

Projected Registered Nurse Workforce in Hawai'i 2005 - 2020

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In order to plan future workforce needs, workforce demand requirements and supply availability need to be adequately estimated, and workforce shortages or oversupply conditions need to be predicted. Forecasting requires that past and current trends in the demand for and supply of nursing workforce are carefully assessed. Predictors of levels and trends in demand and supply must be identified and models created that weigh these factors and use them to project future demand and supply.

One of the goals of the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is to establish "*an ongoing system that assists in estimating the future registered nursing workforce supply and demand needs in Hawai'i.*" Long range forecasting is described as '*an estimate or prediction of the future*'. Forecast data are a best estimate of likely trends and are an essential component of nursing workforce planning. In order to plan future workforce needs, workforce demand requirements and supply availability need to be adequately estimated, and workforce shortages or oversupply conditions need to be predicted.

In this study, the National Center for Health Workforce Analysis (NCHWA) models are used to forecast the supply and demand of registered nurses (RN) in Hawai'i from 2005 - 2020. Preliminary estimates suggest that demand will grow from a current need for about 8,411 FTE RNs to more than 10,955 over the next 15 years. However, supply is projected to increase from an estimated 7,553 RNs in 2005 to an estimated 8,286 by 2020. The models indicate that by the year 2020, Hawai'i will have a shortage of approximately 2,669 FTE RNs, or about 24 percent demand shortfall.

Both immediate and long-term policy development is required to address this growing nursing shortage. We need to address the limited educational capacity issues faced by our nursing programs; to attract and ensure educational opportunities for people to the nursing profession. The advantage of such policies is that they add new nurses year after year. Thus, while the increase in any one year may be modest, the cumulative effect can be significant. Other factors such as reducing net annual out-migration and turnover rates; and attracting more people to nursing will have an accumulative effect.

Policies that affect participation within the existing pool of nurses may have a limited long-term impact while increasing the supply of nurses in the short term. Delaying time until retirement, reducing career changes and increasing the percentage of nurses working full time as opposed to part time are examples of such policies.