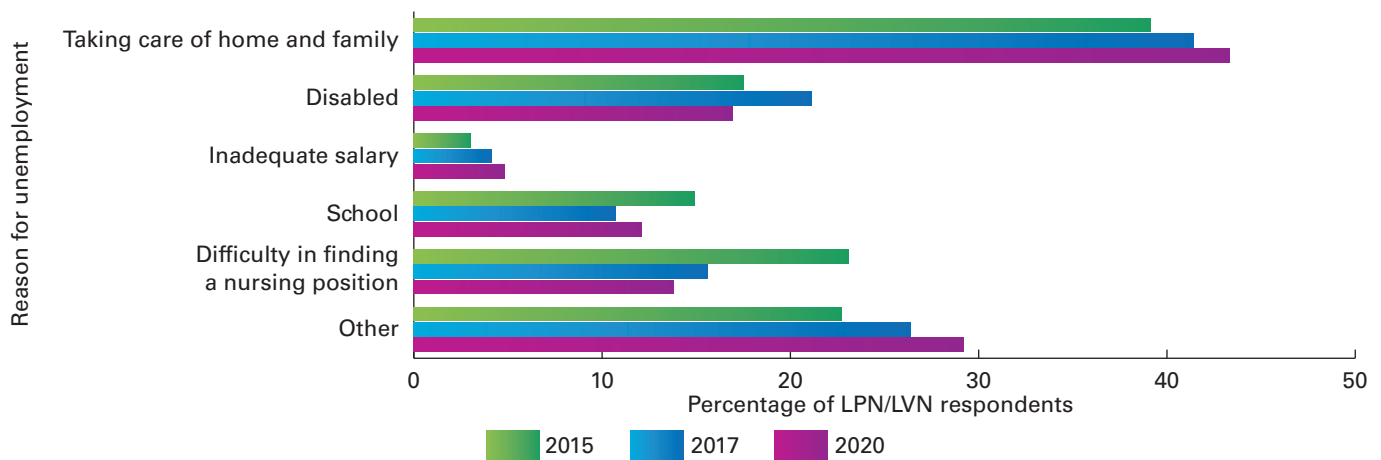
Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were unemployed. Respondents were asked to select all that apply.

Retirement Plans

In the 2020 LPN/LVN survey, a new question was added: "Do you plan to retire or leave nursing in the next five years?" Only one-fifth of respondents (20.2%) answered "yes." (Table 64).

TABLE 64

Retirement Plans of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, 2020

Weighted Sample Values		
Plan to Retire Within 5 Years	**2020 (*n* = 31,693.0)**	
	n	%
Yes	6,406.8	20.2
No	25,286.2	79.8

Estimated Population Values		
Plan to Retire Within 5 Years	**2020**	
	n	%
Yes	152,225	20.2
No	600,798	79.8

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

Number of Positions Currently Held

Respondents were asked to identify the number of positions in which they were currently employed as a nurse. In 2020 and 2017, 82.4% of LPN/LVN respondents indicated holding just one position as a nurse. The percentage of LPNs/LVNs who reported working in two positions increased slightly from 14.9% in 2017 to 15.1% in 2020. The percentage of respondents who indicated that they held three or more positions in nursing slightly decreased from 2.7% in 2017 to 2.5% in 2020 (Table 65).

TABLE 65

Number of Positions Currently Held by Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Number of Positions	**2015 (*n* = 23,317.3)**		**2017 (*n* = 27,576.8)**		**2020 (*n* = 31,231.7)**	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
1	19,706.5	84.5	22,725.0	82.4	25,738.9	82.4
2	3,113.0	13.4	4,117.5	14.9	4,705.7	15.1
3 or more	497.8	2.1	734.3	2.7	787.1	2.5

Estimated Population Values						
Number of Positions	**2015**		**2017**		**2020**	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
1	592,611	84.5	519,563	82.4	611,554	82.4
2	93,613	13.4	94,139	14.9	111,807	15.1
3 or more	14,970	2.1	16,788	2.7	18,701	2.5

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

Number of Hours Worked During a Typical Week in all Nursing Positions

In the 2020 survey, 58.6% of responding LPNs/LVNs reported working 32 to 40 hours in a typical week in all positions, which decreased from 59.4% in 2017 and 60.4% in 2015. The second most frequently reported category was 41 to 50 hours (14.9%). This represents a slight decrease from 16% in 2017 (Table 66 and Figure 29).

TABLE 66

Number of Hours Worked by Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses During a Typical Week in All Nursing Positions, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Hours Worked per Week	2015 (n = 22,450.6)		2017 (n = 27,505.7)		2020 (n = 30,985.7)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
1–15	913.1	4.1	1,132.6	4.1	1,214.4	3.9
16–23	1,088.9	4.9	1,298.4	4.7	1,323.6	4.3
24–31	1,866.4	8.3	2,031.1	7.4	2,238.6	7.2
32–40	13,562.8	60.4	16,328.2	59.4	18,164.7	58.6
41–50	3,410.0	15.2	4,412.7	16.0	4,609.1	14.9
51–60	928.3	4.1	1,391.1	5.1	1,567.2	5.1
≥ 61	681.1	3.0	911.5	3.3	1,868.1	6.0

Estimated Population Values						
Hours Worked per Week	2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
1–15	27,459	4.1	25,896	4.1	28,854	3.9
16–23	32,744	4.9	29,686	4.7	31,449	4.3
24–31	56,126	8.3	46,437	7.4	53,189	7.2
32–40	407,859	60.4	373,314	59.4	431,592	58.6
41–50	102,546	15.2	100,888	16.0	109,512	14.9
51–60	27,916	4.1	31,805	5.1	37,237	5.1
≥ 61	20,482	3.0	20,841	3.3	44,386	6.0

FIGURE 29

Number of Hours Worked by LPNs/LVNs During a Typical Week in All Nursing Positions, 2015–2020
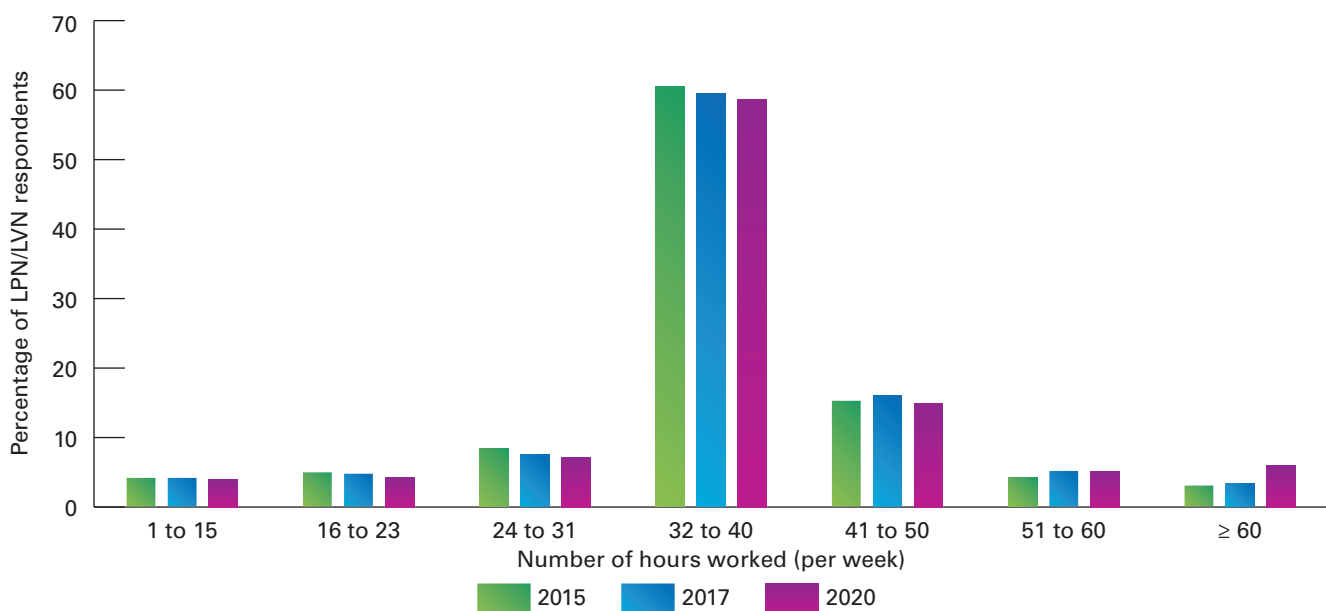
Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

Primary Nursing Practice Position Setting

Of the responding LPNs/LVNs, 27.5% indicated that their primary nursing practice position was in a nursing home/extended care setting, down from 31.7% in 2017. The hospital setting was the second most frequently selected setting by 12.8% of LPNs/LVNs, a 3.2 percentage point increase since 2017, followed by home health at 12.4% and 8.6% in the ambulatory care setting. Hospice (2.1%) and dialysis center (0.9%) were added as new categories in the 2017 survey (Table 67 and Figure 30).
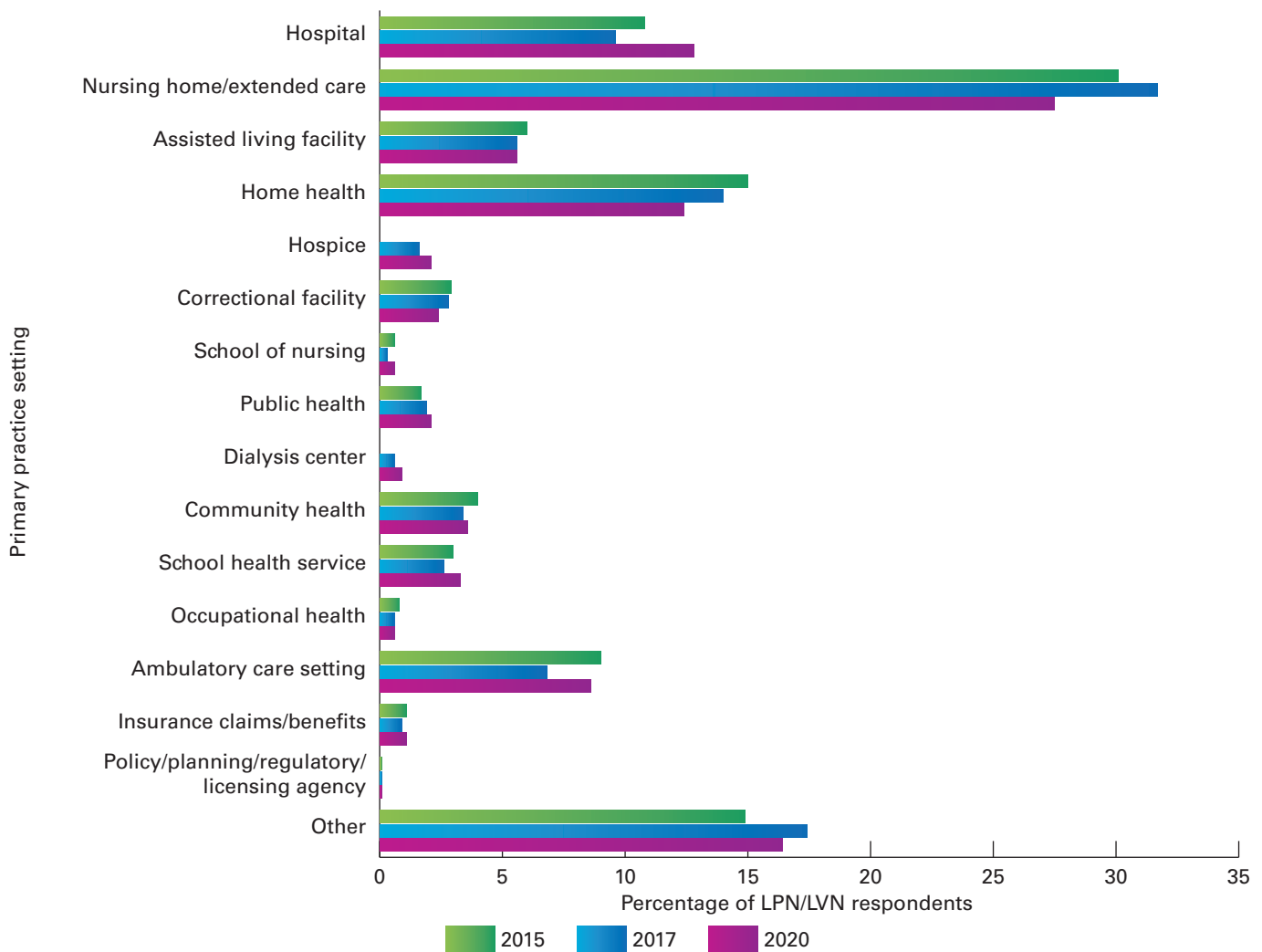
TABLE 67

Primary Nursing Practice Position Setting of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Primary Practice Setting	2015 (n = 22,989.1)		2017 (n = 26,459.8)		2020 (n = 30,055.4)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Hospital	2,478.9	10.8	2,540.3	9.6	3,831.4	12.8
Nursing home/extended care	6,911.9	30.1	8,385.3	31.7	8,250.3	27.5
Assisted living facility	1,369.5	6.0	1,484.2	5.6	1,679.5	5.6
Home health	3,451.0	15.0	3,710.5	14.0	3,733.3	12.4
Hospice			426.6	1.6	639.8	2.1
Correctional facility	670.2	2.9	738.6	2.8	729.3	2.4
School of nursing	142.0	0.6	78.4	0.3	173.7	0.6
Public health	399.8	1.7	498.3	1.9	623.1	2.1
Dialysis center			165.8	0.6	266.1	0.9
Community health	922.6	4.0	888.1	3.4	1,073.8	3.6
School health service	683.9	3.0	697.4	2.6	977.2	3.3
Occupational health	174.9	0.8	166.6	0.6	187.3	0.6
Ambulatory care setting	2,061.2	9.0	1,797.3	6.8	2,588.2	8.6
Insurance claims/benefits	259.7	1.1	241.3	0.9	331.8	1.1
Policy/planning/regulatory/licensing agency	32.3	0.1	24.4	0.1	36.7	0.1
Other	3,431.2	14.9	4,616.7	17.4	4,933.9	16.4

Estimated Population Values						
Primary Practice Setting	2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Hospital	74,544	10.8	58,079	9.6	91,034	12.8
Nursing home/extended care	207,854	30.1	191,715	31.7	196,026	27.5
Assisted living facility	41,183	6.0	33,933	5.6	39,905	5.6
Home health	103,779	15.0	84,834	14.0	88,703	12.4
Hospice			9,753	1.6	15,202	2.1
Correctional facility	20,154	2.9	16,887	2.8	17,328	2.4
School of nursing	4,270	0.6	1,792	0.3	4,127	0.6
Public health	12,022	1.7	11,394	1.9	14,805	2.1
Dialysis center			3,790	0.6	6,323	0.9
Community health	27,745	4.0	20,305	3.4	25,513	3.6
School health service	20,565	3.0	15,945	2.6	23,218	3.3
Occupational health	5,260	0.8	3,810	0.6	4,450	0.6
Ambulatory care setting	61,984	9.0	41,091	6.8	61,495	8.6
Insurance claims/benefits	7,810	1.1	5,517	0.9	7,884	1.1
Policy/planning/regulatory/licensing agency	973	0.1	557	0.1	872	0.1
Other	103,182	14.9	105,553	17.4	117,229	16.4

FIGURE 30

Primary Nursing Practice Position Setting of LPNs/LVNs, 2015–2020

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

Primary Nursing Position Title

Staff nurse was the title reported as most closely corresponding to the LPN/LVN respondents' primary nursing position by 72.8%. The second most frequently selected position title was "other—health related" at 15.6%, followed by 5.5% of respondents choosing nurse manager as their title, slightly lower than the 6.2% reported in 2017 (Table 68 and Figure 31).

