



Trends in New York Registered Nurse Graduations, 2002-2018



School of Public Health
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PREFACE

For over 15 years, the Center for Health Workforce Studies (CHWS) has conducted an annual survey of the deans and directors of New York's registered nurse (RN) education programs. The survey asks about nursing program applications, admissions, and graduations as well as respondents' assessment of the local job market, and barriers to expanding program capacity. In addition to presenting results from the 2018 survey, this report documents trends in RN production at regional and state levels.

Established in 1996, CHWS is a center of the School of Public Health, University at Albany, State University of New York (SUNY). The mission of CHWS is to provide timely and accurate data and to conduct policy relevant research about the health workforce. The work of CHWS supports and promotes health workforce planning and policymaking at local, regional, state, and national levels. Today, CHWS is a national leader in the field of health workforce studies.

This report was prepared by CHWS staff, including Robert Martiniano, Nubia Goodwin, Maaisa Cleaves, Kristen Stiegler, Tehreem Khalid, and Jean Moore with layout design by Leanne Keough and Matt Allegretti. The views expressed in this report are those of CHWS and do not necessarily represent positions or policies of the School of Public Health, University at Albany, SUNY.

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BACKGROUND

The number of registered nurses (RNs) in the workforce nationwide has grown substantially over the past decade and is projected to continue to grow.¹ Registered nursing is one of the largest licensed health professions in the state and the nation.² In response to population aging and the growing emphasis on population health, the health care delivery system is shifting its focus to primary and preventive care as well as social determinants of health. This, in turn, is creating more opportunities for RNs in a variety of settings, with roles that support more effective chronic disease management.³

Like many health professions, RNs in New York are unevenly distributed, with fewer in rural areas and more in urban areas of the state. New York passed a law in 2017 known as “BSN in 10,” requiring that registered nurses in the state obtain a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing within 10 years of initial licensure.* In addition, there is discussion about the state mandating minimum nurse staffing ratios in hospitals and nursing homes.

The annual survey of deans and directors of New York’s RN education programs conducted by CHWS provides critical information on the production of RNs that can help stakeholders better understand the relationship between RN production and the supply and distribution of the state’s nursing workforce.

METHODS

In September 2018, CHWS invited the deans and directors of the state’s 123 RN education programs to participate in the survey.[†] Nursing programs surveyed included all associate degree (ADN) programs, 4-year baccalaureate degree (BSN) programs, BSN-completer programs (licensed RNs completing baccalaureate degrees in nursing)[‡] and the lone nursing diploma program. The survey remained in the field until May 2019. During that time, researchers followed up with non-respondents via email and telephone.

The survey consisted of 5 questions, including:

- The number of RN graduates, 2014 to 2018
- Changes in the number of applications and acceptances between 2017 and 2018
- An estimate of the number of qualified applicants turned away from the program and reasons why
- The number of faculty vacancies
- Perceptions of the local job market for new RN markets

Of the 123 programs surveyed, 108 responded for an 88% response rate overall, with an 83% response rate from BSN programs and a 92% response rate from ADN programs. Respondents had the option of mailing or emailing completed surveys as well as providing the requested information by telephone. Data for non-respondents

*“BSN in 10” officially amended the NYS Education Article 139 law §6905. For more information on BSN in 10, visit: <http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/nurse/article139.htm>.

† Different RN education programs (eg, ADN and BSN) offered by the same institution, were counted as separate programs.

‡ BSN completers are those RNs already holding an RN diploma or associates degree who obtain a BSN.

were extrapolated using previous survey data to generate an estimate of graduations from all of the state’s RN education programs in 2018.

LIMITATIONS

While the vast majority of RNs who train in New York practice in New York, some of the state’s licensed RNs trained in other states. Similarly, licensed RNs seeking BSNs may enroll in on-line BSN-completer programs that are based in other states. Consequently, while in-state nursing education programs make a substantial contribution to the production of new RNs and BSN-completers for the state, it is not the exclusive source.

FINDINGS

The number of new RN graduates continues to rise slowly, driven by graduations from 4-year baccalaureate programs.

Overall, the number of new RN graduates[§] has more than doubled between 2002 and 2018 (Figure 1 and Table 1). However, between 2011 and 2018, the number of ADN (associate degree nursing) graduates decreased by nearly 12% while the number of BSN graduates (4-year baccalaureate nursing degrees) increased by slightly more than 63%.

