



Regulated Nurses, 2015: Canada and Jurisdictional Highlights

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Overview

Collecting and reporting health human resources (HHR) data assists decision-makers in the planning and distribution of health care providers. Since 2002, the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) has collected data on the supply, distribution and practice characteristics of the 3 groups of regulated nursing professionals in Canada: registered nurses (including nurse practitioners), licensed practical nurses and registered psychiatric nurses.

Regulated Nurses, 2015: Canada and Jurisdictional Highlights presents the key attributes of the nursing supply and workforce in Canada and each of its provinces and territories.

More information

The following companion products are available on CIHI's website at www.cihi.ca/hhr:

- Regulated Nurses, 2015: Summary Report (.pdf)
- Regulated Nurses, 2015: Chartbook (.pptx)
- Regulated Nurses, 2015: RN/NP Data Tables (.xlsx)
- Regulated Nurses, 2015: LPN Data Tables (.xlsx)
- Regulated Nurses, 2015: RPN Data Tables (.xlsx)
- Regulated Nurses, 2015: Health Regions (.xlsx)
- Regulated Nurses, 2015: Methodology Guide (.pdf)

Information and analyses on 30 other health care professions in Canada are also available at www.cihi.ca/hhr.

Feedback and questions are welcome at hhr@cihi.ca.

Regulated professions

There are 3 regulated nursing professions in Canada. Each province and territory has its own legislation governing nursing practice, as well as its own body that regulates and licenses its members.

Below is a brief description of each type of regulated nursing provider.

Registered nurses (RNs, including NPs) are self-regulated health care professionals who work both autonomously and in collaboration with others to enable individuals, families, groups, communities and populations to achieve their optimal levels of health. At all stages of life, in situations of health, illness, injury and disability, RNs deliver direct health care services, coordinate care and support clients in managing their own health. RNs contribute to the health care system through their leadership across a wide range of settings in practice, education, administration, research and policy. RNs are currently regulated in all 13 provinces and territories.

Nurse practitioners (NPs) are RNs with additional educational preparation and experience who possess and demonstrate the competencies to autonomously diagnose, order and interpret diagnostic tests, prescribe pharmaceuticals and perform specific procedures within their legislated scope of practice. NPs are currently regulated in all 13 provinces and territories.

Licensed practical nurses (LPNs) work independently or in collaboration with other members of a health care team. LPNs assess clients and work in health promotion and illness prevention. They assess, plan, implement and evaluate care for clients. LPNs are currently regulated in all 13 provinces and territories.

Registered psychiatric nurses (RPNs) work both autonomously and in collaboration with clients and other health care team members to coordinate health care and provide client-centred services to individuals, families, groups and communities. RPNs focus on mental and developmental health, mental illness and addictions, while integrating physical health and utilizing bio-psycho-social and spiritual models for a holistic approach to care. RPNs are currently regulated in the 4 Western provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia) and Yukon.

Notes to readers

Throughout this document,

- The term *regulated nurses* is used to describe the 3 groups of regulated nursing professionals as a whole: RNs (including NPs), LPNs and RPNs.
- The term *nursing* refers collectively to Canada's 3 regulated nursing professions, unless otherwise specified.
- The term *supply* refers to all regulated nurses who are eligible to practise in the given year (including those employed and those not employed at the time of registration).
- The term *workforce* refers to only those regulated nurses who were employed at the time of annual registration.
- Unless otherwise noted and/or referenced, data and information are from the nursing component of CIHI's Health Workforce Database. At present, this data set excludes RPNs in Yukon and LPNs in Nunavut. More information regarding the collection and reporting of this data is available in the companion document *Regulated Nurses, 2015: Methodology Guide*.
- Urban/rural population estimates for this report were obtained from the Demography Division, Statistics Canada, in February 2016.