TABLE 68

Primary Nursing Position Title of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Title	2015 (*n* = 23,567.8)		2017 (*n* = 26,776.9)		2020 (*n* = 30,512.5)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Consultant	140.6	0.6	152.7	0.6	148.4	0.5
Nurse researcher	65.0	0.3	51.2	0.2	66.3	0.2
Nurse executive	137.6	0.6	70.9	0.3	120.6	0.4
Nurse manager	1,365.4	5.8	1,661.5	6.2	1,680.2	5.5

(continued)

Weighted Sample Values						
Title	**2015 (n = 23,567.8)**		**2017 (n = 26,776.9)**		**2020 (n = 30,512.5)**	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Nurse faculty/educator	967.9	4.1	257.5	1.0	310.5	1.0
Advanced practice registered nurse	401.7	1.7	9.0	0.0	149.4	0.5
Staff nurse	16,214.1	68.8	19,564.6	73.1	22,209.9	72.8
Case manager	595.3	2.5	561.4	2.1	842.8	2.8
Other—health related	3,444.2	14.6	4,275.5	16.0	4,768.8	15.6
Other—not health related	236.0	1.0	172.7	0.7	215.5	0.7

Estimated Population Values						
Title	**2015**		**2017**		**2020**	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Consultant	4,227	0.6	3,490	0.6	3,526	0.5
Nurse researcher	1,955	0.3	1,170	0.2	1,575	0.2
Nurse executive	4,138	0.6	1,621	0.3	2,865	0.4
Nurse manager	41,060	5.8	37,986	6.2	39,921	5.5
Nurse faculty/educator	29,107	4.1	5,887	1.0	7,377	1.0
Advanced practice registered nurse	12,079	1.7	206	0.0	3,550	0.5
Staff nurse	487,589	68.8	447,308	73.1	527,705	72.8
Case manager	17,902	2.5	12,835	2.1	20,025	2.8
Other—health related	103,572	14.6	97,751	16.0	113,306	15.6
Other—not health related	7,097	1.0	3,949	0.7	5,120	0.7

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

FIGURE 31

Primary Nursing Position Title of LPNs/LVNs, 2015–2020
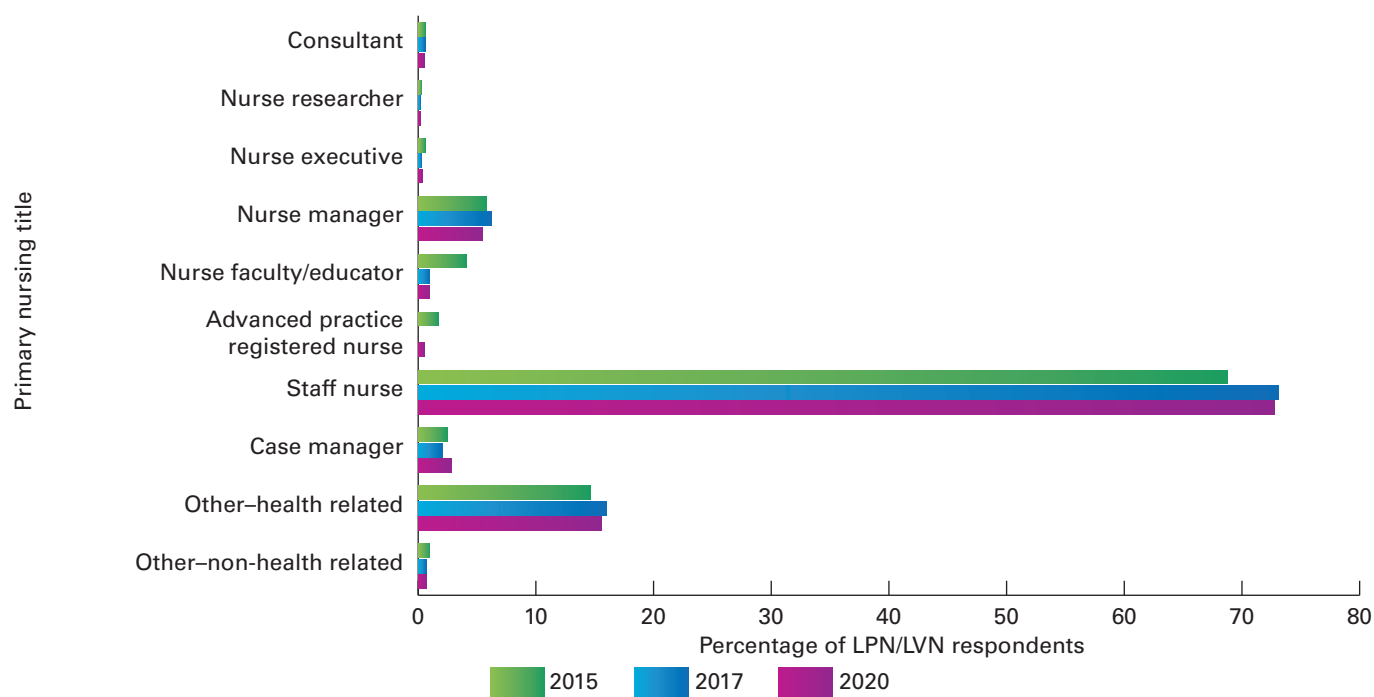
Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. LPN/LVN = licensed practical nurse/licensed vocational nurse.

Primary Nursing Position Specialty

Among LPN/LVN respondents, 26.6% selected geriatric/gerontology as the employment specialty that most closely corresponded to their primary nursing practice position, down from 30.5% in 2017. Home health was the second most frequently selected employment specialty (8.4%) followed by adult health (8.3%). A slightly greater proportion of LPNs/LVNs selected "other—clinical specialties" in 2020 (11.5%) compared to 2017 (10.8%). The acute care/critical care employment specialty responses increased from 2.7% in 2017 to 4.1% in 2020 (Table 69 and Figure 32).

TABLE 69

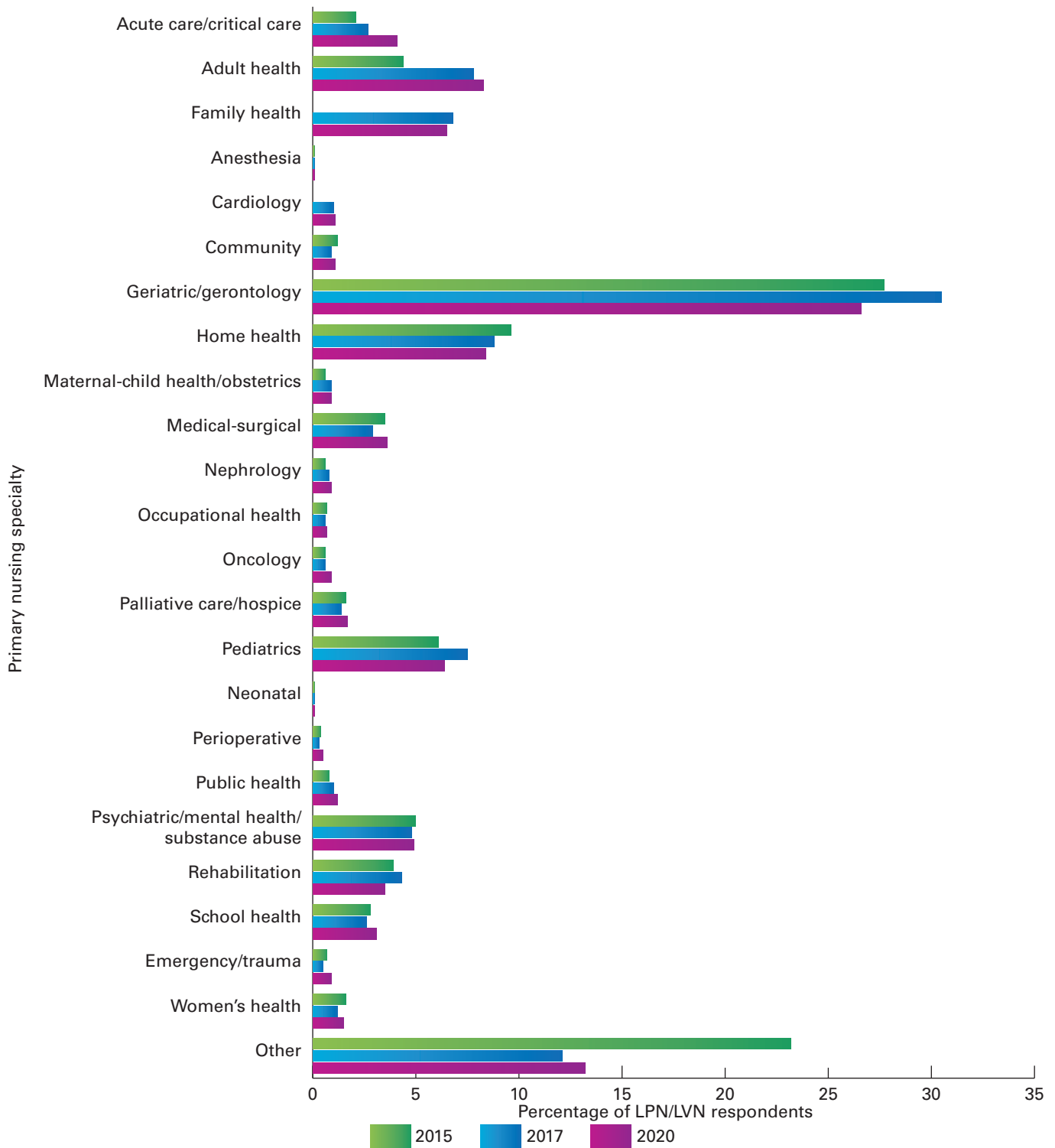## Primary Nursing Position Specialty of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Primary Position Specialty	2015 (*n* = 21,932.4)		2017 (*n* = 25,214.9)		2020 (*n* = 28,417.9)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Acute care/critical care	458.5	2.1	670.0	2.7	1,157.6	4.1
Adult health	960.6	4.4	1,968.0	7.8	2,354.2	8.3
Family health			1,712.4	6.8	1,840.3	6.5
Anesthesia	18.0	0.1	17.6	0.1	22.5	0.1
Cardiology			250.4	1.0	312.5	1.1
Community	262.6	1.2	216.8	0.9	323.6	1.1
Geriatric/gerontology	6,064.1	27.7	7,685.8	30.5	7,545.9	26.6
Home health	2,109.3	9.6	2,228.2	8.8	2,372.5	8.4
Maternal-child health/obstetrics	120.5	0.6	225.1	0.9	266.5	0.9
Medical surgical	777.3	3.5	728.6	2.9	1,008.2	3.6
Nephrology	133.7	0.6	201.0	0.8	258.2	0.9
Occupational health	154.5	0.7	160.8	0.6	183.4	0.7
Oncology	137.1	0.6	152.9	0.6	252.5	0.9
Palliative care/hospice	348.2	1.6	354.7	1.4	490.7	1.7
Pediatrics	1,326.0	6.1	1,880.2	7.5	1,819.5	6.4
Neonatal	28.2	0.1	28.8	0.1	40.8	0.1
Perioperative	93.1	0.4	76.4	0.3	135.3	0.5
Public health	173.1	0.8	257.6	1.0	332.4	1.2
Psychiatric/mental health/substance abuse	1,084.8	5.0	1,205.0	4.8	1,405.0	4.9
Rehabilitation	847.7	3.9	1,081.5	4.3	990.8	3.5
School health	612.9	2.8	646.2	2.6	870.1	3.1
Emergency/trauma	157.2	0.7	127.5	0.5	261.6	0.9
Women's health	342.8	1.6	291.0	1.2	426.2	1.5
Other—clinical specialties			2,724.1	10.8	3,264.9	11.5
Other—nonclinical specialties			324.1	1.3	482.9	1.7
Other	3,400.7	15.5				
Primary care	1,695.5	7.7				
Genetics	182.2	0.8				
Informatics	41.4	0.2				
Neurology/neurosurgical	90.6	0.4				
Orthopedic	185.5	0.9				
Radiology	24.2	0.1				
Urology	102.1	0.5				

Estimated Population Values						
Primary Position Specialty	2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Acute care/critical care	13,787	2.1	15,319	2.7	27,504	4.1
Adult health	28,888	4.4	44,995	7.8	55,936	8.3
Family health			39,151	6.8	43,725	6.5
Anesthesia	542	0.1	401	0.1	535	0.1
Cardiology			5,725	1.0	7,425	1.1
Community	7,896	1.2	4,956	0.9	7,689	1.1
Geriatric/gerontology	182,359	27.7	175,722	30.5	179,290	26.6
Home health	63,430	9.6	50,944	8.8	56,370	8.4
Maternal-child health/obstetrics	3,623	0.6	5,148	0.9	6,332	0.9
Medical surgical	23,375	3.5	16,659	2.9	23,955	3.6
Nephrology	4,022	0.6	4,595	0.8	6,135	0.9
Occupational health	4,647	0.7	3,677	0.6	4,358	0.7
Oncology	4,124	0.6	3,497	0.6	5,999	0.9
Palliative care/hospice	10,471	1.6	8,109	1.4	11,659	1.7
Pediatrics	39,875	6.1	42,988	7.5	43,231	6.4
Neonatal	848	0.1	659	0.1	969	0.1
Perioperative	2,798	0.4	1,747	0.3	3,215	0.5
Public health	5,207	0.8	5,889	1.0	7,898	1.2
Psychiatric/mental health/substance abuse	32,622	5.0	27,550	4.8	33,383	4.9
Rehabilitation	25,493	3.9	24,727	4.3	23,541	3.5
School health	18,432	2.8	14,774	2.6	20,674	3.1
Emergency/trauma	4,729	0.7	2,915	0.5	6,216	0.9
Women's health	10,308	1.6	6,653	1.2	10,126	1.5
Other—clinical specialties			62,282	10.8	77,574	11.5
Other—nonclinical specialties			7,411	1.3	11,474	1.7
Other	102,266	15.5				
Primary care	50,986	7.7				
Genetics	5,480	0.8				
Informatics	1,244	0.2				
Neurology/neurosurgical	2,723	0.4				
Orthopedic	5,577	0.9				
Radiology	727	0.1				
Urology	3,071	0.5				

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

FIGURE 32

Primary Nursing Position Specialty of LPNs/LVNs, 2015–2020

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. LPN/LVN = licensed practical nurse/licensed vocational nurse.

