

ABSTRACT TITLE: Oregon's Newly Licensed Nurse Workforce: The Who, What, Where

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PROBLEM STATEMENT: There is a lack of evidence available on Oregon's newest registered nurses. Insights into the employment of newly-licensed nurses in Oregon can help develop guidance for new graduates, provide information to employers who may be seeking newly-licensed nurses, help undergraduate education with the current work settings and practice areas, and help forecast the need for registered nurse-to-baccalaureate of science in nursing programs.

BACKGROUND/EVIDENCE: Difficulties faced by newly licensed nurses in finding their first jobs has been well documented in the media in recent years. Recent insights from national and state surveys indicate the job market for newly licensed nurses has improved in recent years. It also suggests nurses with baccalaureate and associate degrees may face important differences in rates and places of employment.

METHOD/STRATEGY: An independent survey was conducted of Oregon registered nurses who obtained their license via examination between September 1, 2014 and August 31, 2015. A total of 579 registered nurses out of 1,338 surveyed responded for a response rate of 43.3%.

RESULTS: Among those surveyed, 81.1% were already employed as registered nurses. There were no significant differences in employment between baccalaureate- and associate-prepared nurses. The vast majority (83.1%) of newly-licensed nurses who were employed secured a job offer within one to three months. The majority of newly-licensed nurses (68.1%) worked in hospitals, with another 11.6% working in nursing home/extended care/assisted living settings. There were differences in work settings when comparing baccalaureate- and associate-prepared nurses. Overall, most (91.0%) employed newly-licensed nurses were satisfied with their first nursing job. Additionally, 95.9% of associate-prepared nurses indicated they planned to attend an RN-to- BSN completion program within the next five years.

RECOMMENDATIONS/LESSONS LEARNED: Newly-licensed nurses should actively seek and consider work in a variety of practice areas and settings. Nursing programs and employers, especially in non-acute work settings, should continue to expand partnerships with undergraduate nursing programs to provide increased opportunities for students to experience a variety of settings and practice areas. Finally, nursing programs should continue to assess the availability of in-state RN-to-BSN programs.