



2015 Advanced Practice Nursing Workforce Survey Executive Summary Illinois HealthCare Action Coalition*

The results from the 2015 Illinois HealthCare Action Coalition (IHAC) Advanced Practice Nursing workforce survey are reported in this document. The survey captured data on the demographics, education, state distribution, job activities and practice foci of Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs) in Illinois. The survey was conducted via an electronic platform and announced to Illinois APNs via email and a number of US mail reminders. Participation was voluntary, and 2,365 of the 9000 plus Illinois APNs completed the survey.

General overview:

Data on the characteristics, supply, and distribution of APNs in the State of Illinois is essential to expanding access to care and planning for provisions of essential services, both in primary care and acute care as well as new team-based models of care. This report contains data on the demographics of Illinois' current APN workforce, the relative numbers of APNs in each age group, their cultural diversity, and educational preparation. The data quantifies the services APNs provide, how they bill for these services, and how they maintain their required collaborative agreements with their respective Illinois physician. Finally, the survey captures APN density throughout the state as well as their work with a broad range of populations.

Aging workforce:

The report documents important information about the aging of the Illinois APN workforce, 41.5% of our sample are 55-65 years of age. As a comparison, the average age of this age cohort was 34% the 2012 National Sample Survey of Nurse Practitioners.ⁱ Interestingly, years of experience as an APN, does not closely correlate with the age of the APN -- suggesting the diverse career trajectories of APNs.

Geographic distribution:

The report maps out where APNs are practicing in the state, documenting that APNs generally practice in areas of high population density. While of great interest, it is difficult to map APN practice sites in terms of Medically Underserved Areas (MUAs). The broad county-wide designation of an MUA masks the diversity of underserved areas within the region -- best indicated by a zip code or census tract within a county. The current data is an excellent start toward efforts to map the practice of APNs, and their provision of care to underserved areas of the State.

Decreased diversity:

The data indicate the lack of cultural diversity within the APN workforce. Of particular concern is that diversity actually decreases in the younger cohort; a trend which is of great concern given the increased diversity of our state.

Specialty/Work Place Characteristics/Billing:

The respondents reported on their nursing specialty, billing arrangements, and workplace setting. The survey participants were provided a choice among 26 job settings as well as the option to write in settings that were not listed. The majority of respondents practice in ambulatory settings; but many APNs indicated they split time between a hospital and outpatient setting. Approximately 35% of APNs indicated they practice in traditional primary care settings but other specialties were also represented; specialties that are increasing present in primary care, such as Psychiatric/Mental Health. In line with Illinois regulation, APNs maintain collaborative agreements but with a range of physician-collaborator relationships. Consistent with national data, most APNs are satisfied with their work; however, the degree of satisfaction varies based on the level of perceived hierarchy within that collaborative relationship. Forty percent of respondents bill exclusively under their

National Provider Identifier; rising to 53% with the addition of APNs who bill a combination of NPI and physician /clinic billing.

Summary:

Taken together, these data will be extremely valuable as health care planners project the human health care capital that will be needed in Illinois. These data will be of great use in estimating the current APN supply, their demographics, and practice specialties. The anticipated shortage of primary care providers is particularly acute in Illinois. Focused workforce planning is urgently needed to assure access to healthcare for Illinois residents.

ⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, National Center for Health Workforce Analysis. Highlights From the 2012 National Sample Survey of Nurse Practitioners. Rockville, Maryland: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014.

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