Providing Direct Patient Care—Primary Nursing Position

A new question was added to the 2020 survey regarding direct patient care. Survey respondents were asked, "In your primary nursing practice position, do you spend the majority of your time providing direct patient care?" A large majority (77.8%) of LPNs/LVNs responded "yes" (Table 70).

TABLE 70

Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses Providing Direct Patient Care Through Primary Nursing Position, 2020

Weighted Sample Values		
Provide Direct Patient Care	**2020 (n = 31,443.7)**	
	n	%
Yes	24,460.3	77.8
No	6,983.5	22.2

Estimated Population Values		
Provide Direct Patient Care	**2020**	
	n	%
Yes	581,175	77.8
No	165,927	22.2

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

Secondary Nursing Position Setting

Nursing home/extended care settings was the most frequently chosen setting by 31.7% of LPN/LVN respondents as their secondary nursing position, down from 32.5% in 2017. Additionally, the percentage of LPNs/LVNs who indicated their secondary nursing position in a home health setting decreased from 26.8% in 2017 to 23.5% in 2020. At the same time, the hospital setting percentage increased by 3.1 percentage points in 2020 (9.1%) up from 6.0% in 2017, and the ambulatory care setting increased to 3.3% in 2020 from 2.8% in 2017. The respondents who reported the assisted living facility as their secondary nursing position setting was nearly the same between 2017 and 2020 (7.6% and 7.4%) (Table 71 and Figure 33).


TABLE 71

Secondary Nursing Position Setting Among Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Secondary Nursing Position	**2015 (n = 3,018.7)**		**2017 (n = 4,376.2)**		**2020 (n = 5,067.9)**	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Hospital	180.4	6.0	261.2	6.0	461.1	9.1
Nursing home/extended care	813.3	26.9	1,422.0	32.5	1,608.2	31.7
Assisted living facility	232.5	7.7	332.3	7.6	374.8	7.4
Home health	961.3	31.9	1,173.1	26.8	1,189.7	23.5
Hospice			115.7	2.6	177.8	3.5
Correctional facility	108.7	3.6	136.6	3.1	125.1	2.5
School of nursing	32.7	1.1	10.4	0.2	54.8	1.1
Public health	30.3	1.0	55.8	1.3	54.1	1.1
Dialysis center			35.0	0.8	30.4	0.6
Community health	69.1	2.3	85.2	2.0	108.0	2.1
School health service	42.1	1.4	111.9	2.6	109.9	2.2
Occupational health	16.9	0.6	31.1	0.7	44.3	0.9
Ambulatory care setting	78.4	2.6	121.7	2.8	165.7	3.3
Insurance claims/benefits	6.5	0.2	22.8	0.5	25.8	0.5
Policy/planning/regulatory/licensing agency	15.9	0.5	16.6	0.4	6.2	0.1
Other	430.5	14.3	444.8	10.2	532.0	10.5

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

FIGURE 33

Secondary Nursing Position Setting Among LPNs/LVNs, 2015–2020
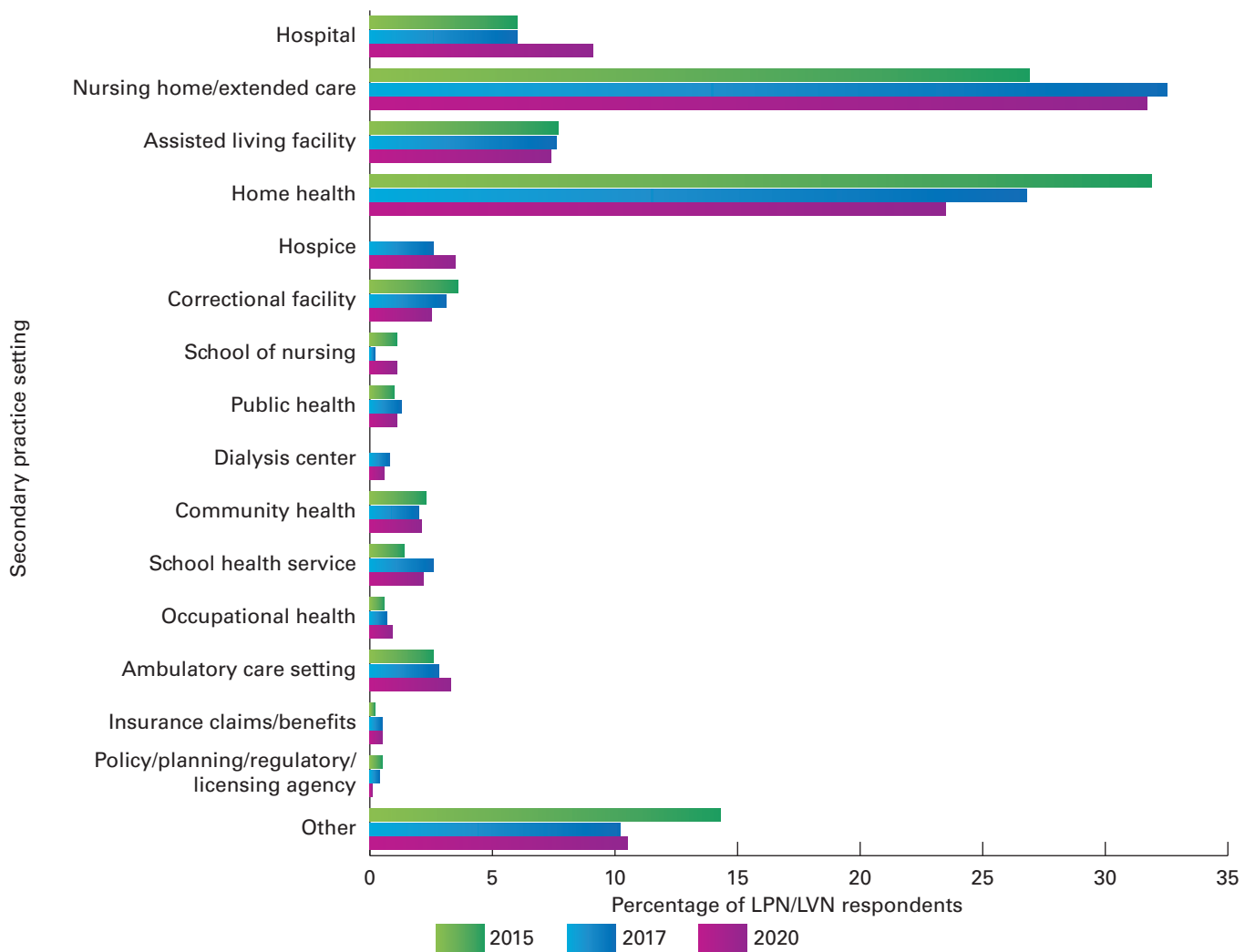
Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. LPN/LVN = licensed practical nurse/licensed vocational nurse.

Secondary Nursing Position Title

It remains that more than three-quarters (77.7%) of LPN/LVN respondents reported their secondary nursing position title as staff nurse, which is similar to 2017 (78.5%). The percentage of LPNs/LVNs who reported a secondary nursing position title of nurse manager was 3.1%, down from 3.4% in 2017. The next highest category reported was case manager at 2.3% of respondents, followed by nurse faculty/educators at 2.2%. Unspecified titles are in the category of "other—health related" positions at 11.9% (Table 72 and Figure 34).
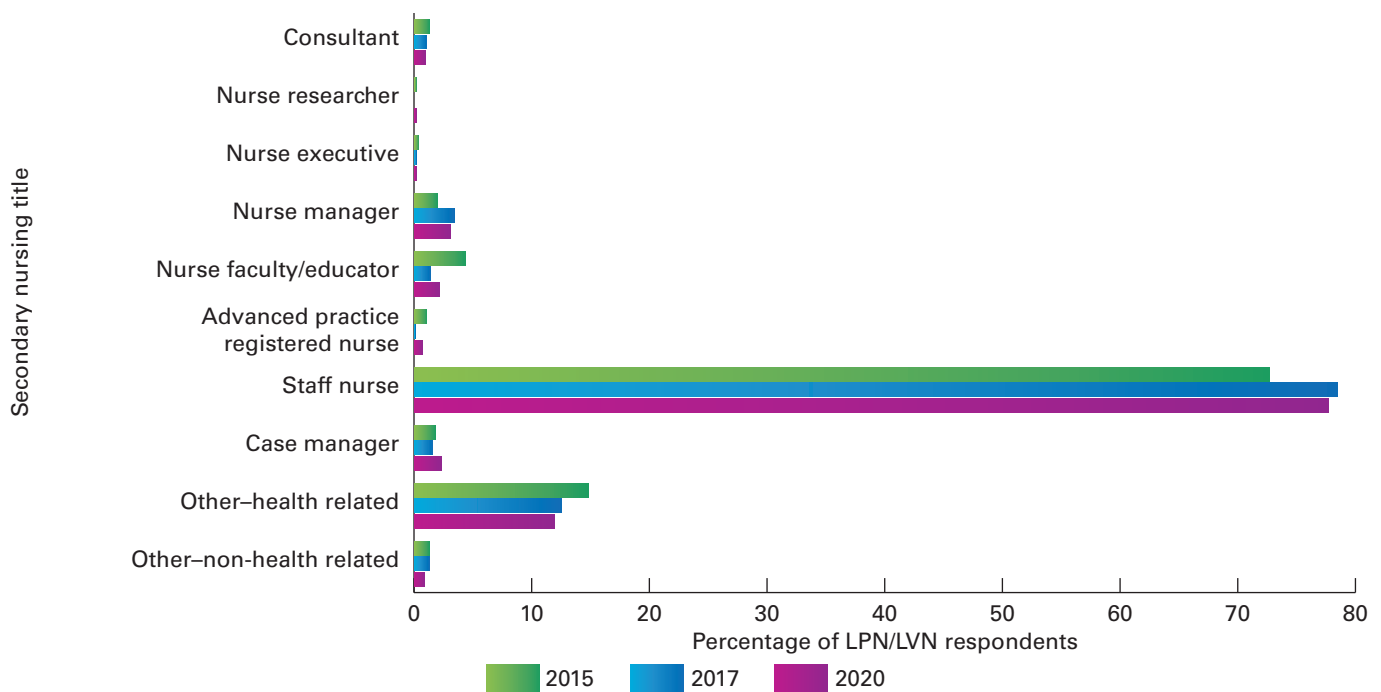
TABLE 72

Secondary Nursing Position Title of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Secondary Title	**2015 (n = 2,980.3)**		**2017 (n = 4,217.2)**		**2020 (n = 4,942.1)**	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Consultant	37.5	1.3	45.2	1.1	47.0	1.0
Nurse researcher	7.0	0.2	1.3	0.0	7.3	0.2
Nurse executive	10.4	0.4	10.0	0.2	8.6	0.2
Nurse manager	59.9	2.0	141.4	3.4	153.2	3.1
Nurse faculty/educator	132.0	4.4	58.4	1.4	107.9	2.2
Advanced practice registered nurse	34.1	1.1	2.6	0.1	36.1	0.7
Staff nurse	2,167.2	72.7	3,309.2	78.5	3,842.2	77.7
Case manager	53.8	1.8	66.6	1.6	111.6	2.3
Other—health related	440.3	14.8	528.9	12.5	586.2	11.9
Other—not health related	38.3	1.3	53.5	1.3	42.1	0.9

FIGURE 34

Secondary Nursing Position Title of LPNs/LVNs, 2015–2020

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. LPN/LVN = licensed practical nurse/licensed vocational nurse.

Secondary Nursing Position Specialty

Nearly one-third of LPNs/LVNs (30.6%) reported their secondary nursing position specialty was geriatric/gerontology, a decrease of nearly 4 percentage points from 2017 (34.5%). Home health was the second most frequently selected specialty at 18.2%, followed by adult health at 8.0%, and "other—clinical specialties" at 7.9% of respondents (Table 73 and Figure 35).

TABLE 73

Secondary Nursing Position Specialty of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Secondary Position Specialty	2015 (n = 2,809.3)		2017 (n = 4,024.3)		2020 (n = 4,686.1)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Acute care/critical care	70.9	2.5	120.5	3.0	188.0	4.0
Adult health	63.8	2.3	236.6	5.9	373.0	8.0
Family health			88.6	2.2	101.9	2.2
Anesthesia	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.1	0.0	0.0
Cardiology			13.1	0.3	12.3	0.3
Community	37.3	1.3	72.3	1.8	64.9	1.4
Geriatric/gerontology	834.0	29.7	1,388.2	34.5	1,432.1	30.6
Home health	568.1	20.2	679.5	16.9	853.6	18.2
Maternal-child health/obstetrics	10.5	0.4	21.4	0.5	25.1	0.5
Medical surgical	48.2	1.7	73.9	1.8	117.4	2.5
Nephrology	9.3	0.3	27.8	0.7	19.3	0.4
Occupational health	17.2	0.6	27.3	0.7	38.2	0.8
Oncology	1.6	0.1	9.0	0.2	16.5	0.4
Palliative care/hospice	77.8	2.8	58.0	1.4	105.8	2.3
Pediatrics	181.7	6.5	378.6	9.4	271.7	5.8
Neonatal	8.4	0.3	1.7	0.0	0.3	0.0
Perioperative	0.5	0.0	2.9	0.1	17.5	0.4
Public health	21.6	0.8	57.6	1.4	65.8	1.4
Psychiatric/mental health/substance abuse	111.8	4.0	159.5	4.0	224.1	4.8
Rehabilitation	108.3	3.9	184.2	4.6	174.1	3.7
School health	39.8	1.4	82.8	2.1	72.9	1.6
Emergency/trauma	43.6	1.6	48.4	1.2	45.2	1.0
Women's health	10.5	0.4	17.1	0.4	21.8	0.5
Other—clinical specialties			227.0	5.6	368.0	7.9
Other—nonclinical specialties			48.3	1.2	76.4	1.6
Other	420.1	15.0				
Primary care	76.9	2.7				
Genetics	29.9	1.1				
Informatics	3.6	0.1				
Neurology/neurosurgical	3.4	0.1				
Orthopedic	6.7	0.2				
Radiology	1.8	0.1				
Urology	1.8	0.1				

