

**Imagine**

**a world**

**without**

**NURSES**





# IMAGINE A WORLD WITHOUT REGISTERED NURSES

## WHO REGISTERED NURSES ARE

The 3.1 million registered nurses (RNs) are the nation’s largest segment of the healthcare workforce in the U.S.. Nearly every healthcare encounter includes an RN. From the staff nurse in the community hospital, the Advanced Practice Registered Nurse working in a local retail clinic, or the school nurse in your child’s school, the nursing profession is meeting America’s many healthcare needs.

## WHAT REGISTERED NURSES DO

They...

- Perform physical exams and health histories
- Provide health promotion, counseling and education
- Administer medications, wound care, and numerous other personalized interventions

Less visible, they...

- Interpret patient information and make critical decisions about needed actions
- Coordinate care, in collaboration with a wide array of healthcare professionals
- Direct and supervise care delivered by other healthcare personnel such as licensed practical nurses and nurse aides
- Conduct research in support of improved practice and patient outcomes

*“RNs are the last link in the safety net in the prevention of errors.”*

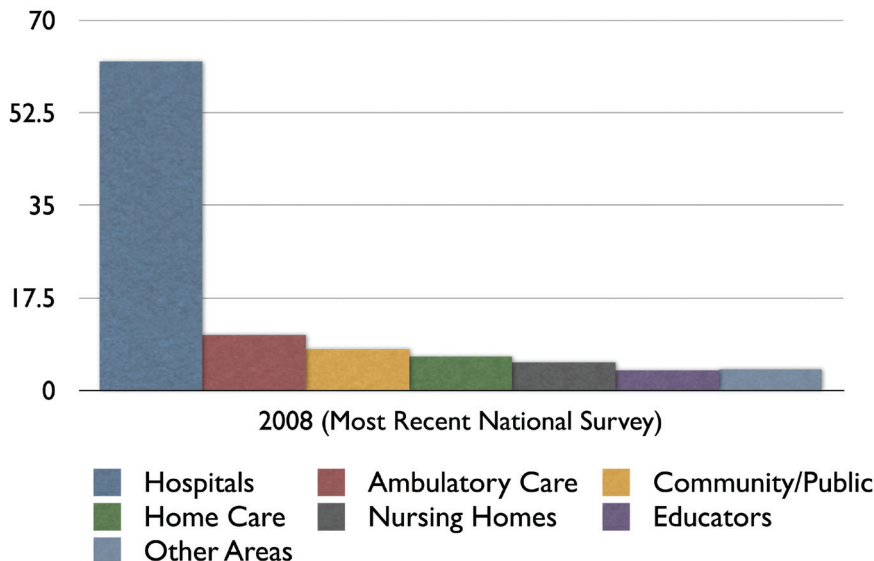
## WHERE REGISTERED NURSES WORK

RNs practice in all healthcare settings: hospitals, nursing homes, medical offices, ambulatory care centers, community health centers, schools, and retail clinics. They also provide health care in more surprising locations such as camps, homeless shelters, prisons, sporting events and tourist destinations.

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Of the 2.6 million RNs **employed in nursing** (in 2008)...

- The vast majority (62.2%) continue to work in hospitals
- 10.5% were employed in the ambulatory care setting (medical offices / clinics, dialysis centers, health maintenance organizations)
- 7.8% worked in community and public health
- 6.4% were in home care, (an increase from 3.8% over four years)
- 5.3% worked in nursing homes / extended care
- 3.8% were employed as faculty in schools of nursing, and the remaining nurses worked in other areas such as schools, prisons, insurance providers, and medical equipment providers

Additionally...

- RN jobs represented 2% of all employment in 2010
- The average annual earnings for full time RNs in 2010 (excluding managers, supervisors and faculty) was \$67,720
- Average age was 47 years; nearly 48% are 50 and older (2008)

## WHO ARE ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSES?

Advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) are qualified to furnish many of the same services traditionally provided by physicians: diagnosing illnesses through examination, health histories, ordering, performing and interpreting lab tests and x-rays, and determining treatment plans which may include prescribing medications.

APRNs are further identified by four categories:

- Nurse practitioners (NP)
- Clinical nurse specialists (CNS)
- Certified nurse midwives (CNM)
- Certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNA)

Each of these four categories requires specialized knowledge and skills acquired through graduate-level education and certification in their specific specialty role. Certification can be provided by a state agency or more often by a national body such as the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) or relevant specialty nurses association.

Decades of research has shown that APRNs are able to provide care that is as high in quality as that provided by physicians. As of 2008, an estimated 251,000 RNs report they are prepared as an APRN in one or more specialties or fields; an increase of just over 4% since 2004.

Each year Americans are unable to access healthcare services either because of an inability to access physician care or because the provider no longer accepts the patients' insurance coverage. (such as Medicare). APRNs play a critical role in fulfilling this unmet need.

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## How Do LPNS Differ?

Licensed practical nurses (LPNs), also known as licensed vocational nurses (LVNs) in California and Texas, complement the healthcare team by providing basic, routine care consistent with their education under the direction of an RN, APRN, MD/DO in a variety of settings. The scope of practice as with the education is less in depth than that for the RN. Many continue their education in order to qualify for RN licensure.

## HOW NURSES QUALIFY...

### LICENSURE

Every state and the District of Columbia have a board of nursing with a mission of protecting the public from harm. Governance of the practice of nursing includes:

- Establishing requirements for initial licensure and retaining: basic education, continuing education and/or competency.
- Interpreting scope of practice parameters, as defined in state statute (nurse practice act)
- Investigating complaints of licensees and disciplinary actions.

### EDUCATION

There is more than one educational pathway leading to eligibility to take the standardized National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX)-RN.

### UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

The **Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BS/BSN)** offered at colleges and universities:

- Prepares graduates to engage in the full scope of professional nursing practice across all healthcare settings
- Is intended to result in a deeper understanding of the cultural, political, economic, and social issues that affect patients and influence healthcare delivery
- Includes nursing theory, physical and behavioral sciences, and humanities with additional content in research, leadership, and may include such topics as healthcare economics, health informatics, and health policy

The **Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN)** is offered by community colleges and hospital-based schools of nursing. Diplomas in Nursing which were once the most common route to RN licensure are only available through a hospital-based schools of nursing.

### GRADUATE / POST-GRADUATE EDUCATION

Offer additional routes to advancing the expertise of registered nurses:

- Master's Degree (MSN)** programs offer a number of tracks designed to prepare Advanced Practice Nurses, nurse administrators, and nurse educators.
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)** programs are research-focused whose graduates typically teach and/or conduct research
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)** programs focus on clinical practice or leadership roles

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