Canada

- The supply of regulated nurses — including those who are and are not employed — grew by 18.5% between 2006 (351,048) and 2015 (415,864).
- In 2015, a total of 30,897 regulated nurses registered to practise in a province or territory for the first time, representing an inflow of 8.0%. After the 2014 registration year, 22,534 regulated nurses failed to renew their registration with the province or territory, representing an outflow of 5.9%.
- The regulated nursing workforce — those employed in nursing — grew by 19.7% over the previous 10 years. In 2006, the workforce included 326,170 regulated nurses, compared with 390,359 in 2015. In 2015, there were 283,575 RNs/NPs (4,090 NPs), 101,319 LPNs and 5,465 RPNs.
- In 2015, 3.2% of regulated nurses indicated that they were not employed in nursing at the time of registration.
- Between 2005 and 2014, the number of entry-to-practice graduates from registered nursing programs grew at an average annual rate of 4.6%, reaching 11,987 in 2014.
- Around 9 out of 10 regulated nurses who graduated from a Canadian nursing program (and who registered in Canada in 2015) either did not move after graduation or eventually returned to their jurisdiction of graduation. For those who moved after graduation, British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario continued to be the destinations of choice — this trend has remained unchanged since 2006.
- The proportion of internationally educated regulated nurses remained stable between 2006 and 2015, representing just less than 8% of all regulated nurses. Of those employed in 2015, 34.0% graduated in the Philippines, with an additional 11.5% graduating in India and 10.5% in the United Kingdom.
- The average age of regulated nurses was 43.8 in 2015, down from 45.0 in 2006. In 2015, 28.9% of regulated nurses in Canada were younger than 35 and 23.2% were 55 and older.
- The proportion of regulated nurses employed full time increased from 54.5% in 2006 to 57.6% in 2015.
- In 2015, close to 60% (58.9%) of regulated nurses were working in a hospital setting, while those identifying employment in community and nursing home/long-term care settings each accounted for about 15% of the workforce.
- In 2015, 11.7% (45,303) of the regulated nurses working in Canadian provinces worked in a rural or remote area, whereas 17.3% of the population lived in these areas. In comparison, 38.3% (623) of the regulated nurses working in the Canadian territories worked in a rural or remote area; 51.8% of the population lived in these areas.

Newfoundland and Labrador

- The supply of regulated nurses increased from 8,245 in 2006 to 8,448 in 2015, growing by 2.5% over the decade.
- In 2015, a total of 649 regulated nurses registered to practise in the province for the first time, representing an inflow of 7.7%. After the 2014 registration year, 602 regulated nurses failed to renew their registration with the province, representing an outflow of 7.2%.
- The regulated nursing workforce grew by 2.0% between 2006 and 2015, from 8,154 to 8,317. This included 6,072 RNs/NPs (136 NPs) and 2,245 LPNs.
- In 2015, 1.5% of regulated nurses indicated that they were not employed in nursing at the time of registration.
- Between 2005 and 2014, the number of entry-to-practice graduates from registered nursing programs grew at an average annual rate of 2.7%, reaching 250 in 2014.
- Of the 10,192 graduates of Newfoundland and Labrador's nursing programs who registered in Canada in 2015, 76.3% registered in the province. An additional 6.8% registered in Ontario, 5.8% in Alberta and 5.6% in Nova Scotia.
- In 2015, the average age of regulated nurses was 42.9. In addition, 26.3% of regulated nurses were younger than 35 and 16.1% were 55 and older.
- The proportion of regulated nurses employed full time increased from 64.1% in 2006 to 70.0% in 2015.
- In 2015, more than 60% (5,016) of regulated nurses were working in a hospital setting, while 11.2% (929) were in a community setting.
- In 2015, 28.2% of regulated nurses were employed in a rural or remote area of the province; in comparison, 50.4% of the province's population was living in a rural or remote area.