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

FIGURE 35

Secondary Nursing Position Specialty of LPNs/LVNs, 2015–2020
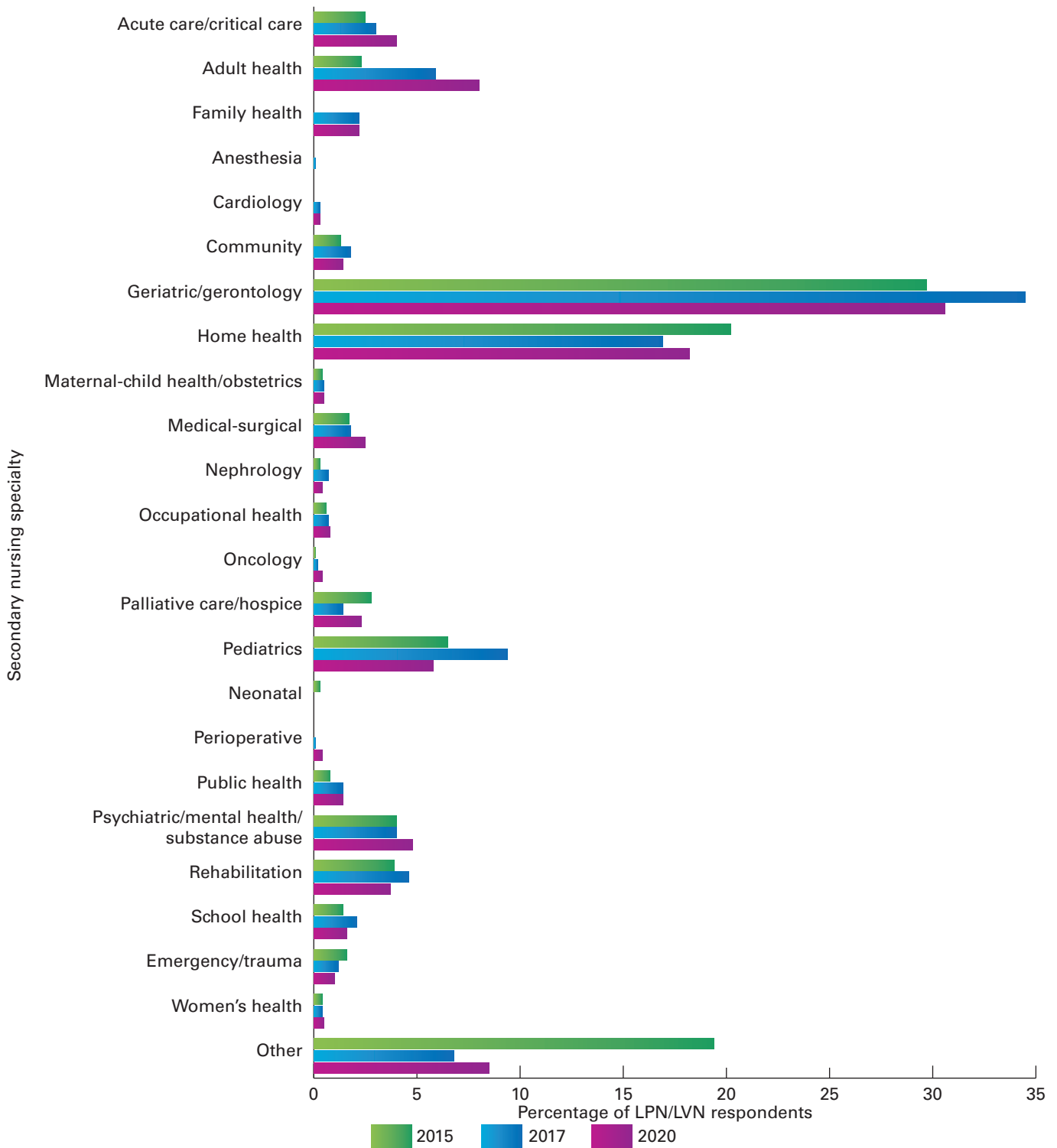
Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. LPN/LVN = licensed practical nurse/licensed vocational nurse.

Providing Direct Patient Care—Secondary Nursing Practice Position

A new question was added to the 2020 survey regarding direct patient care. Survey respondents were asked, "In your secondary nursing practice position, do you spend the majority of your time providing direct patient care?" The vast majority (85.5%) responded "yes" (Table 74).

TABLE 74

Providing Direct Patient Care—Secondary Nursing Practice Position of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, 2020

Provide Direct Patient Care	2020 (n = 5,140.8)	
	n	%
Yes	4,393.8	85.5
No	747.0	14.5

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

Salary/Earnings

2020 Pretax Annual Earnings From Primary Nursing Position

The median pretax annual earnings for responding LPNs/LVNs increased from $38,000 in 2015 to $40,000 in 2017 and $44,000 in 2020. This constitutes a 3.2% simple annual growth in earnings during the 5-year period (0.1% lower than the growth in reported RN incomes during the same period). Categorically, there has been a trend since 2015 of the percentage of respondents earning less than $40,000 annually decreasing while percentages in all other wage categories have increased. The percent of LPNs reporting wages under $40,000 has decreased by 17.7 percentage points from 2015 to 2020 while all other earnings categories have increased. The largest increase has been in the $60,000 to $80,000 category, which has increased by 8.4 percentage points since 2015 (Table 75 and Figure 36).

TABLE 75

Annual Earnings of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Earnings	2015 (n = 19,436.4)		2017 (n = 24,473.1)		2020 (n = 26,035.6)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
< $40,000	10,138.3	52.2	11,190.3	45.7	8,988.0	34.5
$40,000 to < $60,000	7,088.3	36.5	9,819.4	40.1	10,653.6	40.9
$60,000 to < $80,000	1,418.5	7.3	2,243.9	9.2	4,073.6	15.7
$80,000 to < $100,000	174.6	0.9	361.1	1.5	1,118.1	4.3
≥ $100,000	616.8	3.2	858.4	3.5	1,202.3	4.6

Estimated Population Values						
Earnings	2015		2017		2020	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
< $40,000	304,877	52.2	255,845	45.7	213,554	34.5
$40,000 to < $60,000	213,157	36.5	224,501	40.1	253,129	40.9
$60,000 to < $80,000	42,657	7.3	51,303	9.2	96,788	15.7
$80,000 to < $100,000	5,250	0.9	8,256	1.5	26,566	4.3
≥ $100,000	18,548	3.2	19,626	3.5	28,567	4.6

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. Salary includes overtime and bonuses but does not include sign-on bonuses.

FIGURE 36

Annual Earnings of LPNs/LVNs, 2015–2020
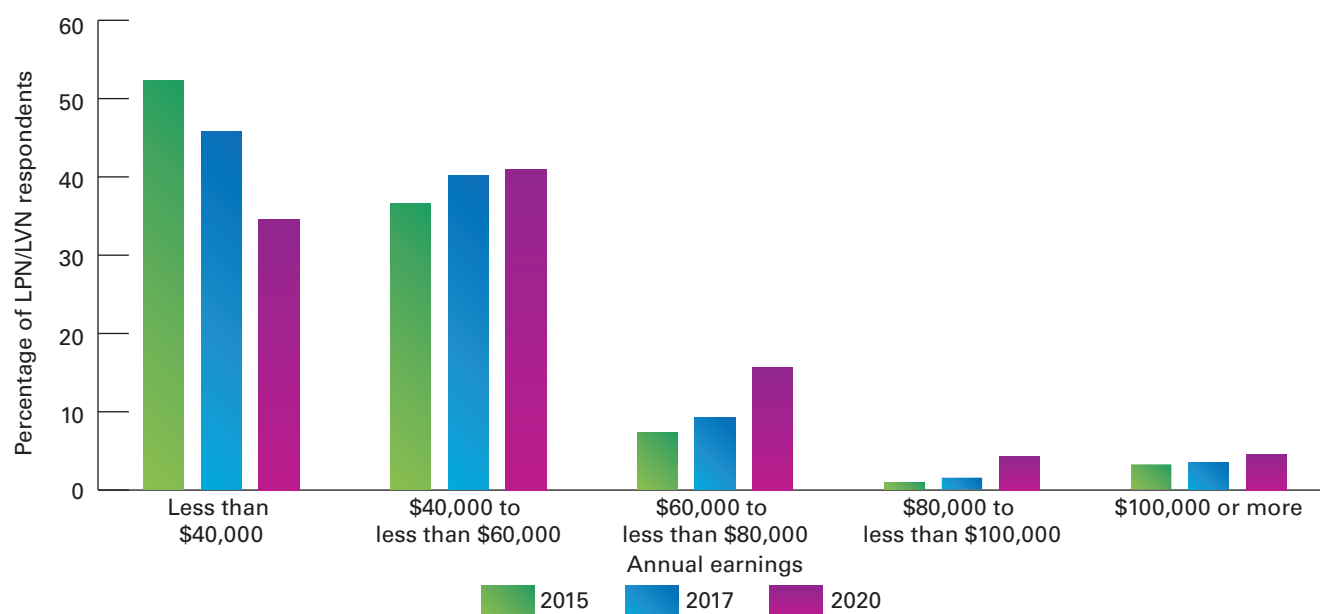
Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. Salary includes overtime and bonuses but does not include sign-on bonuses. LPN/LVN = licensed practical nurse/licensed vocational nurse.

Earnings by Gender and Specialty

For all specialties, the median salary for males is higher than the median salary for females. LPNs/LVNs working in occupational health and rehabilitation tied for the specialty with the highest median salary. LPNs/LVNs working in school health have the lowest median salary overall. These rankings remain unchanged from the previous survey (Table 76).

TABLE 76

Median Annual Earnings of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses by Gender and Specialty, 2020

Specialty	Male		Female		Other		Total	
	n	Earnings	*n*	Earnings	*n*	Earnings	*n*	Earnings
Acute care/critical care	95	$54,000	776	$45,000			871	$45,000
Adult health	176	$50,000	1,607	$45,000	2	$40,500	1,785	$45,000
Family health	41	$45,760	1,933	$38,000			1974	$38,000
Anesthesia	2	$59,500	12	$37,500			14	$42,500
Cardiology	17	$45,000	252	$40,000			269	$40,000
Community	22	$53,000	281	$41,000			303	$42,000
Geriatric/gerontology	430	$53,000	6,278	$46,000	3	$65,000	6,711	$47,000
Home Health	135	$50,000	1,605	$42,000			1,740	$42,000
Maternal-child health/ obstetrics			187	$42,000			187	$42,000
Medical-surgical	66	$47,000	756	$41,000	1	$45,000	823	$41,041
Nephrology	16	$57,500	144	$45,000	1	$50,000	161	$46,600
Occupational health	13	$49,000	148	$50,000	1	$74,000	162	$50,000
Oncology	9	$38,000	173	43296	1	$19,000	183	$43,000
Palliative care/hospice	16	$54,000	333	$47,000			349	$47,500
Pediatrics	56	$42,075	1,321	$40,000	1	$50,000	1,378	$40,000
Neonatal			23	$45,000			23	$45,000

(continued)

Specialty	Male		Female		Other		Total	
	n	Earnings	*n*	Earnings	*n*	Earnings	*n*	Earnings
Perioperative	11	$52,000	98	$45,000			109	$45,760
Public health	18	$43,000	249	$40,000			267	$40,000
Psychiatric/mental health/ substance abuse	142	$51,400	1,009	$45,000	1	$64,000	1,152	$45,000
Rehabilitation	90	$55,000	756	$50,000	2	$44,640	848	$50,000
School health	16	$39,000	631	$29,000			647	$29,000
Emergency/trauma	26	$47,584	173	$40,000			199	$41,674
Women's health			316	$40,780			316	$40,780
Other—clinical special- ties	170	$52,000	2,624	$44,000	1	$46,784	2,795	$44,800
Other—nonclinical spe- cialties	25	$59,599	314	$50,000			339	$50,000
Total	1,593	$50,000	21,999	$43,000	14	$48,392		

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. Salary includes overtime and bonuses but does not include sign-on bonuses.

Earnings by Highest Education

Holding true from previous years, LPNs/LVNs with baccalaureate degrees have the highest median salaries (Table 77).

TABLE 77

Median Annual Earnings of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses by Highest Education, 2017 and 2020

Highest Education Level	2017		2020	
	n	Earnings	*n*	Earnings
Vocational/practical certificate-nursing	16,750	$42,000	17,947	$43,000
Diploma	3,709	$41,600	3,589	$43,000
Associate degree	2,199	$40,000	3,565	$45,000
Baccalaureate degree	227	$51,619	566	$60,000

Earnings by State

Reported median earnings rose in most states. The highest median earnings were for LPNs/LVNs practicing in New York ($60,000) and Alaska ($56,559). California, Nevada, and Washington, D.C., tied at around $55,000. The lowest median earnings were for LPNs/LVNs practicing in Alabama ($39,000), South Dakota ($38,000), Mississippi ($37,000), and West Virginia ($36,000). Unlike with RNs where the highest gains in earnings were also the states with the lowest earnings, the states with the highest gains in earnings since 2015 for LPNs/LVNs are New York (10%), Idaho (5.8%), Michigan (5.7%), South Dakota (5.3%), and Oregon (5.0%). Notably, LPNs/LVNs working in the Northern Mariana Islands had both lower reported median earnings than LPNs/LVNs in all U.S. states and also saw an 8% decline in those earnings since 2015 (Table 78).

TABLE 78

Median Annual Earnings of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses in Primary Nursing Position by State(s) Where Currently Practicing

State	2015	2017	2020	State	2015	2017	2020
Alabama	$33,000	$35,000	$39,000	Montana	$36,260	$37,440	$43,000
Alaska	$50,000	$52,000	$56,559	Nebraska	$33,000	$38,000	$40,000
Arizona	$48,000	$48,000	$52,000	Nevada	$48,000	$49,000	$55,000
Arkansas	$33,500	$37,000	$40,000	New Hampshire	$42,000	$45,500	$50,000
California	$45,000	$48,000	$55,836	New Jersey	$45,000	$48,000	$54,000
Colorado	$42,000	$45,000	$50,000	New Mexico	$45,000	$45,000	$50,000
Connecticut	$49,000	$50,000	$52,360	New York	$40,000	$45,000	$60,000
Delaware	$45,000	$47,000	$50,000	North Carolina	$38,000	$41,000	$44,000
District of Columbia	$53,000	$50,000	$55,000	North Dakota	$35,000	$37,000	$40,000
Florida	$37,000	$40,000	$43,210	Ohio	$34,000	$36,000	$40,000
Georgia	$36,000	$39,800	$42,000	Oklahoma	$35,000	$37,000	$40,000
Hawaii	$45,000	$46,000	$50,000	Oregon	$42,240	$47,000	$53,000
Idaho	$32,560	$38,000	$42,000	Pennsylvania	$39,000	$40,320	$44,000
Illinois	$40,000	$40,000	$45,000	Rhode Island	$45,000	$50,000	$50,000
Indiana	$36,000	$40,000	$45,000	South Carolina	$37,124	$40,000	$42,000
Iowa	$34,640	$36,000	$41,000	South Dakota	$30,000	$34,865	$38,000
Kansas	$35,000	$39,000	$41,500	Tennessee	$34,000	$36,000	$40,000
Kentucky	$35,000	$40,000	$42,000	Texas	$40,082	$43,000	$49,383
Louisiana	$35,000	$38,000	$40,000	Utah	$36,000	$41,000	$41,000
Maine	$36,000	$40,000	$43,500	Vermont	$37,128	$42,000	$45,000
Maryland	$45,000	$50,000	$53,012	Virginia	$36,000	$40,000	$44,000
Massachusetts	$48,000	$50,000	$54,000	Washington	$44,000	$48,000	$54,000
Michigan	$35,000	$40,000	$45,000	West Virginia	$32,000	$35,000	$36,000
Minnesota	$33,000	$36,750	$40,000	Wisconsin	$35,000	$38,000	$40,000
Mississippi	$35,000	$35,000	$37,000	Wyoming	$40,000	$40,500	$44,000
Missouri	*	*	$40,000	Guam	$34,000	$32,000	$40,000
				Northern Mariana Islands	$55,000	$28,500	$32,959

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. Salary includes overtime and bonuses but does not include sign-on bonuses.

