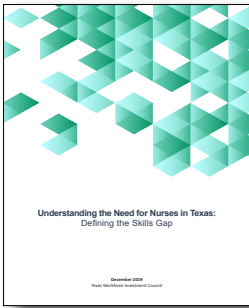


Understanding the Need for Nurses in Texas: Defining the Skills Gap



The Texas Workforce Investment Council (Council) prepared this study on the demographic characteristics of the nursing workforce in Texas. While there is much comparative national data in the full report, this synopsis focuses primarily on the key data and analysis necessary to understand the nursing labor force in Texas.

Research suggests that the United States is in the midst of a nursing shortage. In 2017, approximately 5 million Registered Nurses (RNs), Nurse Anesthetists, Nurse Practitioners and Nurse Midwives, and Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses (LP and LVNs) made up the nursing labor force in the United States. Projections indicate that employment of RNs will grow approximately 12 percent in the next ten years.

Emerging demographic and socioeconomic changes present challenges for the nursing labor force. As the population continues to age and retire, the nursing labor force will age and retire with it. Aging Baby Boomers also present challenges to existing healthcare models. Additionally, attracting new nurses has proven difficult, especially recruiting nurses from rural and remote communities and from diverse backgrounds. These factors, among others, affect the current supply of nurses.

Characteristics of the Nursing Labor Force in Texas

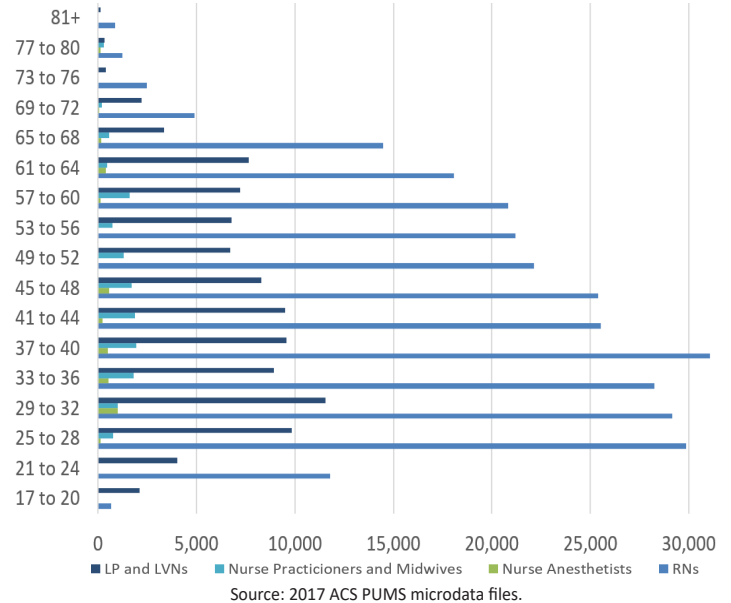
In 2017, according to American Community Survey data (most recent available), the estimated number of nursing labor force participants (includes employed individuals and unemployed individuals looking for work) was 357,691 individuals. Of the nursing labor force participants who were employed (353,146 individuals), approximately 72 percent (253,852 individuals) were RNs and approximately 23 percent (82,117 individuals) were LP and LVNs. Nearly five percent (17,177 individuals) of the Texas nursing labor force participants were Nurse Anesthetists, Nurse Practitioners, and Nurse Midwives. Additionally, over 50 percent of nurses who were unemployed in 2017 were RNs, and approximately 49 percent were LP and LVNs.

Similar to national trends, female participation in nursing outpaces that of male participation. The median age for nurses in Texas is 41, which is slightly younger than the median age for nurses at the national level. The highest concentration of nurses in Texas occurred between the ages of 25 and 48 with steady, although declining, rates from ages 49 to 68. While the overall population of RNs in Texas falls between 17 and 44 years of age, nearly half of all RNs in Texas are 44 years of age and older, and over a third of all RNs are age 55 and older.

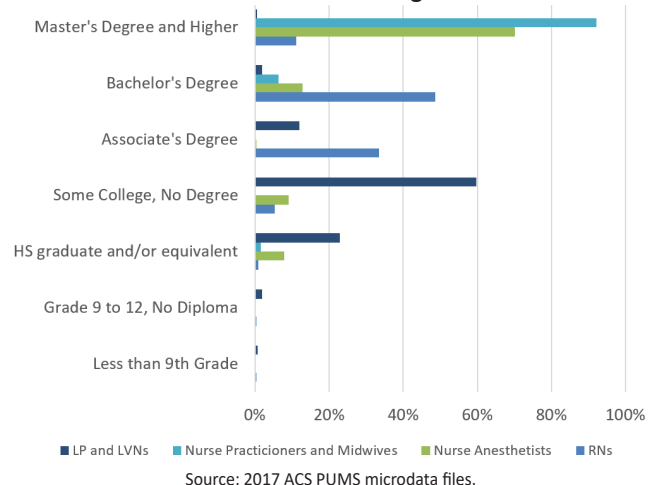
Of the nursing labor force participants in Texas, over 90 percent of Nurse Practitioners and Midwives had a master's degree and higher. Approximately 50 percent of RNs had a bachelor's degree or higher. LP and LVNs had at least a high school diploma or equivalent, with the higher numbers having obtained some college, but no degree.