Prince Edward Island

- While the supply of regulated nurses increased by 7.0% between 2006 (2,100) and 2015 (2,247), this is the second consecutive year in which the supply of regulated nurses declined in the province.
- In 2015, a total of 146 regulated nurses registered to practise in the province for the first time, representing an inflow of 6.5% in the regulated nursing supply. After the 2014 registration year, 150 regulated nurses failed to renew their registration with the province, representing an outflow of 6.7%.
- The regulated nursing workforce grew by 2.9% between 2006 and 2015, from 2,027 to 2,085. This included 1,537 RNs/NPs (14 NPs) and 548 LPNs.
- In 2015, 1.2% of regulated nurses indicated that they were not employed in nursing at the time of registration.
- Between 2005 and 2014, the number of entry-to-practice graduates from registered nursing programs grew at an average annual rate of 4.1%, reaching 73 in 2014.
- Of the 2,133 graduates of Prince Edward Island's nursing programs who registered in Canada in 2015, 77.3% registered in the province. An additional 8.0% registered in Nova Scotia, 4.9% in Alberta and 3.4% in Ontario.
- In 2015, the average age of regulated nurses was 45.6. In addition, 24.5% of regulated nurses were younger than 35 and 27.3% were 55 and older.
- The proportion of regulated nurses employed full time increased slightly, from 48.4% in 2006 to 50.9% in 2015.
- In 2015, 55.8% (1,158) of regulated nurses were working in a hospital setting, while 7.5% (156) were in a community setting.
- In 2015, 35.5% of regulated nurses were employed in a rural or remote area of the province; in comparison, 40.8% of the province's population was living in a rural or remote area.

Nova Scotia

- The supply of regulated nurses increased from 12,459 in 2006 to 13,581 in 2015, growing by 9.0%.
- In 2015, a total of 1,093 regulated nurses registered to practise in the province for the first time, representing an inflow of 8.0%. After the 2014 registration year, 978 regulated nurses failed to renew their registration with the province, representing an outflow of 7.3%.
- The regulated nursing workforce grew by 9.2% between 2006 and 2015, from 11,964 to 13,070. This included 9,296 RNs/NPs (143 NPs) and 3,774 LPNs.
- In 2015, 1.1% of regulated nurses indicated that they were not employed in nursing at the time of registration.
- Between 2005 and 2014, the number of entry-to-practice graduates from registered nursing programs grew at an average annual rate of 4.7%, reaching 370 in 2014.
- Of the 13,215 graduates of Nova Scotia's nursing programs who registered in Canada in 2015, 80.9% registered in the province. An additional 5.7% registered in Ontario, 4.2% in Alberta and 2.8% in New Brunswick.
- In 2015, the average age of regulated nurses was 45.8. In addition, 22.8% of regulated nurses were younger than 35 and 28.2% were 55 and older.
- The proportion of regulated nurses employed full time increased from 59.8% in 2006 to 63.2% in 2015.
- In 2015, just more than 60% (7,953) of regulated nurses were working in a hospital setting, while 13.3% (1,741) were in a community setting.
- In 2015, 27.9% of regulated nurses were employed in a rural area of the province; in comparison, 33.7% of the province's population was living in a rural area.

New Brunswick

- The supply of regulated nurses increased from 10,794 in 2006 to 11,628 in 2015, growing by 7.7%.
- In 2015, a total of 900 regulated nurses registered to practise in the province for the first time, representing an inflow of 7.7%. After the 2014 registration year, 819 regulated nurses failed to renew their registration with the province, representing an outflow of 7.1%.
- The regulated nursing workforce grew by 6.7% between 2006 and 2015, from 10,326 to 11,022. This included 7,961 RNs/NPs (106 NPs) and 3,061 LPNs.
- In 2015, 2.0% of regulated nurses indicated that they were not employed in nursing at the time of registration.
- Between 2005 and 2014, the number of entry-to-practice graduates from registered nursing programs declined at an average annual rate of -0.8%, from 276 to 256.
- Of the 12,589 graduates of New Brunswick's nursing programs who registered in Canada in 2015, 81.2% registered in the province. An additional 5.2% registered in Nova Scotia, 4.3% in Ontario and 3.4% in Alberta.
- In 2015, the average age of regulated nurses was 44.3. In addition, 25.4% of regulated nurses were younger than 35 and 22.3% were 55 and older.
- The proportion of regulated nurses employed full time increased slightly from 59.5% in 2006 to 60.7% in 2015.
- In 2015, 62.6% (6,900) of regulated nurses were working in a hospital setting, while 11.0% (1,207) were in a community setting.
- In 2015, 28.4% of regulated nurses were employed in a rural area of the province; in comparison, 38.2% of the province's population was living in a rural area.

