

**NLN Annual Nursing Data Review Documents
Application, Admission, Enrollment, and Graduation Rates for
All Types of Prelicensure Nursing Programs**

Demand for Spots in Nursing Programs Continues to Dramatically Outstrip Supply

ADN Programs Account for Majority of Growth in Admission, Enrollment, and Graduation

Vast Majority of Nursing Schools Recruiting Faculty with Difficulty

New York, NY - March 16, 2009 - The National League for Nursing's annual Nursing Data Review Academic Year casts a wide lens on all types of nursing programs, from doctoral through diploma including the 1000-plus programs offering diploma and associate nursing degrees, to determine rates of application, enrollment and graduation. Administered from March to September 2008 to obtain 2006-2007 data, the review also provides a comprehensive demographic profile of the current student population, documenting ethnic-racial identity, gender, and age.

"Research undertaken by the NLN has long played a key role in decision-making by federal and state governments regarding the nursing workforce," observed NLN CEO Beverly Malone, PhD, RN, FAAN. The NLN obtains data from LPN to baccalaureate programs creating a true picture of nursing education and contributing to an exact understanding of the importance of the nursing workforce today and tomorrow."

Key findings include:

- **Eighty-four percent of US nursing schools attempted to hire new faculty in 2007-2008.** Of those, 79 percent found recruitment "difficult" and almost 1 in 3 schools found it "very difficult." The two main difficulties cited were "not enough qualified candidates" (cited by 46 percent of schools), followed by inability to offer competitive salaries (cited by 38 percent).
- Despite increased capacity, an estimated 99,000 qualified applications - or almost **40 percent of qualified applications submitted to prelicensure RN programs - were rejected in 2006-07.** And selectivity rates (a.k.a. "acceptance rates") were extremely low, with 53 percent of RN programs falling into the "highly selective" category - a designation earned by programs offering admission to fewer than one-half of their applicants.
- **Capacity continued to grow, although more slowly.** Though indicators point to some expansion in the RN workforce pipeline - the nation added 64 additional prelicensure RN programs between 2006 and 2007; the rate of growth was slower than in the previous year.
- **Associate degree students continued to predominate.** Associate degree students comprised over one-half of all students enrolled in prelicensure RN programs, and more than three-fifths of admissions and graduations in 2006-2007, as broken down below.
- **Admissions have grown.** ADN programs admitted 12.3 percent more new students than last year. Baccalaureate admissions continued to grow as well albeit at a slower rate (5.6 percent in 2006-07) than in recent years. Diploma admissions were down slightly (4.2 percent).
- **Enrollments jumped.** Driven by an increase in ADN enrollment, the nation's ranks of prelicensure nursing students grew by almost 20,000, or 6.7 percent between 2006 and 2007. By contrast BSN programs did not change significantly during this period.
- **Graduation rates slowed in 2007.** Prelicensure graduations increased by only 3 percent between 2006 and 2007 after two years of more than 8 percent annual growth. Associate degree graduations accounted for the larger share of the increase, rising by 4.3 percent. Growth in baccalaureate program graduations slowed to only 2.3 percent, after a dramatic rise of almost 20 percent last year.

- **There was no significant movement in the percentage of racial-ethnic minorities graduating from prelicensure RN programs between 2006 and 2007.** Although the *class of 2006* had been considerably more diverse than in previous years, 2007 brought little change with just under 23.6 percent of new graduates from minority backgrounds in 2007 compared with 24.5 percent in 2006. Similarly, the percentage of male graduates held steady at 12 percent in 2007.

Concluded NLN president Dr. Elaine Tagliareni, "Given the opportunities being presented as health care reform moves front and center and funding potentially becomes available via the Recovery and Reinvestment Act, these nursing workforce data are more important than ever."

Please note: NLN research data is now available to all on the NLN website. *NLN DataView™* features slides and tables from key NLN data reports as PDFs, MS PowerPoint™ slides, MS Excel™ charts, and JPG images. Visit www.nln.org/research/slides/index.htm.

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