Figure 1. The Annual Number of New Graduates From NY RN Education Programs by Degree Type, 2002–2018

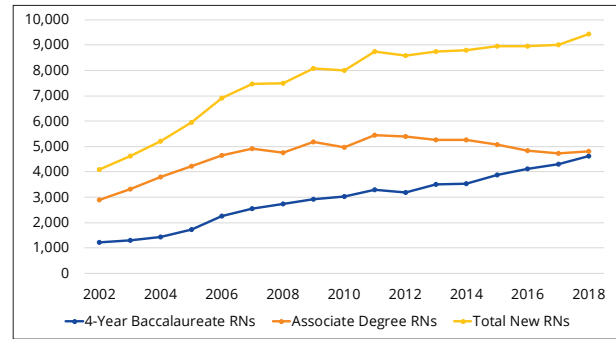


Table 1. The Annual Number of Graduates From NY RN Education Programs by Degree Type, 2002–2018

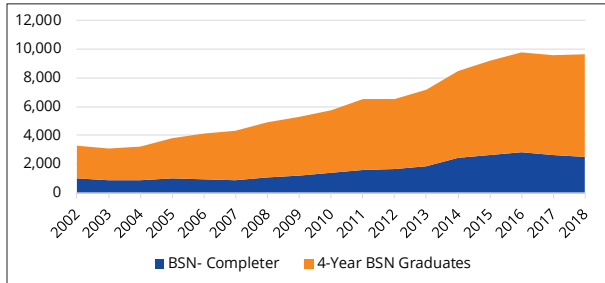
School Year	RN Diplomas	Associate Degree RNs	4-Year Baccalaureate RNs	Total New RNs
2002	3	2,877	1,208	4,088
2003	3	3,323	1,303	4,629
2004	11	3,780	1,427	5,218
2005	14	4,211	1,714	5,939
2006	8	4,640	2,266	6,914
2007	9	4,918	2,535	7,462
2008	6	4,750	2,742	7,498
2009	9	5,161	2,919	8,089
2010	14	4,966	3,023	8,003
2011	9	5,440	3,299	8,748
2012	16	5,370	3,186	8,572
2013	10	5,248	3,495	8,753
2014	12	5,244	3,542	8,798
2015	10	5,074	4,007	9,091
2016	17	4,810	4,292	9,119
2017	14	4,701	4,121	8,836
2018	9	4,792	4,482	9,283

BSN-completer graduations as a percentage of total BSN graduations declined between 2014 and 2018.

BSN-completer graduates, as a percentage of total BSN graduates, grew steadily between 2007 and 2014, increasing from 26% to 41% (Figure 2). Since 2014, however, BSN-completer graduates as a percentage of total BSN graduates declined to 35%.

[§] Excludes BSN completers.

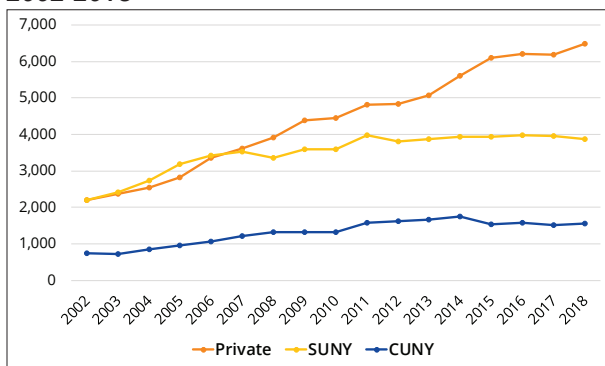
Figure 2. 4-year BSN Completers Graduates in New York, 2002-2018



RN graduations from privately sponsored nursing education programs in the state have nearly tripled.

Between 2011 and 2018, RN graduations from privately sponsored RN programs (including hospital-based) have increased by nearly 35% (Figure 3). During the same time period, however, RN graduations from State University of New York (SUNY) sponsored and from the City University of New York (CUNY) sponsored programs have decreased by 3% and 1%, respectively. Since 2002, RN graduations from privately sponsored programs have nearly tripled.

Figure 3. New York State Graduations by Sponsor, 2002-2018

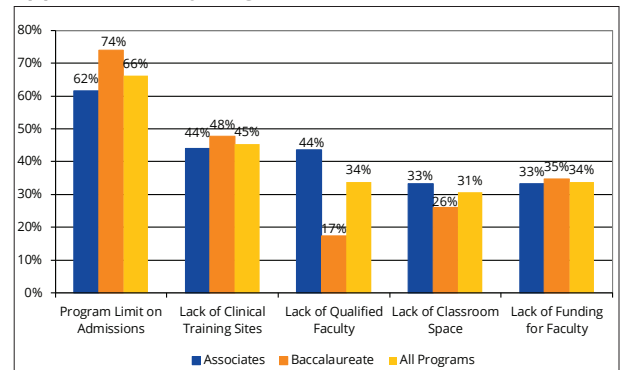


Limits on the number of nursing program admissions was cited as the main reason for turning away qualified applicants.

