

Nebraska Health and Human Services System



**Nebraska Nurse Employer
Report
2003**

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BACKGROUND

In 2000, the Nebraska Legislature created the Nebraska Center for Nursing. The 16-member board was appointed by the Governor to address the nursing shortage and charged with developing a strategic plan. For the Board to satisfy its mandate, there was a need for current, comprehensive data about the supply and demand of nurses in Nebraska. Therefore, a comprehensive survey was conducted in 2000 (Nursing Workforce Employer Survey 2000) and again in 2002 (Nursing Workforce Employer Survey 2002). The 2002 surveys were mailed to all identified employers of Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses in Nebraska. A total of 560 facilities returned the Nursing Workforce Employer Surveys, which were entered for data analysis. Surveys returned from each type of facility included the following: Assisted Living Facility 137, Health Clinic 58, Home Health Agency 65, Home Health Agency/ Hospice 1, Hospice 9, Hospital 84, Intermediate Care for Mentally Retarded 2, Nursing Home 202, Nursing Home/ Assisted Living 1, and Public Health Clinic/ Family Planning Clinic 1.

This report summarizes the major descriptive findings of the Nebraska Nursing Workforce Employer Survey 2002 and compares findings with the 2000 survey and National numbers where applicable and feasible. Data is reported on Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, and Unlicensed Assistive Personnel.

NUMBER OF BUDGETED POSITIONS

Employers reported the number of budgeted Registered Nurse, Licensed Practical Nurse, and Unlicensed Assistive Personnel positions. In 2002, there were 9,218 budgeted RN positions, 3,247 budgeted LPN positions, and 11,064 budgeted Unlicensed Assistive Personnel positions. In comparison to the 2000 survey, there were 9,502 budgeted RN positions, 3,588 budgeted LPN positions, and 9,985 budgeted Unlicensed Assistive Personnel positions. Budgeted RN positions decreased by 284 and LPN positions decreased by 340 from 2000 to 2002. However, Unlicensed Assistive Personnel positions increased by 1,079 budgeted positions. Table A compares the 2000 and 2002 budgeted positions.

Table A. Number of Budgeted RN, LPN, and UAP Positions

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>RN</u>	<u>LPN</u>	<u>UAP's</u>
2000	9502	3588	9985
2002	9218	3247	11064

NUMBER OF VACANT POSITIONS

Employers were asked to report their vacancy numbers for Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, and Unlicensed Assistive Personnel, and all three positions showed a decrease in vacancy numbers. Numbers of vacant RN positions decreased from 1,048 in 2000 to 898 in 2002, showing a decrease of 150 vacant RN positions. LPN vacant positions decreased by 151 from 356 in 2000 to 214 in 2002. Unlicensed Assistive Personnel showed a decrease of 380 vacant positions from 912 in 2000 to 532 in 2002. Table B compares the number of vacant RN, LPN, and UAP positions from 2000 to 2002.

Table B. Number of Vacant RN, LPN, and UAP Positions

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>RN</u>	<u>LPN</u>	<u>UAP's</u>
2000	1048	356	912
2002	898	214	532

RATE OF VACANT POSITIONS

Vacancy rates decreased in relation to the number of vacant positions. RN vacancy rates dropped from 11% in 2000 to 10% in 2002, LPN vacancy rates dropped from 10% to 7%, and Unlicensed Assistive Personnel from 9% to 5%. According to the National Association for Health Care Recruitment (www.nahcr.com), national RN vacancy rates for the years 1998-2003 include the following: 5.6% in 1998, 8.6% in 1999, 10.2% in 2000, 11.9% in 2001, 11.2% in 2002, and 13.6% in 2003. Table C illustrates the rate of vacant RN, LPN, and UAP positions in Nebraska.

Table C. Rate of Vacant RN, LPN, and UAP Positions

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>RN</u>	<u>LPN</u>	<u>UAP's</u>
2000	11%	10%	9%
2002	10%	7%	5%

FTE's BUDGETED, VACANT, AND FTE VACANCY RATES

Employers were also asked to record the number of full time equivalents (FTE's) of RNs, LPNs, and Unlicensed Assistive Personnel on the survey. Budgeted RN FTE's increased from 8,823 in 2000 to 8,887 in 2002. The number of vacant RN FTE's decreased from 883 to 574 and the rate of vacant RN FTE's decreased from 10% to 6%.

Budgeted LPN FTE's increased from 2,845 in 2000 to 3,605 in 2002. The number of vacant LPN FTE's decreased from 291 to 137 and the rate of vacant LPN FTE's decreased from 10% to 4%.

