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Regulated Nurses, 2014

Regulated Nurses, 2014 highlights current trends in nursing practice across a variety of supply, employment and demographic characteristics. This report highlights data for the 3 groups of regulated nursing professionals in Canada: registered nurses (RNs, including nurse practitioners, or NPs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and registered psychiatric nurses (RPNs).

This data can be used by decision-makers, planners and researchers to inform health human resources management and policy development.

Supply of regulated nurses declined, but growth in the profession remained stable

In 2014, the supply of regulated nurses declined by 0.3% over the previous year. There were 406,817 regulated nurses, including 293,205 RNs (including 3,966 NPs), 107,923 LPNs and 5,689 RPNs. The supply of RNs faced its first decline (1.0%) in almost 2 decades. Growth among the supply of LPNs (1.4%) and RPNs (1.3%) continued to slow in 2014.

Number of Canadian RN and RPN graduates registering in Canada holds steady

Between 2005 and 2013, 80% to 90% of Canadian RN entry-to-practice graduates obtained a licence to practise registered nursing in Canada. Close to 90% of Canadian RPN entry-to-practice graduates obtained an RPN licence to practise in Canada. Graduates are most likely to attain a Canadian nursing licence within 3 to 4 years of graduation.

Nurses not obtaining a Canadian nursing licence may choose to pursue further education, leave Canada to practise nursing in another country or leave the profession altogether. Factors influencing a nurse's decision on where to live and work are diverse and may include social, political, economic, environmental and/or familial issues.

Number of nurses not renewing registration exceeded number entering profession

In 2014, a total of 25,397 regulated nurses registered in a province or territory where they did not register the year before. This fell short of the 27,757 regulated nurses who allowed their provincial or territorial registration to lapse at the end of 2013, resulting in a net loss of 2,360 regulated nurses. The majority of regulated nurses who allowed their registration to lapse were from Ontario, due in large part to regulatory changes that occurred in the province in 2014.

Retention highest among regulated nurses employed in hospital setting

Between 2005 and 2014, more than 80% of regulated nurses remained in the same workplace setting from one year to the next. The retention rates were highest in the hospital setting, where close to 90% of regulated nurses were retained, including more than 80% of RPNs, 85% of LPNs and 87% of RNs/NPs.