*Missouri did not participate in the 2015 and 2017 surveys.

Earnings by Years Licensed and Age

Similar to RNs, there are steady increases in reported median salary as the number of years licensed increases, and less increase when looking at increase in age within the same number of years of experience (Table 79).

TABLE 79

Median Annual Earnings of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses by Years Licensed and Age, 2020

Number of Years Licensed										
Age in Years	**0–1**		**2–5**		**6–10**		**≥ 11**		**Total**	
	n	**Earnings**	***n***	**Earnings**	***n***	**Earnings**	***n***	**Earnings**	***n***	**Earnings**
18–29	655	$29,983	1,159	$38,000	286	$40,000	9	$60,000	2,109	$35,300
30–34	318	$33,519	804	$40,000	847	$42,000	256	$42,000	2,225	$40,000
35–39	234	$35,000	583	$42,000	789	$44,422	859	$45,000	2,465	$42,806
40–44	176	$37,872	413	$42,000	651	$45,000	1,330	$43,000	2,570	$43,000
45–49	119	$35,675	339	$45,000	511	$47,000	1,772	$48,000	2,741	$46,360
50–54	88	$37,720	268	$45,000	415	$47,121	2,107	$48,000	2,878	$47,000
55–59	45	$40,000	123	$44,000	329	$45,017	2,671	$48,000	3,168	$47,084
60–64	17	$49,920	58	$42,075	200	$45,000	2,909	$46,600	3,184	$46,000
≥ 65	16	$11,820	51	$45,000	103	$43,000	2,645	$42,000	2,815	$42,000
Total	1,668	$32,316	3,798	$40,000	4,131	$45,000	14,558	$45,167		

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. Salary includes overtime and bonuses but does not include sign-on bonuses.

Telehealth Utilization

Percentage of Time Providing Telehealth

There has been little change over time in the percentage of LPNs/LVNs who report providing telehealth services (Table 80 and Figure 37).
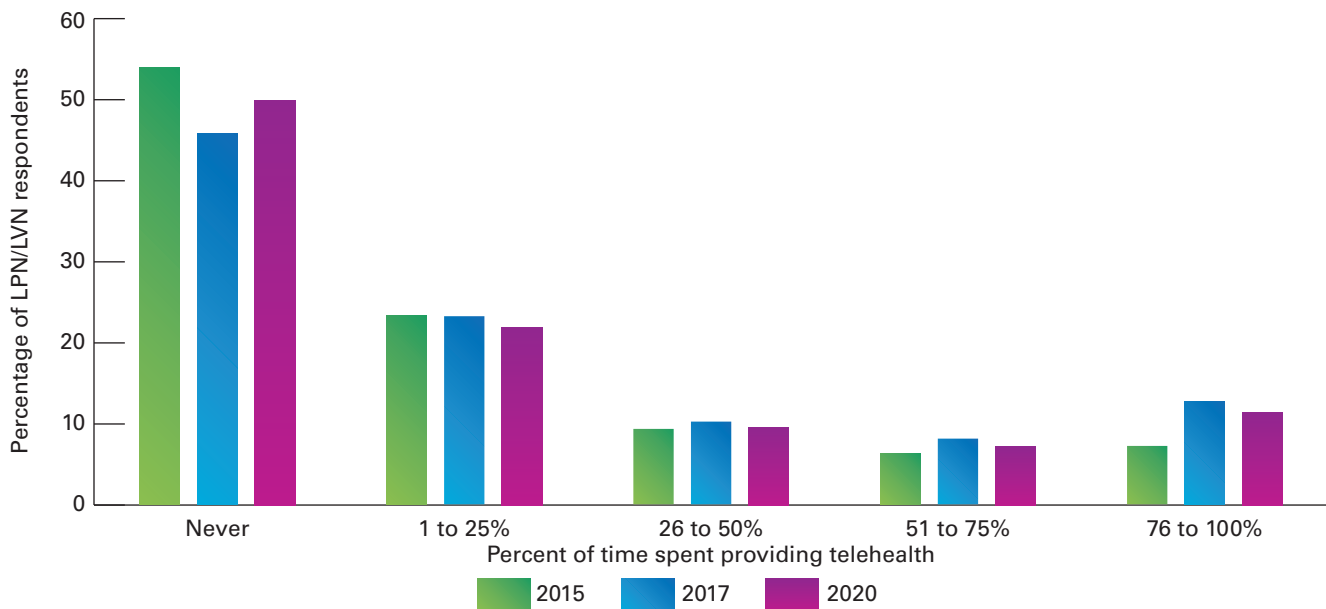
TABLE 80

Percentage of Time Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses Spend Providing Telehealth, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Provides Telehealth	**2015 (*n* = 23,619.9)**		**2017 (*n* = 27,760.6)**		**2020 (*n* = 31,095.7)**	
	n	**%**	***n***	**%**	***n***	**%**
Never	12,723.1	53.9	12,715.8	45.8	15,504.3	49.9
1%–25%	5,496.6	23.3	6,436.4	23.2	6,799.8	21.9
26%–50%	2,207.1	9.3	2,821.3	10.2	2,993.3	9.6
51%–75%	1,490.6	6.3	2,253.8	8.1	2,240.4	7.2
76%–100%	1,702.4	7.2	3,533.3	12.7	3,557.9	11.4

Estimated Population Values						
Provides Telehealth	**2015**		**2017**		**2020**	
	n	**%**	***n***	**%**	***n***	**%**
Never	382,606	53.9	290,722	45.8	368,381	49.9
1%–25%	165,294	23.3	147,157	23.2	161,563	21.9
26%–50%	66,373	9.3	64,503	10.2	71,121	9.6
51%–75%	44,826	6.3	51,529	8.1	53,232	7.2
76%–100%	51,195	7.2	80,781	12.7	84,535	11.4

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

FIGURE 37

Percentage of Time LPNs/LVNs Spend Providing Telehealth, 2015–2020

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. LPN/LVN = licensed practical nurse/licensed vocational nurse.

Telehealth Across State Borders

Of those providing nursing services remotely, there has been a 9.2 percentage point increase in those who reported providing telehealth across state borders compared to 2015 (Table 81 and Figure 38).
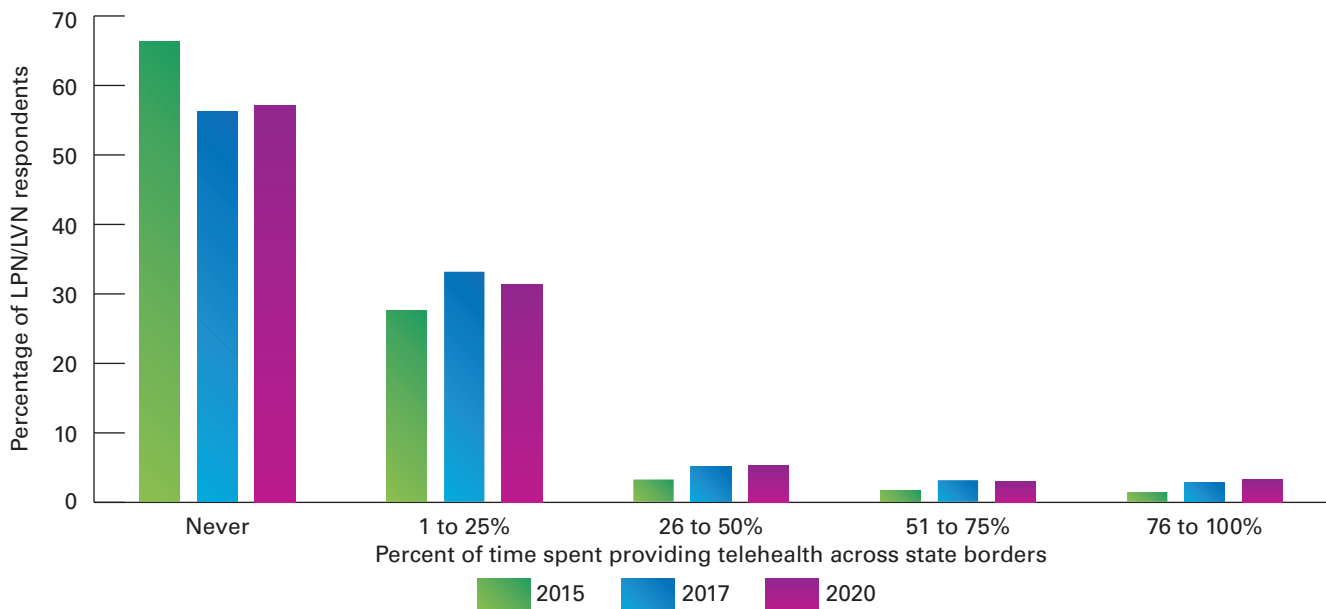
TABLE 81

Percentage of Time Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses Spend Providing Telehealth Across State Borders, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Provide Telehealth	**2015 (n = 11,421.5)**		**2017 (n = 12,214.3)**		**2020 (n = 12,981.4)**	
	n	**%**	***n***	**%**	***n***	**%**
Never	7,566.5	66.2	6,849.9	56.1	7,413.4	57.1
1%–25%	3,140.4	27.5	4,040.1	33.1	4,062.8	31.3
26%–50%	371.1	3.2	622.9	5.1	692.7	5.3
51%–75%	180.4	1.6	372.2	3.1	390.8	3.0
76%–100%	163.1	1.4	329.3	2.7	421.7	3.3

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing.

FIGURE 38

Percentage of Time LPNs/LVNs Spend Providing Telehealth Across State Borders, 2015–2020

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. LPN/LVN = licensed practical nurse/licensed vocational nurse.

Telehealth Across International Borders

LPNs/LVNs providing remote services across international borders has remained relatively flat, with 10% of LPNs/LVNs reporting they provide telehealth (Table 82).

TABLE 82

Percentage of Time Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses Spend Providing Telehealth Across National Borders, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Provide Telehealth	**2015 (*n* = 11,089.2)**		**2017 (*n* = 11,117.1)**		**2020 (*n* = 12,295.4)**	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Never	10,201.8	92.0	9,800.3	88.2	11,068.0	90.0
1%–25%	633.3	5.7	807.0	7.3	814.2	6.6
26%–50%	129.0	1.2	208.1	1.9	193.3	1.6
51%–75%	82.0	0.7	189.0	1.7	115.8	0.9
76%–100%	43.1	0.4	112.7	1.0	104.2	0.9

FIGURE 39

Percentage of Time Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses Spend Providing Telehealth Across International Borders, 2015–2020
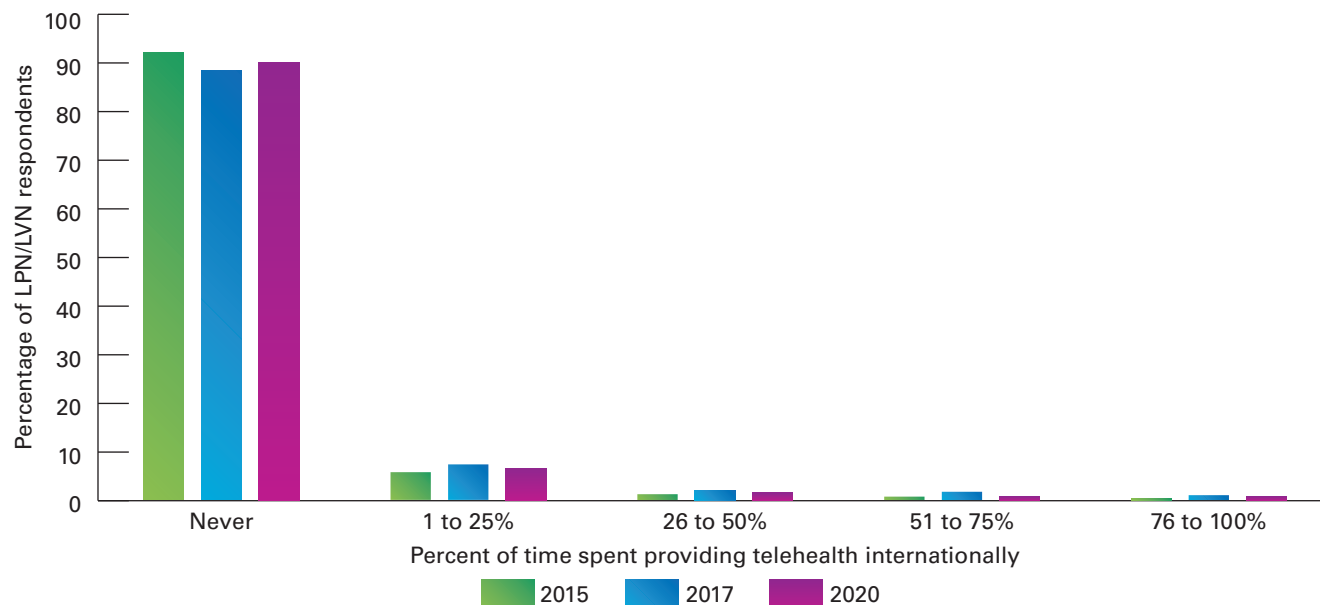
Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. LPN/LVN = licensed practical nurse/licensed vocational nurse.

Modes of Communication Used for Telehealth

LPNs/LVNs providing services via phone or electronically to patients or clients were also asked to identify the modes of communication used. In 2020, 92.8% of LPNs/LVNs reported using a telephone to communicate with patients or clients, a 2.9 percentage point decrease from 2015; 30.5% reported using email to communicate with patients or clients, which is a slight decrease from the 29.5% in 2015; and 27.0% reported using electronic messaging for patient/client communication in 2020 compared to 21.9% in 2015 (Table 83 and Figure 40).

As with their RN colleagues, the use of telephones continues to be the most common method of communication for telehealth provision. However, telephone use has declined 2.9% since 2015 in favor of video calls, VoIP, and electronic messaging (increases of 9, 5.7, and 5.1 percentage points since 2015, respectively) (Table 83 and Figure 40).