Budgeted UAP FTE's decreased from 9,014 in 2000 to 8,497 in 2002. The number of vacant UAP FTE's decreased from 714 to 405 and the rate of vacant UAP FTE's decreased from 8% to 5%. Budgeted FTE's, Vacant

FTE's, and FTE Vacancy Rates are shown for RNs, LPNs, and UAPs in Tables D, E, and F respectively.

Table D. RN FTE's Budgeted, Vacant, and FTE Vacancy Rates

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>Budgeted FTE's</u>	<u>Vacant FTE's</u>	<u>FTE Vacancy Rates</u>
2000	8823	883	10%
2002	8887	574	6%

Table E. LPN FTE's Budgeted, Vacant, and FTE Vacancy Rates

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>Budgeted FTE's</u>	<u>Vacant FTE's</u>	<u>FTE Vacancy Rates</u>
2000	2845	291	10%
2002	3605	137	4%

Table F. UAP FTE's Budgeted, Vacant, and FTE Vacancy Rates

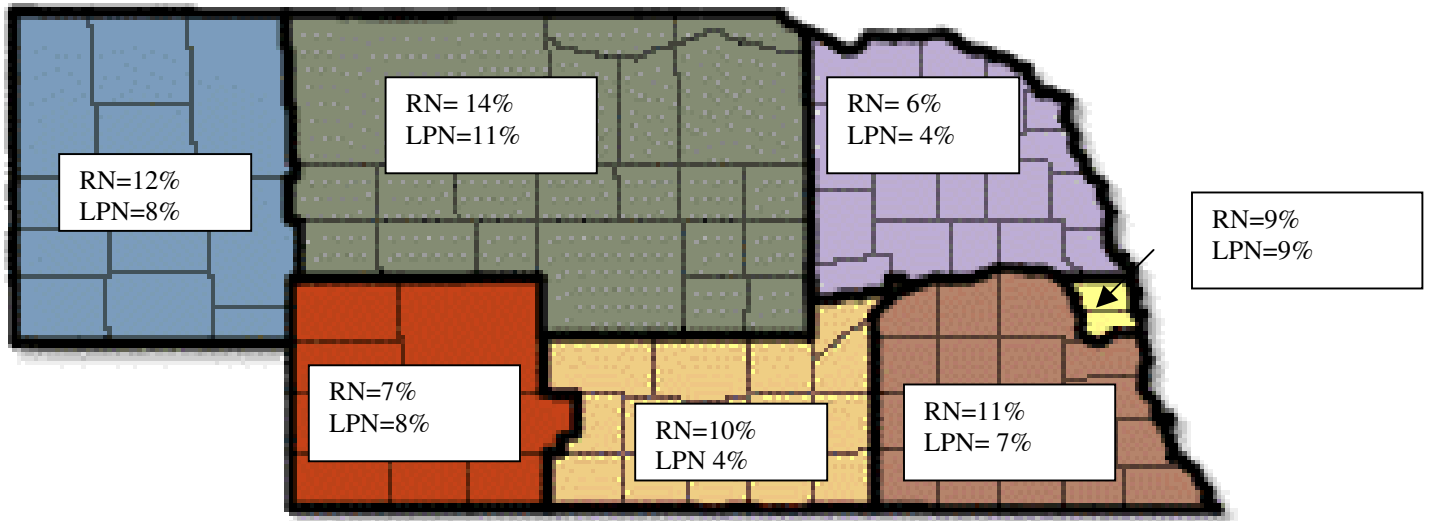
<u>YEAR</u>	<u>Budgeted FTE's</u>	<u>Vacant FTE's</u>	<u>FTE Vacancy Rates</u>
2000	9014	714	8%
2002	8497	405	5%

REGIONAL VACANCY RATES

Picture 1 displays the regional vacancy rates as reported by employers of nurses. Vacancy rate was determined by dividing the total number of vacancies by the total number of budgeted positions.

$$\frac{\# \text{ Vacant positions}}{\# \text{ Budgeted positions}}$$

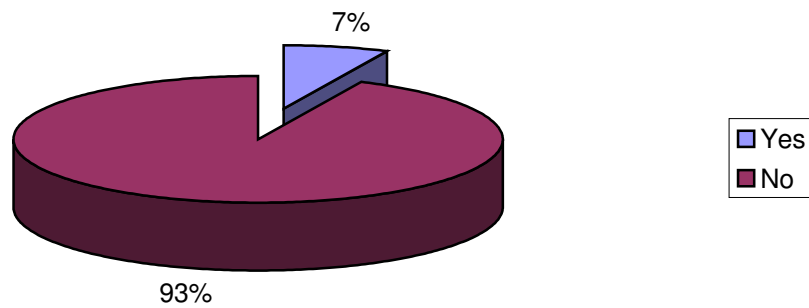
Picture 1. Regional Vacancy Rates for RNs and LPNs



RATE OF FACILITIES DISCONTINUING SERVICES

Facilities were asked if there were nursing services that they had discontinued due to nurse staffing. Seven percent (7%) responded that they had discontinued services due to nurse staffing and ninety-three percent (93%) had not. Chart 1 shows these percentages.