Quebec

- The supply of regulated nurses increased from 84,875 in 2006 to 99,059 in 2015, growing by 16.7%.
- In 2015, a total of 4,954 regulated nurses registered to practise in the province for the first time, representing an inflow of 7.0%. After the 2014 registration year, 4,524 regulated nurses failed to renew their registration with the province, representing an outflow of 6.5%.ⁱ
- The regulated nursing workforce grew by 15.4% between 2006 and 2015, from 81,118 to 93,605. This included 68,738 RNs/NPs (303 NPs) and 24,867 LPNs.
- In 2015, 0.7% of regulated nurses indicated that they were not employed in nursing at the time of registration.
- Between 2005 and 2014, the number of entry-to-practice graduates from registered nursing programs grew at an average annual rate of 1.2%, reaching 3,330 in 2014.
- Of the 99,182 graduates of Quebec's nursing programs who registered in Canada in 2015, 95.7% registered in the province. An additional 2.8% registered in Ontario, 0.4% in Alberta and 0.4% in British Columbia.
- In 2015, the average age of regulated nurses was 41.8. In addition, 32.2% of regulated nurses were younger than 35 and 17.0% were 55 and older.
- The proportion of regulated nurses employed full time increased from 51.7% in 2006 to 54.8% in 2015.
- In 2015, 62.0% (58,024) of regulated nurses in Quebec were working in a hospital setting, while 10.1% (9,419) were in a community setting.
- In 2015, 9.5% of regulated nurses were employed in a rural or remote area of the province; in comparison, 19.1% of the province's population was living in a rural or remote area.

i. The inflow and outflow data excludes LPNs, for whom historical data is not available.

Ontario

- The supply of regulated nurses increased from 132,036 in 2006 to 148,666 in 2015, growing by 12.6%.
- In 2015, a total of 9,613 regulated nurses registered to practise in the province for the first time, representing an inflow of 6.5%. After the 2014 registration year, 7,025 regulated nurses failed to renew their registration with the province, representing an outflow of 4.8%.
- The regulated nursing workforce grew by 19.1% between 2006 and 2015, from 115,145 to 137,133. This included 98,064 RNs/NPs (2,405 NPs) and 39,069 LPNs (also known as registered practical nurses in Ontario).
- In 2015, 5.4% of regulated nurses indicated that they were not employed in nursing at the time of registration.
- Between 2005 and 2014, the number of entry-to-practice graduates from registered nursing programs grew at an average annual rate of 10.7%, reaching 4,034 in 2014.
- Of the 133,686 graduates of Ontario's nursing programs who registered in Canada in 2015, 93.9% registered in the province. An additional 2.2% registered in Alberta, 1.8% in British Columbia and 0.4% in Nova Scotia.
- In 2015, the average age of regulated nurses was 45. In addition, 26.2% of regulated nurses were younger than 35 and 26.9% were 55 and older.
- The proportion of regulated nurses employed full time increased slightly from 60.1% in 2006 to 63.6% in 2015.
- In 2015, 56.6% (77,578) of regulated nurses were working in a hospital setting, while 17.0% (23,316) were in a community setting.
- In 2015, 7.3% of regulated nurses were employed in a rural or remote area of the province; in comparison, 11.0% of the province's population was living in a rural or remote area.

Manitoba

- The supply of regulated nurses increased from 14,966 in 2006 to 16,984 in 2015, growing by 13.5%.
- In 2015, a total of 1,171 regulated nurses registered to practise in the province for the first time, representing an inflow of 6.9%. After the 2014 registration year, 897 regulated nurses failed to renew their registration with the province, representing an outflow of 5.4%.
- The regulated nursing workforce grew by 12.2% between 2006 and 2015, from 14,510 to 16,283. This included 12,313 RNs/NPs (148 NPs), 3,032 LPNs and 938 RPNs.
- In 2015, 1.2% of regulated nurses indicated that they were not employed in nursing at the time of registration.
- Between 2005 and 2014, the number of entry-to-practice graduates from registered nursing programs declined at an average annual rate of -0.1%, reaching 426 in 2014.
- Of the 17,586 graduates of Manitoba's nursing programs who registered in Canada in 2015, 80.9% registered in the province. An additional 6.3% registered in Alberta, 5.5% in British Columbia and 3.5% in Ontario.
- In 2015, the average age of regulated nurses was 45.5. In addition, 24.8% of regulated nurses were younger than 35 and 26.8% were 55 and older.
- The proportion of regulated nurses employed full time decreased from 46.4% in 2006 to 44.8% in 2015.
- In 2015, more than 55.8% (9,039) of regulated nurses in Manitoba were working in a hospital setting, while 16.8% (2,725) were in a community setting.
- In 2015, 27.1% of regulated nurses were employed in a rural or remote area of the province; in comparison, 31.2% of the province's population was living in a rural or remote area.