TABLE 83

Modes of Communication Used by Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses for Telehealth, 2015–2020

Weighted Sample Values						
Mode of Telehealth	2015 (*n* = 8,881.7)		2017 (*n* = 11,164.0)		2020 (*n* = 12,154.9)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Electronic messaging	1,947.7	21.9	2,510.8	22.5	3,280.4	27.0
VoIP	187.7	2.1	349.6	3.1	947.9	7.8
Virtual ICU	84.9	1.0	125.2	1.1	287.5	2.4
Telephone	8,498.5	95.7	10,405.0	93.2	11,274.7	92.8
Email	2,622.2	29.5	3,226.2	28.9	3,706.7	30.5
Video call	207.4	2.3	260.7	2.3	1,371.8	11.3
Other	883.0	9.9	1,027.2	9.2	998.1	8.2

Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. Respondents were asked to select all that apply. VoIP = Voice over Internet Protocol; ICU = intensive care unit.

FIGURE 40

Modes of Communication Used by Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses for Telehealth, 2015–2020
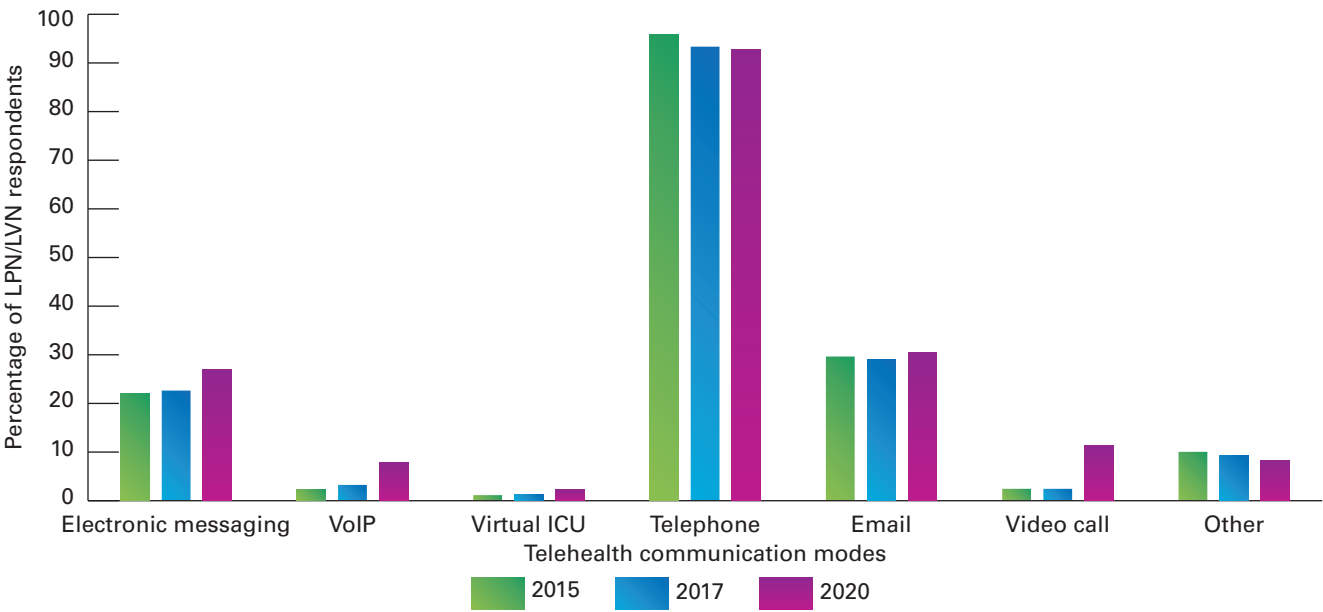
Note. Respondents were asked to answer this question only if they were actively employed in nursing. Respondents were asked to select all that apply. LPN/LVN = licensed practical nurse/licensed vocational nurse; VoIP = Voice over Internet Protocol; ICU = intensive care unit.

Discussion and Implications

Demographics

The workforce in 2020 is more demographically diverse and representative of the country's population than in any other year in which this study was previously conducted. Overall, the RN workforce is 81% White/Caucasian. In contrast, 72% of the U.S. population identifies as Caucasian (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Although these data indicate that persons of color are not adequately represented in the RN workforce, as younger nurses have entered the workforce, they have introduced greater racial diversity by identifying as an underrepresented minority. Nurses between the ages of 19 and 49 comprise 47% of all RNs but account for 49% of RNs who are Black/African American and more than 60% of RNs who are multiracial, Asian, or Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander.

In a pattern similar to that of RNs, younger LPNs/LVNs have introduced more racial diversity to the workforce. It is notable, however, that the racial distribution of the LPN/LVN workforce much more closely matches the racial distribution of the U.S. population than does the RN workforce. As the workforce ages and the less racially diverse generation of nurses begins to retire out of practice, it will be important to monitor whether persons of color become overrepresented among LPNs/LVNs. LPN/LVN licensure requires the lowest level of nursing education and yields a median annual salary that is more than 35% lower than the median income of RNs.

An additional area that warrants monitoring is the proportion of nurses in the workforce who are working past typical retirement age. Nurses aged 65 years or older account for nearly 20% of each of the RN and LPN/LVN workforces. In 2017, this same age cohort accounted for 15% of RNs and 13% of LPNs/LVNs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in a high rate of complications and mortality for patients older than 65 years, many nurses may reconsider how long they plan to remain in the workforce. Employers should develop and implement succession plans to ensure that the rapid loss of the workforce's oldest nurses does not result in an unrecoverable loss of expertise.

Although women continue to account for the largest majority of nurses, the proportion of men licensed as RNs or LPNs/LVNs in the country is increasing. Currently, men account for just under 10% of the RN workforce, which is up from 7% in 2013. The same pattern, though less pronounced, holds true for the proportion of men in the LPN/LVN workforce. The increase in the number of men in the overall nursing workforce reflects the improved representation of men among nurses younger than 50 years. Men account for a higher proportion of nurses within every age cohort between 19 and 49 years of age than they account for in the workforce as a whole.

Employment

Data suggest an average of 83% of all nurses who maintain licensure are employed in nursing; of those, roughly two-thirds work full-time, 10% work part-time, and about 7% work per diem shifts. During the past four reporting periods, there has been a consistent number of RNs and LPNs/LVNs who maintain a nursing license and report working in fields other than nursing. Using weighted sample values, this translates to approximately 200,000 licensees. Additionally, there are approximately 175,000 projected licensees who report being unemployed but are not seeking work as nurses. Still another nearly 15% of unemployed nurses who are seeking nursing employment reported difficulty in finding a nursing position.

For nurses who report being unemployed, about half of RNs and roughly 43.3% of LPNs/LVNs cite taking care of home and family as their reason for not working. Being disabled is another significant reason reported for unemployment among RNs (10.7%) and LPNs/LVNs (16.9%). This is consistent with the research, which suggests that nurses suffer workplace injuries at a higher incidence than other professionals (Dressner & Kissinger, 2018).

The proportion of nurses reporting a retired nursing employment status is on the rise. In a new survey question for 2020, respondents were asked if they plan to retire in the next 5 years. More than one-fifth of all nurses replied positively to the question. This response correlates to the longstanding belief that we will see a tsunami of nurses retire and leave the profession in the near future (McMenamin, 2014). The authors note this may be more critical as we face COVID-19 pandemic responses, which may more quickly accelerate the retirement rate due to the increased health risks that COVID-19 places on persons older than 60 years.

Nearly 84% of RNs work only one position in nursing; however, 13.7% reported that they work two positions and 2.4% reported working three positions or more. Nearly 60% of nurses work 32 to 40 hours a week and more than one-fifth of nurses work more than 40 hours per week. Similar to RNs, 82.4% of LPNs/LVNs reported being currently employed in only one position, and those who reported working two positions increased from 2017 to 2020. One-fifth of LPNs/LVNs report working 41 to 50 hours in their typical week and roughly 60% report working 32 to 40 hours.

Hospitals continue to be the primary practice setting for RNs, followed by the ambulatory care setting, home health, and nursing homes. The number of LPNs/LVNs who are working in hospitals have increased since 2017, which corresponds with the decrease of those who reported working in nursing homes or extended care settings.

Of those nurses who provide direct patient care, more than 90% of the respondents hold the title of staff nurse. Not surprisingly, the title with the least amount of direct patient care is a nurse executive. In the specialty area of anesthesia, 94.7% of respondents provide direct patient care; for nurses who report neonatal as their specialty, 91.2% provide direct patient care. Of those nurses reporting geriatric/

gerontology as their specialty area, less than half (45.1%) provide direct patient care. Those nurses who report public health (31.0%) and community (26.7%) as specialty areas are providing direct patient care at a proportion lower than all other specialties.

Education

In the 2020 survey, the proportion of RNs holding a baccalaureate degree increased for those reporting their highest level of nursing education but remained steady for those reporting the degree held when obtaining their first nursing license. The proportion of RNs holding an associate degree when first licensed increased slightly in 2020. This trend had been declining in recent years. When only considering the highest nursing degree earned, the proportion of RNs earning a baccalaureate degree or higher continues to increase, although the proportion will fall short of the National Academy of Medicine's goal of 80% of RNs hold a baccalaureate degree or higher (National Academy of Medicine, 2011). The proportion of LPNs/LVNs earning an associate or baccalaureate degree also increased slightly this year, while the proportion of those with a practical/vocational certificate or nursing diploma declined.

There is also evidence RNs and LPNs/LVNs are continuing their nursing education after obtaining their initial nursing license. Comparing the highest level of nursing education to the educational attainment when first licensed show that proportionally more RNs hold a baccalaureate or graduate degree than did at initial licensure. Additionally, proportionally more LPNs/LVNs hold an associate or baccalaureate degree as their highest level of nursing education than at initial licensure.

Licensure

Evidence suggests both RNs and LPNs/LVNs are more experienced now than in previous years. The proportion of nurses with 10 or fewer years practicing declined according to survey respondents, while the proportion of those with between 11 and 30 years of experience grew in 2020. As in previous years, most RNs (95%) and LPNs/LVNs (99%) obtained their initial nursing license in the United States.

Salary

Nursing incomes overall have at best remained essentially flat over time, with increases that just barely beat out inflation. Regional income increases in specific states as described in the report may be a good indicator for where employment demand for nurses is high in the country. Of concern are greater-than-average drops in reported median income in specialties related to women and maternal-child health. However, this finding may simply be an indicator that there is less demand in these areas as our population ages.

While telehealth has become a major focus of pandemic healthcare delivery, at the time of this survey, it does not seem that there have been major changes to how nurses use telehealth. It is anticipated that this will change a great deal in the future as our care delivery systems learn how best to utilize nursing services in this new normal.

Limitations

One of the difficulties of a national survey is making a single national observation when nursing, as a profession, is highly dependent on regional and local factors. This must be kept in mind when interpreting the results of the survey.

The survey was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. The responses received pre-pandemic did not differ from the responses received after the initial months of the pandemic for most of the survey questions; however, there were some exceptions. Respondents in the Pre-COVID groups were more likely to be younger, fully employed, and working in hospitals. Respondents in the Post-COVID groups were more likely to be older, retired, and working in home health.

Response rates in social science and public surveys have been declining for quite some time. The Nursing Workforce Survey has reflected this decline. The RN response rates were 38.5% in 2013, 34.3% in 2015, 32.8% in 2017, and 27.3% in 2020. The LPN/LVN rates were 28.0% in 2015, 26.5% in 2017, and 23.9% in 2020. A response rate decline of RNs dropping to 30% and the LPN/LVNs dropping to 25% may have been expected from 2017 to 2020 even without the pandemic. But the decline in response rates was larger for RNs and LPN/LVNs and may also have been a result of the COVID pandemic.

The following groups of nurses may have been slightly overrepresented in both the RN and LPN/LVN samples: White/Caucasian, female, and age of 50 years or older. Because of missing or incomplete data on race/ethnicity, only gender and age could be used to make nonresponse weighting adjustments (Appendix C).

While the response trends of APRNs remained consistent with prior surveys, the overall proportion of APRN responses in the 2020 cycle declined after years of incremental growth. Future survey administrations are necessary to determine whether this reflects a permanent shift in respondent profile or is an outlier due to the pandemic.

Conclusion

The nursing workforce has slowly changed during the past 2 years as evidenced by the information described in this report in terms of employment setting, age, diversity, and education. Efforts to increase baccalaureate-prepared nurses in the workforce according to the goal outlined in the *Future of Nursing* report (National Academy of Medicine, 2011) have resulted in an increase in the number of baccalaureate-prepared nurses. However, the goal of 80% baccalaureate-prepared nurses by 2020 has not been met. The workforce is also shifting as older nurses retire and Generation Z enters the workforce. Challenges will continue in the nursing workforce, such as matching workforce diversity to population, compensation, and opportunity; exploring the role of nurses in new practice settings; and adjusting to changes in healthcare delivery modalities such as telehealth. Ultimately, nursing will continue pursuing the goals of achieving higher levels of education, promoting diversity, and improving data collection regarding the national healthcare workforce.

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Conflicts of Interest: None

APPENDIX A

2020 National Workforce Study Questionnaire

NCSBN Leading Regulatory Excellence

The National FORUM Of State Nursing Workforce Centers

NATIONAL NURSING WORKFORCE SURVEY

Marking Instructions

Use a No. 2 pencil or blue or black ink pen only.
Do not use pens with ink that soaks through the paper.
Make solid marks that fill the oval completely.

○ ● ○ ○   **Correct Mark**
✓ ✗ ◐ ⊙   **Incorrect Marks**

Unless indicated, select one answer per question.