Two-thirds of deans and directors reported that a key reason for turning away qualified applicants

from their programs was limits on program admissions. Other reasons included lack of clinical training sites (45%), lack of qualified faculty and funding to hire more faculty (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Reasons for Turned Away Qualified Applications, by Degree, 2018



Baccalaureate programs were more likely to report increases in applications and acceptances between 2017 and 2018, compared to associate degree programs.

In 2018, over half of the deans and directors of baccalaureate programs noted that the number of applications increased over 2017 levels (Figure 5). In contrast, nearly two-thirds of deans and directors of associate degree programs indicated no change in the number of applications to their programs between 2017 and 2018.

In 2017 and 2018, one-third of baccalaureate program deans and directors reported more acceptances over the previous year (Figure 6). In contrast, less than 10% of the deans and directors in associate degree programs reported increases in acceptances in 2018 compared to 2017.

Figure 5. Change in Applications Among Associate Degree Nursing Programs, 2014-2018

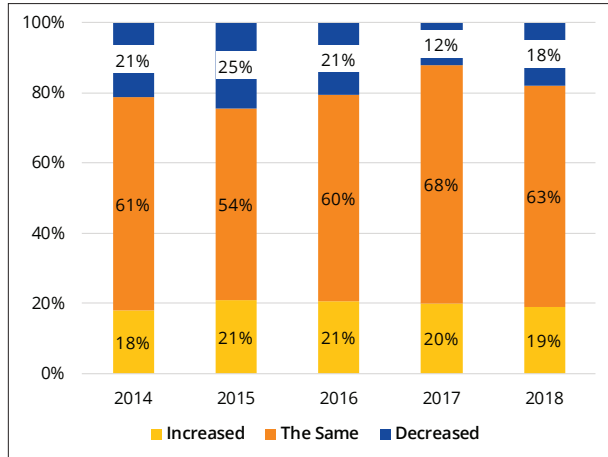


Figure 8. Change in Acceptances Among Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Programs, 2014-2018

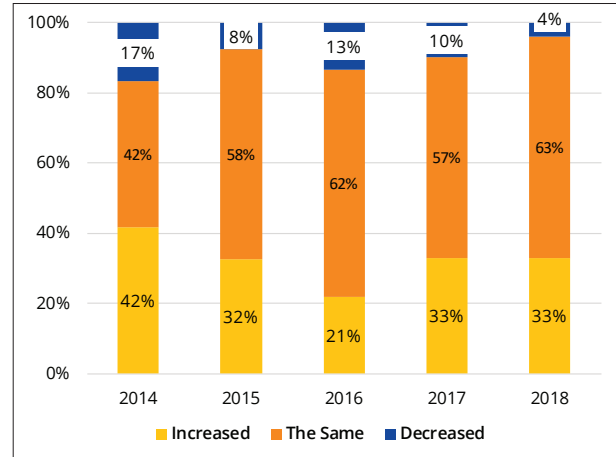


Figure 6. Change in Applications Among Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Programs, 2014-2018

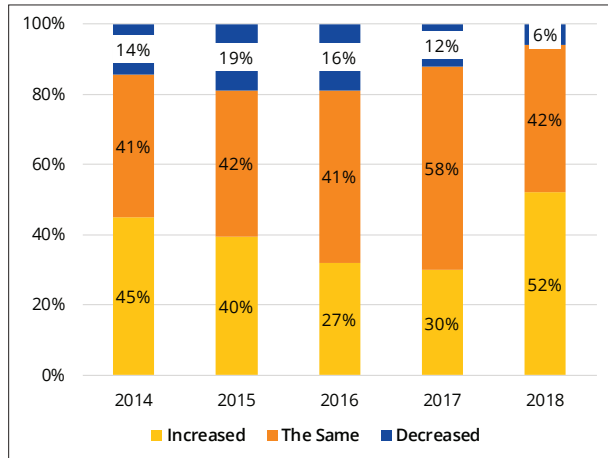
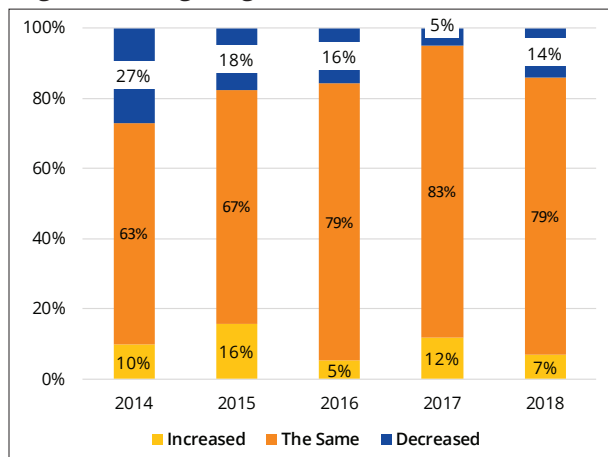


Figure 7. Change in Acceptances Among Associate Degree Nursing Programs, 2014-2018



All deans and directors in the majority of regions reported many jobs for RN graduates of their programs.

