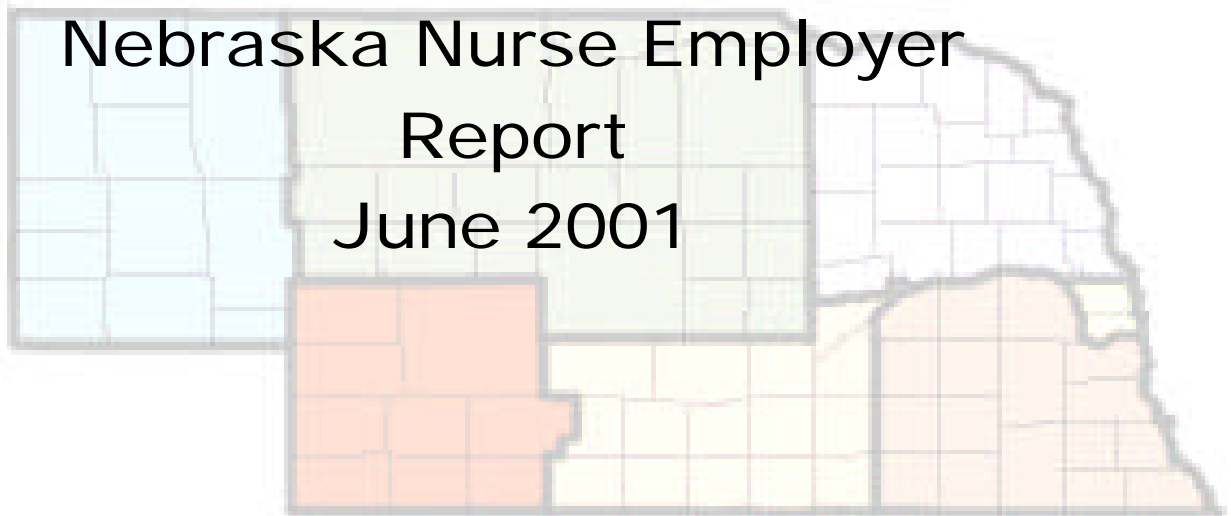


Nebraska Health and Human Services System



Nebraska Nurse Employer Report June 2001

by

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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 (Nursing Workforce Employer Survey 2000) was mailed to all identified employers (n=3400) of Registered Nurses (RNs) and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) in Nebraska during the fall of 2000.

A total of 320 of these Nursing Workforce Employer Surveys were returned and entered for data analysis. This report summarizes the major descriptive findings of the Workforce Employer Survey.

Jenenne S. Geske, PhD of University of Nebraska – Lincoln, compiled the Nebraska employer survey data.

Employment Setting and Vacancy Rates

After a review of the data it was determined that the response rate to the survey was not sufficient to accurately reflect vacancy rates statewide. Another abbreviated survey of all major employers will be completed in the next few months in an attempt to accurately determine vacancy rates.

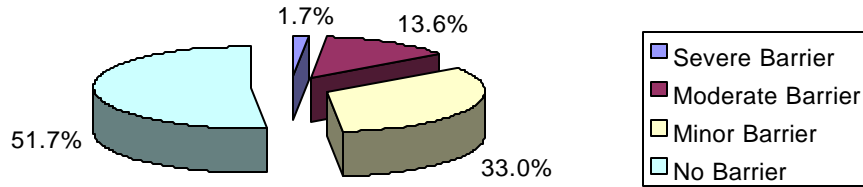
Retention

Employers were asked to identify barriers to retaining nurses. Charts 1 through 16 portray these barriers. Table 1 summarizes retention data.

High Cost of Living

Fifty-one point seven percent of employers reported that the high cost of living was not a barrier to retention. However, 15.3% of employers found the high cost of living to be a severe or moderate barrier to retaining nurses.

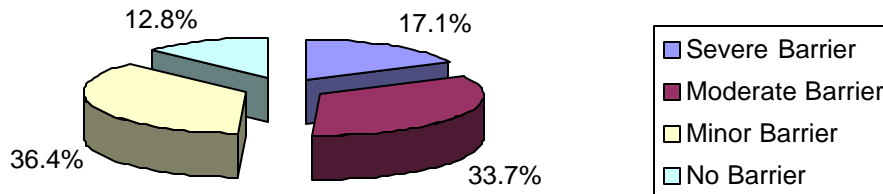
Chart 1. High Cost of Living as a Barrier to Retention



Salary

Of the employers responding, 50.8% said that insufficient salary was a severe or moderate barrier to retaining nurses. Only 12.8% of employers said that it was not a barrier at all.

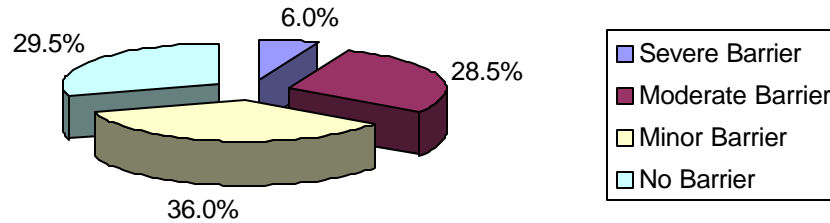
Chart 2. Insufficient Salary as Retention Barrier



Benefits

Inadequate benefits were a severe or moderate barrier to retaining nurses for 34.5% employers. Only 29.5% responded that benefits were not a barrier.