Demographics

1. **What is your gender?**
   ○ Male   ○ Female   ○ Other

2. **Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin?**
   ○ Yes   ○ No

3. **What is your race?** *(Select all that apply)*
   ○ American Indian or Alaska Native
   ○ Asian
   ○ Black/African American
   ○ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   ○ Middle Eastern/North African
   ○ White/Caucasian
   ○ Other

4. **In what year were you born?** [YEAR]

5. **What type of nursing degree/credential qualified you for your first U.S. nursing license?**
   ○ Vocational/Practical certificate–nursing
   ○ Diploma–nursing
   ○ Associate degree–nursing
   ○ Baccalaureate degree–nursing
   ○ Master's degree–nursing
   ○ Doctoral degree–nursing (PhD)
   ○ Doctoral degree–nursing (DNP)

6. **What is your highest level of nursing education?**
   ○ Vocational/Practical certificate–nursing
   ○ Diploma–nursing
   ○ Associate degree–nursing
   ○ Baccalaureate degree–nursing
   ○ Master's degree–nursing
   ○ Doctoral degree–nursing (PhD)
   ○ Doctoral degree–nursing practice (DNP)
   ○ Doctoral degree–nursing other

7. **What is your highest level of non-nursing education?**
   ○ Associate degree–non-nursing
   ○ Baccalaureate degree–non-nursing
   ○ Master's degree–non-nursing
   ○ Doctoral degree–non-nursing
   ○ Not applicable

License/Certification Information

8. **What type of license do you currently hold?** *(Select all that apply)*
   ○ RN   ○ LPN   ○ APRN

9. **Year of Initial U.S. Licensure:** [YEAR]

10. **In what country did you receive your entry-level nursing education?**
    ○ United States   ○ India
    ○ Canada   ○ Other, please specify
    ○ Philippines   _____

11. **In what country were you initially licensed as an RN, LPN or APRN?**
    ○ United States   ○ India
    ○ Canada   ○ Other, please specify
    ○ Philippines   _____

12. **What is the status of the license currently held?**
    ○ Active   ○ Inactive

13. **Indicate whether you are credentialed in your state to practice as any of the following:** *(Select all that apply)*
    ○ Certified Nurse Practitioner
    ○ Clinical Nurse Specialist
    ○ Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
    ○ Certified Nurse Midwife
    ○ Not credentialed as any of the above

14. **Please indicate the states in which you hold an active license to practice as an RN, LPN or APRN:** *(Select all that apply)*

○ AK	○ HI	○ MI	○ NV	○ UT
○ AL	○ IA	○ MN	○ NY	○ VA
○ AR	○ ID	○ MO	○ OH	○ VT
○ AZ	○ IL	○ MS	○ OK	○ WA
○ CA	○ IN	○ MT	○ OR	○ WI
○ CO	○ KS	○ NC	○ PA	○ WV
○ CT	○ KY	○ ND	○ RI	○ WY
○ DC	○ LA	○ NE	○ SC	○ **AS**
○ DE	○ MA	○ NH	○ SD	○ **GU**
○ FL	○ MD	○ NJ	○ TN	○ **MP**
○ GA	○ ME	○ NM	○ TX	○ **VI**

PageONE

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◉○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○   SERIAL #

15. Please indicate the states in which you are currently practicing as an RN, LPN or APRN:
(Select all that apply)

◯ AK	◯ HI	◯ MI	◯ NV	◯ UT
◯ AL	◯ IA	◯ MN	◯ NY	◯ VA
◯ AR	◯ ID	◯ MO	◯ OH	◯ VT
◯ AZ	◯ IL	◯ MS	◯ OK	◯ WA
◯ CA	◯ IN	◯ MT	◯ OR	◯ WI
◯ CO	◯ KS	◯ NC	◯ PA	◯ WV
◯ CT	◯ KY	◯ ND	◯ RI	◯ WY
◯ DC	◯ LA	◯ NE	◯ SC	◯ **AS**
◯ DE	◯ MA	◯ NH	◯ SD	◯ **GU**
◯ FL	◯ MD	◯ NJ	◯ TN	◯ **MP**
◯ GA	◯ ME	◯ NM	◯ TX	◯ **VI**

Employment Information

16. What is your employment status? *(Select all that apply)*
◯ Actively employed in nursing or in a position that requires a nurse license full-time
◯ Actively employed in nursing or in a position that requires a nurse license part-time
◯ Actively employed in nursing or in a position that requires a nurse license on a per-diem basis
◯ Actively employed in a field other than nursing full-time
◯ Actively employed in a field other than nursing part-time
◯ Actively employed in a field other than nursing on a per-diem basis
◯ Working in nursing only as a volunteer
◯ Unemployed, seeking work as a nurse
◯ Unemployed, not seeking work as a nurse
◯ Retired

17. If unemployed, please indicate the reasons.
(Select all that apply)
◯ Taking care of home and family
◯ Disabled
◯ Inadequate salary
◯ School
◯ Difficulty in finding a nursing position
◯ Other

> ***If you are actively employed in nursing, please answer the remaining questions. If you are not actively employed in nursing, you have completed the survey.**

18. Do you plan to retire or leave nursing in the next five years?
◯ Yes   ◯ No

19. In how many positions are you currently employed as a nurse?
◯ 1   ◯ 2   ◯ 3 or more

20. How many hours do you work during a typical week in all your nursing positions?
HOURS

21. Please indicate the zip code of your __primary__ employer.

ZIP CODE

⓪	⓪	⓪	⓪	⓪
①	①	①	①	①
②	②	②	②	②
③	③	③	③	③
④	④	④	④	④
⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤
⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥
⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦
⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧
⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨

22. Please estimate your 2019 pre-tax __annual__ earnings from your __primary__ nursing position. Include overtime and bonuses, but exclude sign-on bonuses.

EARNINGS

$, , .00 per year

⓪	⓪	⓪	⓪	⓪	⓪	⓪
①	①	①	①	①	①	①
②	②	②	②	②	②	②
③	③	③	③	③	③	③
④	④	④	④	④	④	④
⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤
⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥
⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦
⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧
⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨

23. Please identify the type of __setting__ that most closely corresponds to your __primary__ nursing practice position.
◯ Hospital
◯ Nursing Home/Extended Care
◯ Assisted Living Facility
◯ Home Health
◯ Hospice
◯ Correctional Facility
◯ School of Nursing
◯ Public Health
◯ Dialysis Center
◯ Community Health
◯ School Health Service
◯ Occupational Health
◯ Ambulatory Care Setting
◯ Insurance Claims/Benefits
◯ Policy/Planning/Regulatory/Licensing Agency
◯ Other (Please specify)

24. Please identify the <u>position title</u> that most closely corresponds to your <u>primary</u> nursing practice position.
- ◯ Consultant
- ◯ Nurse Researcher
- ◯ Nurse Executive
- ◯ Nurse Manager
- ◯ Nurse Faculty/Educator
- ◯ Advanced Practice Registered Nurse
- ◯ Staff Nurse
- ◯ Case Manager
- ◯ Other–Health Related (Please specify)

  _____

- ◯ Other–Not Health Related (Please specify)

  _____

25. In your primary nursing practice position, do you spend the majority of your time providing direct patient care?
- ◯ Yes   ◯ No

26. Please identify the employment <u>specialty</u> that most closely corresponds to your <u>primary</u> nursing practice position.
- ◯ Acute Care/Critical Care
- ◯ Adult Health
- ◯ Family Health
- ◯ Anesthesia
- ◯ Cardiology
- ◯ Community
- ◯ Geriatric/Gerontology
- ◯ Home Health
- ◯ Maternal-Child Health/Obstetrics
- ◯ Medical Surgical
- ◯ Nephrology
- ◯ Occupational Health
- ◯ Oncology
- ◯ Palliative Care/Hospice
- ◯ Pediatrics
- ◯ Neonatal
- ◯ Perioperative
- ◯ Public Health
- ◯ Psychiatric/Mental Health/Substance Abuse
- ◯ Rehabilitation
- ◯ School Health
- ◯ Emergency/Trauma
- ◯ Women's Health
- ◯ Other–Clinical specialties (Please specify)

  _____

- ◯ Other–Non-clinical specialties (Please specify)

  _____

27. Please identify the type of <u>setting</u> that most closely corresponds to your <u>secondary</u> nursing practice position.
- ◯ No Secondary Practice Position
- ◯ Hospital
- ◯ Nursing Home/Extended Care
- ◯ Assisted Living Facility
- ◯ Home Health
- ◯ Hospice
- ◯ Correctional Facility
- ◯ School of Nursing
- ◯ Public Health
- ◯ Dialysis Center
- ◯ Community Health
- ◯ School Health Service
- ◯ Occupational Health
- ◯ Ambulatory Care Setting
- ◯ Insurance Claims/Benefits
- ◯ Policy/Planning/Regulatory/Licensing Agency
- ◯ Other (Please specify)

  _____

28. Please identify the <u>position title</u> that most closely corresponds to your <u>secondary</u> nursing practice position.
- ◯ No Secondary Practice Position
- ◯ Consultant
- ◯ Nurse Researcher
- ◯ Nurse Executive
- ◯ Nurse Manager
- ◯ Nurse Faculty/Educator
- ◯ Advanced Practice Registered Nurse
- ◯ Staff Nurse
- ◯ Case Manager
- ◯ Other–Health Related (Please specify)

  _____

- ◯ Other–Not Health Related (Please specify)

  _____

29. In your secondary nursing practice position, do you spend the majority of your time providing direct patient care?
- ◯ No Secondary Practice Position
- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

PageTHREE

30. Please identify the employment <u>specialty</u> that most closely corresponds to your <u>secondary</u> nursing practice position.

- ○ No Secondary Practice Position
- ○ Acute Care/Critical Care
- ○ Adult Health
- ○ Family Health
- ○ Anesthesia
- ○ Cardiology
- ○ Community
- ○ Geriatric/Gerontology
- ○ Home Health
- ○ Maternal-Child Health/Obstetrics
- ○ Medical Surgical
- ○ Nephrology
- ○ Occupational Health
- ○ Oncology
- ○ Palliative Care/Hospice
- ○ Pediatrics
- ○ Neonatal
- ○ Perioperative
- ○ Public Health
- ○ Psychiatric/Mental Health/Substance Abuse
- ○ Rehabilitation
- ○ School Health
- ○ Emergency/Trauma
- ○ Women's Health
- ○ Other–Clinical specialties (Please specify)

_____

- ○ Other–Non-clinical specialties (Please specify)

_____

Telehealth

31. What percentage of your work time do you estimate you provide nursing services or communicate with a patient or client located somewhere different from where you are located, via phone or electronically?

- ○ Never   ○ 51 – 75%
- ○ 1 – 25%   ○ 76 – 100%
- ○ 26 – 50%

32. When providing nursing services or communicating with a remote patient or client via phone or electronically, what percentage of the time is it across a <u>state border</u>?

- ○ Not applicable; I do not provide nursing services or communicate with remote patients or clients
- ○ Never   ○ 51 – 75%
- ○ 1 – 25%   ○ 76 – 100%
- ○ 26 – 50%

33. When providing nursing services or communicating with a remote patient or client via phone or electronically, what percentage of the time is it across an <u>international border</u>?

- ○ Not applicable; I do not provide nursing services or communicate with remote patients or clients
- ○ Never
- ○ 1 – 25%
- ○ 26 – 50%
- ○ 51 – 75%
- ○ 76 – 100%

34. Please select the mode(s) of communication you use to provide nursing services, or communicate with, a remote patient or client. *(Select all that apply)*

- ○ Not applicable; I do not provide nursing services or communicate with remote patients or clients
- ○ Electronic messaging (ex: text message, instant message)
- ○ Voice over internet protocol (VoIP) (Skype, FaceTime)
- ○ Virtual ICU (also known as: tele-ICU, remote ICU, eICU)
- ○ Telephone
- ○ Email
- ○ Video call
- ○ Other

Nurse Licensure Compact

35. Do you hold a multi-state license?

- ○ Yes   ○ No

*If you hold a multi-state license, please answer the remaining questions. If you do not hold a multi-state license, you have completed the survey.

36. How have you used your multi-state license?

- ○ Physical cross-border practice
- ○ Telehealth
- ○ Distance education
- ○ Disaster support
- ○ Other: _____

37. Please share any examples of how the multi-state license has enhanced or hindered your practice.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

PageFOUR

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

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SERIAL #

Impact of COVID-19 on Survey Responses

During data collection for the survey, the United States became engulfed in the COVID-19 pandemic. The response to the pandemic caused major shifts in the country's workforce activities, which included a rapidly increasing workload for nurses on the "frontlines," shifts in priorities for nurses not on the frontlines, and a temporary closure of the physical sites for many businesses. Among those temporary business closures was the data processing center of the Workforce Survey's vendor, Scantron. During the closure, a large volume of workforce survey responses was not processed. Scantron re-opened their offices in mid-April and spent the rest of the month catching up on the processing of the backlog of responses.

In an attempt to determine whether the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the responses to the survey, a study was conducted that compared the answers to questions from surveys collected before the pandemic to those received after the state of the workforce had changed. A "Pre-COVID" group of RNs and LPNs/LVNs was collected, whose data process date was identified as being March 11, 2020, or earlier (March 11 was the date a global pandemic was declared by the World Health Organization). A "Post-COVID" group of RNs and LPNs/LVNs was also collected, whose data process date was identified as being May 1, 2020, or later. May 1 was chosen because Scantron had caught up with the processing backlog by that date. Records from the interim period, when it could not be determined whether the response was sent to Scantron® before or after the pandemic took effect, were excluded from the analysis.

The Pre-COVID group of RNs consisted of 3,293 respondents whereas the Post-COVID group of RNs consisted of 9,871 respondents. For the LPNs/LVNs, the Pre-COVID group consisted of 1,622 respondents while the Post-COVID group consisted of 11,246 respondents. The distributions of the responses to all the survey questions were calculated for the Pre-COVID and Post-COVID groups. For most of the survey questions, the differences between the response distributions for the Pre-COVID and Post-COVID groups were negligible for both the RN and LPN/LVN surveys. The exceptions for both license types were found in the responses to the gender, age, years licensed, employment status, and employment setting questions:

- In the Pre-COVID RN group, 15.1% of the respondents were male, whereas 8.5% of the respondents in the Post-COVID RN group were male. For LPNs/LVNs, 12.9% of the respondents in the Pre-COVID group were male, whereas 7.3% of the respondents in the Post-COVID group were male.
- In the Pre-COVID RN group, the median age of the respondents was 42 years, whereas in the Post-COVID RN group the median age of the respondents was 52 years. For LPNs/LVNs, the median age of the respondents in the Pre-COVID group was 42 years, wheras the median age of the respondents in the Post-COVID group was 54 years.

- In the Pre-COVID RN group, the median number of years that respondents were licensed was 12, whereas in the Post-COVID RN group, the median number of years the repondents were licensed was 20. For LPNs/LVNs, the median number of years licensed in the Pre-COVID group was 9, whereas the median number of years licensed in the Post-COVID group was 18.
- In the Pre-COVID RN group, 75.3% of the respondents worked full-time, whereas 65.3% of the respondents in the Post-COVID RN group worked full-time. For LPNs/LVNs, 74.4% of the respondents in the Pre-COVID group worked full-time, whereas 66.2% of the respondents in the Post-COVID group worked full-time.
- In the Pre-COVID RN group, 4.6% of the respondents were retired, whereas 12.1% of the respondents in the Post-COVID RN group were retired. For LPNs/LVNs, 2.4% of the respondents in the Pre-COVID group were retired, whereas 12.5% of the respondents in the Post-COVID group were retired.
- In the Pre-COVID RN group, 62.2% of the respondents worked in hospitals, whereas 54.9% of the respondents in the Post-COVID RN group worked in hospitals. For LPNs/LVNs, 16.6% of the respondents in the Pre-COVID group worked in hospitals, whereas 12.9% of the respondents in the Post-COVID group worked in hospitals.
- In the Pre-COVID RN group, 2.9% of the respondents worked in home health, wheras 5.1% of the respondents in the Post-COVID RN group worked in home health. For LPNs/LVNs, 8.9% of the respondents in the Pre-COVID group worked in home health, whereas 13.0% of the respondents in the Post-COVID group worked in home health.

In general, respondents prior to the pandemic were more likely to be younger, fully employed, and working in hospitals. Respondents after the pandemic were more likely to be older, retired, and working in home health (Appendix B).

A caveat: Without data from comparable comparisons in previous surveys, it cannot be determined whether the differences in responses are strictly due to the pandemic. It is quite possible that the different response patterns for the demographic variables (gender, age, years licensed) would also be found in earlier surveys. However, working full-time, retirement status, and working in hospitals could quite reasonably be a result of the pandemic.