Statewide, 83% of deans and directors reported many jobs for newly graduated RNs (Figure 7). Regionally, fewer deans and directors reported many jobs in the New York City (56%) and the Hudson Valley regions (75%).

The new RN job market appeared somewhat stronger for baccalaureate graduates compared to ADN graduates (Figure 8). A higher percentage of baccalaureate deans and directors reported many jobs in hospitals, while more ADN deans reported many jobs in nursing homes.

Figure 9. Percent of Nursing Deans and Directors Reporting “Many Jobs” for Newly Trained RNs by Region, 2018

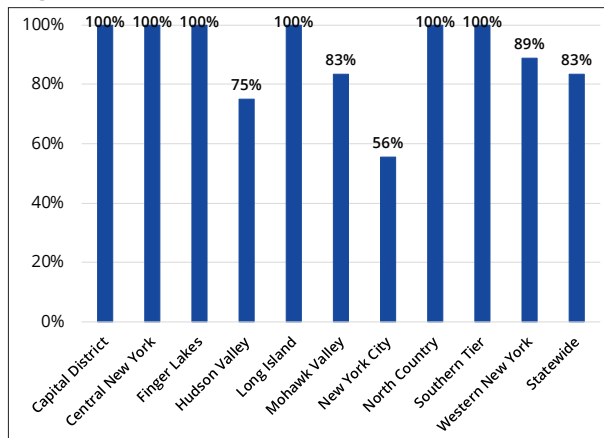
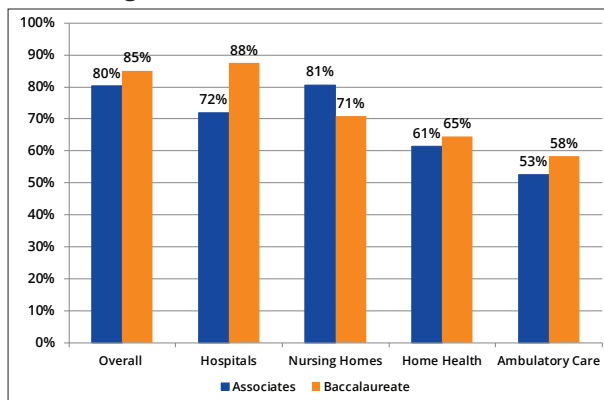


Figure 10. Percent of Nursing Deans and Directors Reporting “Many Jobs” for New Graduates, by Degree and Setting, 2018



DISCUSSION

Since 2002, the number of new RN graduates from NY programs has continued to increase, driven in part by growth in graduations from 4-year baccalaureate programs. Given the continued increase in applications and acceptances to these programs, this trend is expected to continue at least in the short-term. In contrast, graduations from associate degree programs have steadily declined since 2011. This decline may be due in part to employer preference for BSNs as well as the recently enacted “BSN in 10” law.

However, in many areas upstate, particularly rural areas, ADN programs may be a key pipeline for new RNs. The number of BSN completer graduations steadily increased between 2007 and 2016, though somewhat slowed in recent years. It is not clear how this trend will be impacted by the “BSN in 10” law.

Deans and directors reported turning away qualified applicants because of caps on program admissions, lack of clinical training sites and lack of faculty and resources to pay for them. Up until now, these issues have not substantially reduced RN production, though continued monitoring is important. Finally, the job market, especially upstate, indicates strong demand for newly trained RNs across all health care settings.

CONCLUSION

RNs are integral to the delivery of safe and effective health services. They are assuming new and different responsibilities in team-based models of care, particularly in the area of chronic disease management. Educational requirements for RN licensure in the state have changed and RNs must obtain a baccalaureate degree or higher within 10 years of initial licensure. In addition, there is ongoing discussion about mandating minimum nurse staffing ratios in hospitals and nursing homes. Consequently, it is important to continue to monitor the state’s RN education pipeline to assess the adequacy of the supply and distribution of the state’s nursing workforce.

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