Saskatchewan

- The supply of regulated nurses increased from 11,794 in 2006 to 14,790 in 2015, growing by 25.4%.
- In 2015, a total of 1,077 regulated nurses registered to practise in the province for the first time, representing an inflow of 7.3%. After the 2014 registration year, 919 regulated nurses failed to renew their registration with the province, representing an outflow of 6.3%.
- The regulated nursing workforce grew by 23.2% between 2006 and 2015, from 11,604 to 14,292. This included 10,221 RNs/NPs (172 NPs), 3,230 LPNs and 841 RPNs.
- In 2015, 3.1% of regulated nurses indicated that they were not employed in nursing at the time of registration.
- Between 2005 and 2014, the number of entry-to-practice graduates from registered nursing programs grew at an average annual rate of 8.0%, reaching 446 in 2014.
- Of the 13,796 graduates of Saskatchewan's nursing programs who registered in Canada in 2015, 78.1% registered in the province. An additional 12.6% registered in Alberta, 5.7% in British Columbia and 1.7% in Ontario.
- In 2015, the average age of regulated nurses was 43.4. In addition, 32.4% of regulated nurses were younger than 35 and 24.6% were 55 and older.
- The proportion of regulated nurses employed full time increased slightly from 55.6% in 2006 to 57.6% in 2015.
- In 2015, 56.6% (7,933) of regulated nurses in Saskatchewan were working in a hospital setting, while 20.2% (2,836) were in a community setting.
- In 2015, 22.5% of regulated nurses were employed in a rural or remote area of the province; in comparison, 37.5% of the province's population was living in a rural or remote area.

Alberta

- The supply of regulated nurses increased from 34,748 in 2006 to 48,842 in 2015, growing by 40.6%. This was the highest growth rate among all provinces and territories and significantly greater than the Canadian average (18.5%).
- In 2015, a total of 6,188 regulated nurses registered to practise in the province for the first time, representing an inflow of 12.7%. After the 2014 registration year, 2,907 regulated nurses failed to renew their registration with the province, representing an outflow of 6.4%.
- The regulated nursing workforce grew by 38.0% between 2006 and 2015, from 33,510 to 46,256. This included 34,170 RNs/NPs (377 NPs), 10,801 LPNs and 1,285 RPNs.
- In 2015, 5.0% of regulated nurses indicated that they were not employed in nursing at the time of registration.
- Between 2005 and 2014, the number of entry-to-practice graduates from registered nursing programs grew at an average annual rate of 2.8%; however, the numbers have declined in recent years, from 1,689 in 2012 to 1,383 in 2014.
- Of the 40,449 graduates of Alberta's nursing programs who registered in Canada in 2015, 85.5% registered in the province. An additional 7.2% registered in British Columbia, 3.6% in Saskatchewan and 1.8% in Ontario.
- In 2015, the average age of regulated nurses was 42.4. In addition, 34.4% of regulated nurses were younger than 35 and 21.3% were 55 and older.
- The proportion of regulated nurses employed full time increased from 40.4% in 2006 to 49.5% in 2015.
- In 2015, 60.4% (27,456) of regulated nurses in Alberta were working in a hospital setting, while 18.6% (8,471) were in a community setting.
- In 2015, 12.0% of regulated nurses were employed in a rural or remote area of the province; in comparison, 18.5% of the province's population was living in a rural or remote area.