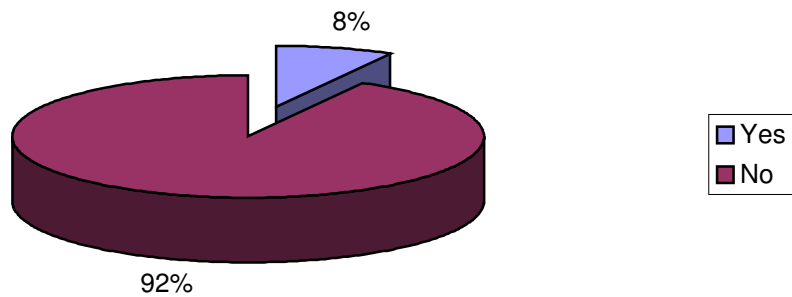
Chart 1. Facilities Discontinuing Services



RATE OF FACILITIES WITH SERVICES IN JEOPARDY

Employers responded to the question of whether they had services in jeopardy due to nurse staffing. Eight percent (8%) responded that they did have services in jeopardy due to nurse staffing and ninety-two percent (92%) did not. Chart 2 shows these percentages.

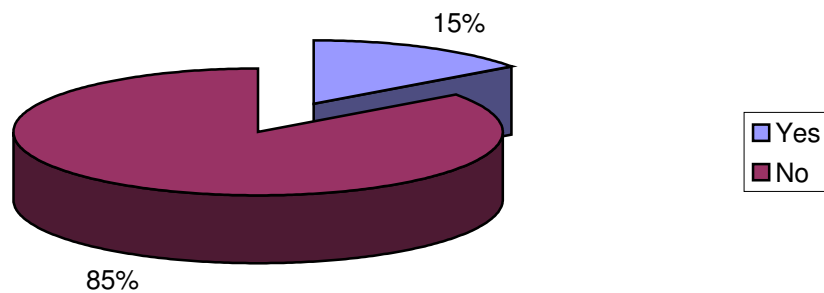
Chart 2. Facilities with Services in Jeopardy



RATE OF ADDITIONAL SERVICES IF STAFF AVAILABLE

Facilities that would provide additional services if staff were available included fifteen percent (15%) and eighty-five percent (85%) would not. Chart 3 shows these percentages.

Chart 3. Facilities That Would Provide Additional Services



SUMMARY

Employers of nurses responded to statewide mailed questionnaires which asked for information regarding budgeted and vacant Registered Nurse, Licensed Practical Nurse, and Unlicensed Assistive Personnel in Nebraska. There were 560 respondents to the survey. Changes were noted between the 2000 and the 2002 surveys. Budgeted RN positions decreased by 284, budgeted LPN positions decreased by 340, and budgeted Unlicensed Assistive Personnel (UAP) positions increased by 1,079. Vacant RN positions decreased by 150, vacant LPN positions decreased by 151, and vacant UAP positions decreased by 380. Vacancy rates dropped from 11% to 10% for RNs, from 10% to 7% for LPNs, and from 9% to 5% for UAPs. In 2002, the Nebraska RN vacancy rate of 10% was lower than the National RN vacancy rate of 11.2%. The number of budgeted RN Full Time Equivalents (FTE's) increased from 8,823 to 8,887. Vacant RN FTE's decreased from 883 to 574 and the rate of vacant RN FTE's decreased from 10% to 6%. Budgeted LPN FTE's increased from 2,845 to 3,605. Vacant LPN FTE's decreased from 291 to 137 and the rate of vacant LPN FTE's decreased from 10% to 4%. Budgeted UAP FTE's decreased from 9,014 to 8,497. Vacant UAP FTE's decreased from 714 to 405 and the rate of vacant UAP FTE's decreased from 8% to 5%. The Sandhills region of Nebraska had the highest vacancy rate of RNs and LPNs followed by the Panhandle. The lowest regional vacancy rate was in Northeast Nebraska. Seven percent (7%) of employers responded that they had discontinued services due to nurse staffing. Eight percent (8%) of employers responded that they had services in jeopardy due to nurse staffing. Fifteen percent (15%) of employers would provide additional services if staff were available.