RNs earned an average salary of \$57,021 (inflation adjusted for 2017). Average salary increases with higher levels of educational attainment. For example, higher average annual salaries for Nurse Anesthetists and Nurse Practitioners and Midwives reflect educational attainment of a bachelor's degree or higher.

Age Distribution of the Nursing Labor Force in Texas by Nurse Type

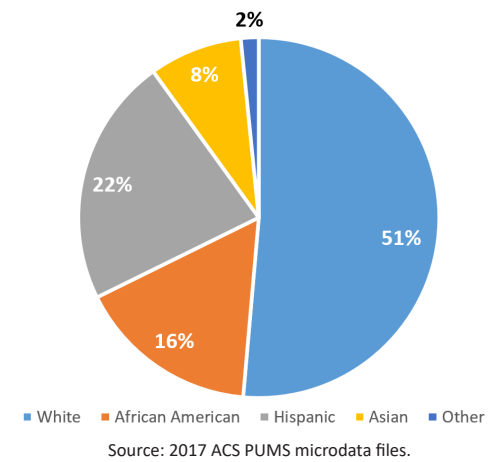


Educational Attainment of the Nursing Labor Force in Texas



The chart to the right illustrates that 51 percent of the nursing labor force in Texas was White, 22 percent was Hispanic, 16 percent was African American, eight percent was Asian, and two percent was Other in 2017. Whites are the oldest racial group in the state and Hispanics are the youngest. The median age in 2020 is projected to be 43.2 for the White population and 31.1 for the Hispanic population.

Race/Ethnicity of the Texas Nursing Labor Force



Geographic Distribution of the Nursing Labor Force in Texas

The table below illustrates the total numbers of nursing labor force participants in each of the 28 local workforce development areas (LWDAs) in Texas. These estimates indicate that the largest concentration of nurses of any type occurs in the areas along the I-35 corridor. However, the number of nurses is different for each LWDA and can vary by nurse type.

Nursing Labor Force in Texas by LWDA

LWDA Name	Total Population	Registered Nurses	Nurse Anesthetists	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	Nurse Practitioners and Midwives
Panhandle	435,273	3,870	35	2,429	43
South Plains	438,349	5,925	0	1,696	419
North Texas	227,998	2,689	0	816	37
North Central Texas	2,842,469	35,247	379	6,745	1,964
Tarrant County	2,052,945	19,564	895	5,223	580
Greater Dallas	2,617,835	20,730	267	5,221	484
Northeast Texas	282,647	4,537	0	2,252	22
East Texas	862,009	12,076	0	4,094	480
West Central Texas	325,835	2,810	0	1,355	173
Borderplex	868,007	8,135	0	3,106	147
Permian Basin	472,595	4,606	29	2,094	600
Concho Valley	161,833	1,412	22	969	0
Heart of Texas	364,291	3,389	0	1,328	310
Capital Area	1,227,473	11,061	373	3,433	520
Rural Capital	1,008,357	11,396	168	1,638	103
Brazos Valley	353,004	2,856	41	1,345	167
Deep East Texas	383,791	4,434	0	2,532	0
Southeast Texas	398,763	2,695	0	2,380	627
Golden Crescent	204,198	2,708	0	597	38
Alamo	2,588,488	24,922	123	10,792	1,566
South Texas	294,472	1,610	0	867	0
Coastal Bend	591,790	5,072	81	4,682	224
Lower Rio Grande Valley	945,617	6,939	49	3,770	162
Cameron County	423,421	4,673	114	2,598	69
Texoma	205,401	2,262	0	719	24
Central Texas	491,209	6,641	251	3,172	246
Middle Rio Grande	170,776	1,298	0	583	0
Gulf Coast	7,064,920	74,360	1,042	22,165	5,255
Total	28,303,766	287,918	3,869	98,598	14,261

Source: 2017 ACS PUMS microdata files.

Observations

Research shows that demographic and socioeconomic factors affect the current supply of nurses. The demographic trends highlighted in *Understanding the Need for Nurses in Texas: Defining the Skills Gap* are expected to continue into the future. Population change presents challenges and opportunities for recruiting, training, and retaining a high-quality nursing labor force. Understanding the implications of demographic changes for nurses will be critical for Texas employers.