British Columbia

- The supply of regulated nurses increased from 37,500 in 2006 to 49,915 in 2015, growing by 33.1%. This was the second-highest growth rate among all provinces and territories and significantly greater than the Canadian average (18.5%).
- In 2015, a total of 4,795 regulated nurses registered to practise in the province for the first time, representing an inflow of 9.6%. After the 2014 registration year, 3,384 regulated nurses failed to renew their registration with the province, representing an outflow of 7.0%.
- The regulated nursing workforce grew by 28.5% between 2006 and 2015, from 36,303 to 46,665. This included 33,781 RNs/NPs (236 NPs), 10,483 LPNs and 2,401 RPNs.
- In 2015, 1.7% of regulated nurses indicated that they were not employed in nursing at the time of registration.
- Between 2005 and 2014, the number of entry-to-practice graduates from registered nursing programs grew at an average annual rate of 5.2%, reaching 1,404 in 2014.
- Of the 37,352 graduates of British Columbia's nursing programs who registered in Canada in 2015, 91.7% registered in the province. An additional 4.9% registered in Alberta, 1.5% in Ontario and 0.6% in Saskatchewan.
- In 2015, the average age of regulated nurses was 44.0, decreasing from 45.8 in 2006. In addition, 28.2% of regulated nurses were younger than 35 and 24.3% were 55 and older.
- The proportion of regulated nurses employed full time increased slightly from 53.5% in 2006 to 53.6% in 2015.
- In 2015, 58.4% (26,866) of regulated nurses were working in a hospital setting, while 16.0% (7,353) were in a community setting.
- In 2015, 7.2% of regulated nurses were employed in a rural or remote area of the province; in comparison, 11.9% of the province's population was living in a rural or remote area.

Yukon

- The supply of regulated nurses increased from 388 in 2006 to 513 in 2015, growing by 32.2%.
- In 2015, a total of 79 regulated nurses registered to practise in Yukon for the first time, representing an inflow of 15.4%. After the 2014 registration year, 72 regulated nurses failed to renew their registration with the territory, representing an outflow of 14.2%.
- The regulated nursing workforce grew by 32.0% between 2006 and 2015, from 384 to 507. This included 397 RNs/NPs (5 NPs) and 110 LPNs.
- In 2015, 1.0% of regulated nurses indicated that they were not employed in nursing at the time of registration.
- Of the 66 graduates of the territory's nursing programs who registered in Canada in 2015, 80.3% registered in the territory. An additional 4.5% registered in each of British Columbia and Saskatchewan and 3.0% in Ontario.
- The average age of regulated nurses was 43.6 in 2015. In addition, 31.6% of regulated nurses were younger than 35 and 25.1% were 55 and older.
- The proportion of regulated nurses employed full time increased from 46.4% in 2006 to 53.6% in 2015.
- In 2015, just less than half (48.3%; 245) of regulated nurses were working in a hospital setting, while 23.5% (119) were in a community setting.
- In 2015, 15.0% of regulated nurses worked outside of Whitehorse; in comparison, 23.2% of Yukon's population was living outside of Whitehorse.

Northwest Territories and Nunavut

- While the supply of regulated nurses increased by 4.2% between 2006 and 2015, from 1,143 to 1,191, the supply declined by 2.1% between 2014 and 2015.
- In 2015, a total of 232 regulated nurses registered to practise in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut for the first time, representing an inflow of 19.5%. After the 2014 registration year, 257 regulated nurses failed to renew their registration, representing an outflow of 21.1%.
- The regulated nursing workforce remained stable between 2006 and 2015 (1,125 and 1,124, respectively), including 1,025 RNs/NPs (45 NPs) and 99 LPNs in the latter year.
- In 2015, 0.7% of regulated nurses indicated that they were not employed in nursing at the time of registration.
- Between 2006 and 2014, the number of entry-to-practice graduates from registered nursing programs declined from 25 to 13 graduates in 2014.ⁱⁱ
- Of the 280 graduates of these territories' nursing programs who registered in Canada in 2015, 63.9% registered in these territories. An additional 13.9% registered in Alberta, 5.7% in British Columbia and 4.3% in each of Ontario, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan.
- The average age of regulated nurses was 45.9 in 2015. In addition, 25.9% of regulated nurses were younger than 35 and 30.2% were 55 and older.
- In 2015, the proportion of regulated nurses employed full time was 73.2%.
- In 2015, 38.1% (426) of regulated nurses were working in a hospital setting, while 44.9% (502) were working in a community setting.
- In 2015, nearly half (48.8%) of regulated nurses worked outside of Yellowknife and Iqaluit; in comparison, 64.9% of the population of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut was living outside of Yellowknife and Iqaluit.

ii. The 2005 number of entry-to-practice graduates in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut was not available.

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