Executive Summary

Illinois Nursing Workforce Center Registered Nurse Workforce Survey 2018

The purpose of this report is to detail the results from the 2018 Illinois Registered Nurse (RN) workforce survey. The survey was structured to capture data on the demographics, education, state distribution, and practice foci of RNs in Illinois. The survey was conducted during the 2018 Illinois RN licensure renewal period, from 3/07/18 to 5/31/18. In Illinois, over 90% of individual RNs completed licensure renewal via an on-line platform. When individuals concluded the renewal process, there was a link to the survey along with an explanation of its purpose. The voluntary survey was completed by 31,047 RNs, representing 17% of the total RN population in Illinois.   In general, the 2018 survey results are similar to those collected during the 2016 RN on-line license renewal, trends and differences will be highlighted.

General overview: Data on the characteristics, supply and distribution of RNs in the State of Illinois is essential to maintaining access to health care and planning for the provision of essential primary care and other health services. This report contains data on the demographics of the current RN workforce, the relative numbers of RNs in each age group, their cultural diversity, educational preparation, and specialty practice area. Based on these findings, issues and concerns around the capacity, distribution and diversity of the nursing workforce are identified.

Aging workforce: The report presents important information about the aging of the RN workforce. In 2018, 52% of respondents are 55 years or older, which although only a 2% increase since 2016 is approximately 10% increase in this cohort of Illinois RNs since 2014. The relatively rapid increase in RNs in older age categories has significant implications for workforce planning. Similar to 2016, approximately 27% of the respondents indicated intent to retire within the next five years. This combination of aging workforce and retirement plans indicate the potential of an impending nursing shortage within the next five years.

Education post-licensure: Responses to questions regarding registered nurses' intent to seek higher degrees revealed a low percent of respondents intend to pursue additional education. Respondents who are not pursuing a degree post-licensure indicated that the greatest barrier was cost, specifically cost of tuition, followed by family obligations. Ten per cent of respondents indicated they were currently enrolled in a nursing education program, which in the entire RN population is approximately 18,000 RNs. Of those in a nursing education program, 4.5% are working towards a baccalaureate degree, 4.5% towards a master's degree, and 1.4% are in a doctoral program.

Diversity: Consistent with the increase in cultural and racial diversity in Illinois, data indicated a slight increase in the cultural diversity of the RN workforce in select groups of the younger cohorts.   For, those identifying as Hispanic/Latino, 32% are younger than age 36 years, while only 6% are over age 55 years. In the multiracial category, 27% are 35 years of age or younger, while 11% are over the age of 65 years. The increase in younger age cohorts did not hold true for all age groups, 9% of Black/African American respondents reported being younger than 35 years, compared to the 17% in those over 65 years.   White females with initial licensure in the U.S. constitute a substantial majority, approximately 80% of respondents.

Specialty foci: The respondents reported employment in these top five nursing specialties: acute care specialties, family focus, medical, surgical and community-health promotion. The data also demonstrated the distribution of nurses in specialties by age cohorts, revealing significantly fewer younger nurses in specialties such as psychiatric mental-health, school, home health, gerontology, and community health nursing. These trends stand in contrast to the Illinois report, *The Workforce Implications of New Health Care Models (2014),* which forecasts a significant increase in ambulatory services, as well as a concomitant need for RNs to practice in community based models of care.

Summary: Collectively, the 2018 Illinois Registered Nurse (RN) workforce survey is a useful resource as health care planners project the human health care capital that will be needed in Illinois. The information will allow the Illinois Nursing Workforce Center (INWC) to address questions around the current RN supply, and if it will it be adequate to meet the health care

needs of Illinois citizens? Health care workforce planners should use these data to help determine what types of RN (e.g. specialty) will be in greatest demand, in what locales, as well as the types of specialties and skills that will be required in future models of care.

Additional information on IL Nursing Workforce Center http://nursing.illinois.gov/ResearchData.asp