

Concerns in both North Dakota and nationally have been expressed regarding a shortage of nurses to meet health care needs of the U.S. population. The Nursing Needs Study was designed to collect data in order to present a more accurate picture of nurses in both rural and urban areas of North Dakota and compare these data with existing national data as well as to inform policy. This fact sheet reflects nursing supply and demand based on 2004 data.

The Nursing Needs Study was mandated by the North Dakota Century Code Nurse Practices Act in which the North Dakota Board of Nursing was directed to explore issues of supply and demand including recruitment, retention and utilization of nurses. The Center for Rural Health at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences conducts the Nursing Needs Study. All results from the study are available at <http://medicine.nodak.edu/crh>.

Nursing Supply in North Dakota

North Dakota has 533 Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs), 7,906 Registered Nurses (RNs) and 3,262 Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs).¹ Ninety-one percent of nurses are female and are primarily caucasian. Most APNs work in hospital and ambulatory care settings, RNs in hospitals and LPNs in long-term care and hospital settings.² The average age of APNs is 50 years, RNs 45 years, the same as the national average,³ and LPNs 46 years.²

Thirty-eight percent of nurses in North Dakota are employed in two settings. This is significantly higher than the national average where 6.4 percent of RNs have a second job.^{2,4}

National data indicate an average of nearly eight RNs per 1,000 people.⁵ Nine counties in North Dakota have over 10 RNs per 1,000 people (see Figure 1) compared to 14 counties in 2002. Twenty-five counties have less than eight RNs per 1,000 people including four counties with less than 3.4 RNs per 1,000 people.

Seven counties have six or more LPNs per 1,000 people compared to

eight counties in 2002 (see Figure 2). Five counties have less than 2.5 LPNs per 1,000 people.

APNs in North Dakota are paid an average salary of just under \$76,000. RNs are paid an average salary of \$35,394 which is less than the U.S. average of \$48,240.^{2,6} LPNs are paid an average salary of \$25,211 which is also less than the U.S. average of \$31,490. LPNs in rural areas report an income 23 percent lower than LPNs in urban settings. RNs and

Figure 1. North Dakota RNs per 1,000 Persons by County 2004

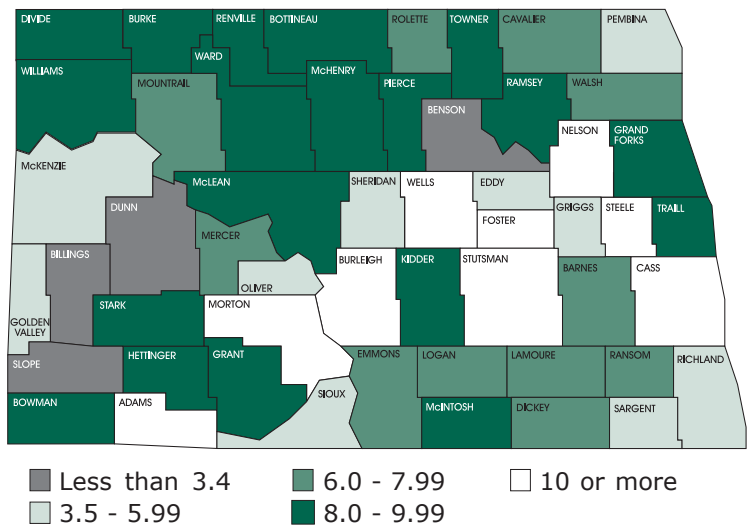
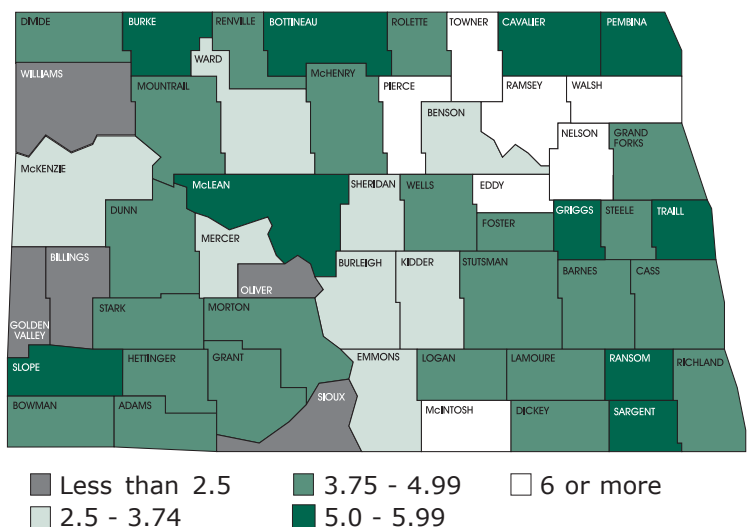


Figure 2. North Dakota LPNs per 1,000 Persons by County 2004



Source: Data from the North Dakota Board of Nursing Database, Summer 2004 and U.S. Census 2000.