Registered Nurse Nonresponse Analyses and Sample Weighting

A formal nonresponse bias analysis was conducted following the close of the survey. Although response rates are a valuable indicator of survey quality, they are not a good measure of response bias. An analysis of basic demographic data (i.e., gender, age, race/ethnicity, number of years since graduation, number of years since first licensed) for all registered nurse (RN) licensees sampled from the Nursys database was used to compare the survey respondents and nonrespondents to determine the representativeness of the survey participants.

Variables in the data file came from both the Nursys database (i.e., the frame data) and responses to the survey (i.e., survey data). The variables used in the nonresponse analysis were from the frame and include state, date of birth, gender, and ethnicity. The dependent variable in the analysis was whether or not the sampled RN population completed the questionnaire.

Preliminary Analysis

Of the 153,695 RNs in the sample frame, 42,021 responded for a response rate of 27.3%* (Table C1). Tables C2 and C3 show the frequencies for the categorical variables. Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics for age. The only demographic information used for the following analyses comes from Nursys, not the survey.

TABLE C1

Response Bias of Registered Nurses: Response Rate (N = 153,695)

Response Status	n	%
Nonresponse	111,674	72.7
Response	42,021	27.3

TABLE C2

Response Bias of Registered Nurses: Gender (N = 153,695)

Gender Response Variables		n	%	Valid %
Valid	Female	86,025	56.0	89.5
	Male	10,065	6.5	10.5
	Total	96,090	62.5	100.0
Missing	Restricted/unknown	3,382	2.2	
	Missing	54,223	35.3	
	Total	57,605	37.5	

TABLE C3

Response Bias of Registered Nurses: Race/Ethnicity (N = 153,695)

Race/Ethnicity Response Variables		n	%	Valid %
Valid	White	43,322	28.2	77.5
	Black/African American	3,922	2.6	7.0
	Asian	2,075	1.4	3.7
	Hispanic	2,290	1.5	4.1
	Native American	772	0.5	1.4
	Pacific Islander	71	0.0	0.1
	Other	3,418	2.2	6.1
	Total	55,870	36.4	100.0
Missing	Restricted/unknown	41,092	26.7	
	Missing	56,733	36.9	
	Total	97,825	63.6	

TABLE C4

Response Bias of Registered Nurses: Descriptive Statistics for Age (N = 91,540)

	M	SD	Min	Max
Age in Years	46.8	13.7	20	92

Bivariate Analysis

Tables 5 and 6 show the bivariate relationships between the demographic variables from the sample frame and whether or not the respondent completed the survey. There were far fewer men in the database (10,065 compared to 86,025 women) and they were less likely to complete the survey (20.3% compared to 28.5% among women).

TABLE C5

Response Bias of Registered Nurses: Survey Completion Rate by Gender

Gender	n	Complete Survey?	
		No	Yes
Female	86,025	71.5%	28.5%
Male	10,065	79.7%	20.3%
Total	96,090	72.3%	27.7%

Note. χ^2 (1, N = 96,090) = 309.6, p < .001.

As presented in Table 6, nurses who identified as Pacific Islander were most likely to respond, with a response rate of 29.6%. African

American nurses were least likely to respond, with a response rate of 19.0%.

TABLE C6

Response Bias of Registered Nurses: Survey Completion Rate by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	n	Complete Survey?	
		No	Yes
White	43,322	72.0%	28.0%
African American	3,922	81.0%	19.0%
Hispanic	2,290	77.7%	22.3%
Asian	2,075	74.4%	25.6%
Native American	772	78.9%	21.1%
Pacific Islander	71	70.4%	29.6%
Other	3,418	71.4%	28.6%
Total	55,870	73.0%	27.0%

Note. χ^2 (6, N = 55,870) = 198.0; p < .001.

Table C7 displays the mean age of RNs. On average, those who completed the survey were 4.9 years older than the nonrespondents. This relationship is statistically significant ($p < .001$).

TABLE C7

Response Bias of Registered Nurses: Differences in Mean Age by Survey Completion

Complete Survey?	n	Age in Years	
		M	SD
No	65,632	45.4	13.2
Yes	25,908	50.3	14.3
Total	91,540	46.8	13.7

Note. A *t* test shows that the relationship is significant at the <.001 level.

Weights

In the 2015 and 2017 National Nursing Workforce Survey reports, nonresponse adjustments were made for gender and age. In 2020, nonresponse adjustments were again made for gender and age. There was a high degree of missing race/ethnicity data in the sample frame (63.6% missing/unknown). It was deemed impractical to use race/ethnicity for nonresponse adjustment even though there were differences in response rates by the category.

For the 2020 Survey, nonresponse adjustments were applied for gender and age in the jurisdictions for which data were obtained through the Nursys database. To create the combined age and gender (AgeGender) nonresponse weights (i.e., AgeGenderWgtC), the survey response rates for the age variable were compared at the 5-year age group level and neighboring cells with similar response rates were collapsed. Upon completion of this process, six age groups were created (16 (AuthorWas this the youngest age? Elsewher in the article, 17, 18, and 19 are used.) to 49, 50 to 54, 55 to 59, 60 to 64, 65 or older, missing). These six age groups were combined with the gender variable response categories (male, female, missing (AU: What about the "other" response option? (This question also pertains to the relevant LPN/LVN section)) to produce 18 AgeGender categories. The survey response rate for each AgeGender category (# responding/# in sample frame) was calculated and used to create each category's weight as follows:

$$\text{AgeGender Category Weight} = \frac{\text{Overall Survey Response Rate}}{\text{AgeGender Category Survey Response Rate}}$$

As an example of how this was calculated, there were 1,479 RNs in the sample frame whose gender was identified as male and whose age was missing. Out of these 1,479 RNs, 251 responded. The AgeGender response rate for this category was determined to be 251/1479 = .1697. The overall survey response rate was 42021/153695 = .2734. Hence, the AgeGender weight for the age missing-gender male category was .2734/.1697 = 1.611.

When the AgeGender weights for each respondent are totaled up, the sum comes to 42,021—the same as the total number of respondents. Table C8 displays the weights for the 18 AgeGender categories in jurisdictions for which data were obtained through the Nursys database.

TABLE C8

Response Rate Bias of Registered Nurses: AgeGender Weights

Age in Years	Missing	Gender	
		Female	Male
16–49	1.310	1.152	1.602
50–54	1.076	1.008	1.308
55–59	0.840	0.811	1.199
60–64	0.749	0.710	0.907
≥ 65	0.623	0.607	0.698
Age missing	1.030	1.118	1.611

In a similar manner, poststratification weights (i.e., JurisdictionWgtC) were constructed at the state level to adjust for differing sampling rates across states. These adjustments were made by comparing the number of responses to the number of licensees in that state. Analysis of the raw data, without accounting for the sample design, would lead to the overall results being too heavily influenced by states with fewer licensees.

For example, there were 444,964 licensed RNs in California, out of which 811 responded. The California response per license rate was 811/444964 = .0018. The overall response per license rate

was 42021/4948914 = .0085. Hence, the poststratification weight for California was .0085/.0018 = 4.659.

Overall weights (pct_wgtC), which combined the AgeGender and poststratification weights were created by multiplying the AgeGender and poststratification weights for each individual to create an initial set of weights, adding the initial weights together, and slightly adjusting the weights so that they summed 42,021.

The overall weights adjust the distribution across states, age, and gender but the sum is the actual number of RNs in the subset of completed responses. They can be applied when analyzing relationships between variables without the effect of artificially altering the degrees of freedom and thereby affecting significance tests. The AgeGender weights, poststratification weights, and overall weights are summarized in Table C9.

TABLE C9

Response Bias of Registered Nurses: Descriptive Statistics of Weights, Complete Responses Only

	n	Min	Max	Sum	Mean
AgeGender (AgeGenderWgtC)	42,021	0.607	1.611	42,021	1.000
Poststratification (JurisdictionWgtC)	42,021	0.082	4.659	42,021	1.000
Combined (pct_wgtC)	42,021	0.049	7.415	42,021	1.000

Note. Combined (pct_wgtC) was used in reporting results.

Licensed Practical Nurse/Licensed Vocational Nurse Nonresponse Analyses and Sample Weighting

As with the RNs, a formal nonresponse bias analysis was conducted on the licensed practical nurse/licensed vocational nurse (LPN/LVN) data following the close of the survey. Variables in the data file came from both the Nursys database (i.e., the frame data) and responses to the survey (i.e., survey data). The variables used in the nonresponse analysis were from the frame and include state, date of birth, gender, and race/ethnicity. The dependent variable in the analysis was whether or not the sampled LPN/LVN population completed the questionnaire.

Preliminary Analysis

Of the 166,217 LPNs/LVNs in the sample frame, 39,765 responded for a response rate of 23.9% (Table C10). Tables C11 and C12 show the frequencies for the categorical variables. Table C13 shows the descriptive statistics for age.

TABLE C10

Response Bias of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses: Response Rate

Response Status	(n = 166,217)	%
No	126,452	76.1
Yes	39,765	23.9

TABLE C11

Response Bias of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses: Gender

Gender Response Variables		(n = 166,217)	%	Valid %
Valid	Female	93,317	56.1	91.8%
	Male	8,344	5.0	8.2%
	Total	101,661	61.2	100.0%
Missing	Restricted/unknown	1,033	0.6	
	Missing	63,523	38.2	
	Total	64,556	38.8	

TABLE C12

Response Bias of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses: Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity Response Variables		(n = 166,217)	%	Valid %
Valid	White	39,165	23.6%	73.4%
	Black/African American	6,975	4.2%	13.1%
	Asian	709	0.4%	1.3%
	Hispanic	3,373	2.0%	6.3%
	Native American	811	0.5%	1.5%
	Pacific Islander	63	0.0%	0.1%
	Other	2,233	1.3%	4.2%
	Total	53,329	32.1%	100.0%
Missing	Restricted/unknown	48,740	29.3%	
	Missing	64,148	38.6%	
	Total	112,888	67.9%	

TABLE C13

Response Bias of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses: Descriptive Statistics for Age (*n* = 97,238)

	M	*SD*	**Min**	**Max**
Age in Years	47.0	13.6	19	93

Bivariate analysis

Tables 14 and 15 show the bivariate relationships between the demographic variables from the sample frame and whether or not the respondent completed the survey. There were far fewer men in the database (8,344 compared to 93,317 women), and they were less likely to complete the survey (17.2% compared to 24.6% among women).

TABLE C14

Response Bias of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses: Survey Completion Rate by Gender

Gender	**n**	**Complete Survey?**	
		No	**Yes**
Female	93,317	75.4%	24.6%
Male	8,344	82.8%	17.2%
Total	101,661	76.0%	24.0%

Note. χ² (1, *N* = 101,661) = 229.8, *p* < .001.

From Table C15, LPNs/LVNs who identified as White were most likely to respond, with a response rate of 25.7%. African American nurses were least likely to respond, with a response rate of 17.8%.

TABLE C15

Response Bias of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses: Survey Completion Rate by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	**n**	**Complete Survey?**	
		No	**Yes**
White	39,165	74.3%	25.7%
African American	6,975	82.2%	17.8%
Asian	709	76.2%	23.8%
Hispanic	3,373	80.3%	19.7%
Native American	811	79.8%	20.2%
Pacific Islander	63	81.0%	19.0%

Race/Ethnicity	**n**	**Complete Survey?**	
		No	**Yes**
Other	2,233	78.9%	21.1%
Total	53,329	76.0%	24.0%

Note. χ² (6, *N* = 53,329) = 258.5, *p* < .001.

Table C16 displays the mean age of LPNs/LVNs. On average, those who completed the survey were 5.3 years older than the nonrespondents. This relationship is statistically significant.

TABLE C16

Response Bias of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses: Differences in Mean Age by Survey

Complete Survey?	**n**	**Age in Years**	
		M	**SD**
No	73,806	45.7	13.2
Yes	23,432	51.0	14.0
Total	97,238	47.0	13.6

Note. A *t* test shows that this relationship is significant at the <.001 level.

Weights

In the 2015 and 2017 National Nursing Workforce Survey reports, nonresponse adjustments were made for gender and age. Due to the high degree of missing race/ethnicity data in the sample frame (67.9% missing/unknown), it was still deemed impractical to use that category for nonresponse adjustment.

To create the combined age and gender (AgeGender) nonresponse weights (i.e., AgeGenderWgtC), the survey response rates for the age variable were compared at the 5-year age group level, and neighboring cells with similar response rates were collapsed. Upon completion of this process, six age groups were created (16 to 49, 50 to 54, 55 to 59, 60 to 64, 65 or older, missing). These six age groups were combined with the gender variable response categories (male, female, missing) to produce 18 AgeGender categories. The survey response rate for each age-gender category (# responding/# in sample frame) was calculated and used to create each category's weight, as follows:

$$\text{AgeGender Category Weight} = \frac{\text{Overall Survey Response Rate}}{\text{AgeGender Category Survey Response Rate}}$$

An example of how this was calculated can be found in the RN nonresponse sample weighting section.

When the AgeGender weights for each respondent are totaled, the sum comes to 39,765—the same as the total number of respondents. Table C17 displays the weights for the 18 AgeGender

categories in jurisdictions for which data were obtained through the Nursys database.

	n	Min	Max	Sum	Mean
Combined (pct_wgtC)	39,765	0.083	7.059	39,765	1.000

Note. pct_wgtC was used in reporting results.

TABLE C17

Response Bias of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses: AgeGender Weights

Age in Years	Gender		
	Missing	Female	Male
18 to 49	1.496	1.253	1.715
50 to 54	1.177	0.977	1.355
55 to 59	0.944	0.799	1.187
60 to 64	0.765	0.697	1.049
65 or older	0.665	0.592	0.745
Age missing	0.993	1.078	1.435

In a similar manner poststratification weights (i.e., JurisdictionWgtC) were constructed at the state level to adjust for differing sampling rates across states. However, these adjustments were made not by comparing the number of responses in a state to its sample frame count, but rather by comparing the number of responses to the number of licensees in that state. An example of how these weights were calculated can be found in the RN nonresponse sample weighting section.

Overall weights (pct_wgtC), which combined the AgeGender and poststratification weights, were created by multiplying the AgeGender and poststratification weights for each individual to create an initial set of weights, adding the initial weights together, and slightly adjusting the weights so that they sum up to 39,765.

The overall weights simply adjust the distribution across states, age, and gender but sum to the actual number of LPNs/LVNs in the subset of completed responses. They can be applied when analyzing relationships between variables without the effect of artificially altering the degrees of freedom and thereby affecting significance tests. The AgeGender weights, poststratification weights, and overall weights for LPNs/LVNs are summarized in Table C18.

TABLE C18

Response Bias of Licensed Practical Nurses/Licensed Vocational Nurses: Descriptive Statistics of Weights, Complete Responses Only

	n	Min	Max	Sum	Mean
AgeGender (AgeGenderWgtC)	39,765	0.592	1.715	39,765	1.000
Poststratification (JurisdictionWgtC)	39,765	0.117	5.270	39,765	1.000