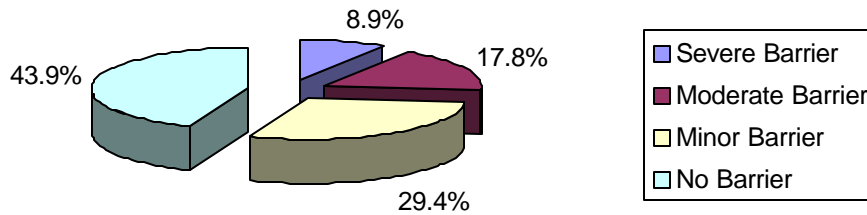
Chart 3. Inadequate Benefits Package as Retention Barrier



Remote/Isolated Location

The location of the employer in a remote or isolated area was found to be a barrier for retention in 26.7% of responses. Forty-three point nine percent of respondents did not report that location was a barrier.

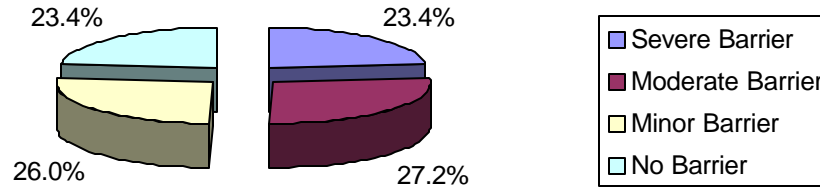
Chart 4. Remote/Isolated Location as Retention Barrier



Inadequate Nursing Personnel

Employers were asked to identify whether the number of nursing personnel may have an impact on retaining nurses. Severe and moderate barriers were reported by 50.6% of employers.

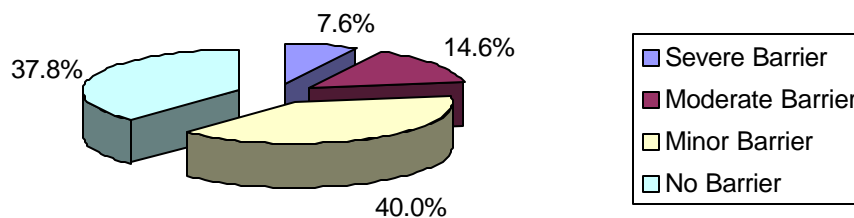
Chart 5. Inadequate Nursing Personnel as Retention Barrier



Inexperienced Available Personnel

Whether the personnel were inexperienced was another condition that employers were asked to identify as a retention barrier. Twenty-two point two percent found the inexperience of their employees to be a retention barrier.

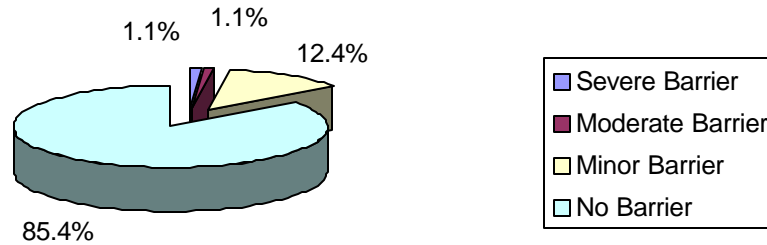
Chart 6. Inexperienced Available Personnel as Retention Barrier



Lack of Specific Language Skills

Only a minor number implicated language skills as a severe or moderate barrier (2.2%). Twelve point four percent of participants of the study identified language skills as a minor barrier.

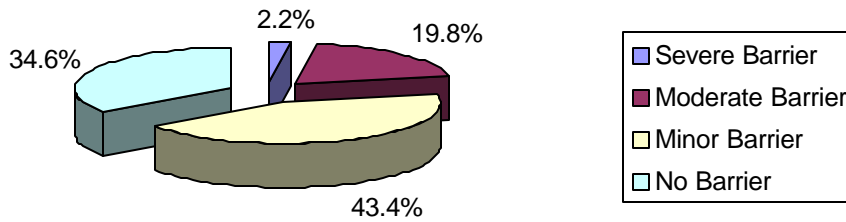
Chart 7. Lack of Specific Language as Retention Barrier



Lack of Educational Advancement

Twenty-two percent of employers identified lack of educational advancement as a moderate or severe retention barrier. An additional 43.4% responded that it was a minor barrier.

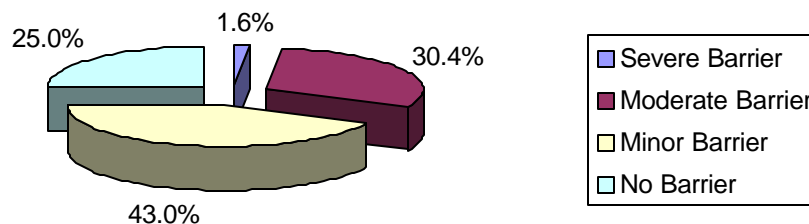
Chart 8. Lack of Education Advancement as a Retention Barrier



Lack of Opportunity for Upward Mobility

Thirty-two percent of employers cited lack of upward mobility as a severe or moderate retention barrier. A majority, 43%, stated that it was a minor barrier.

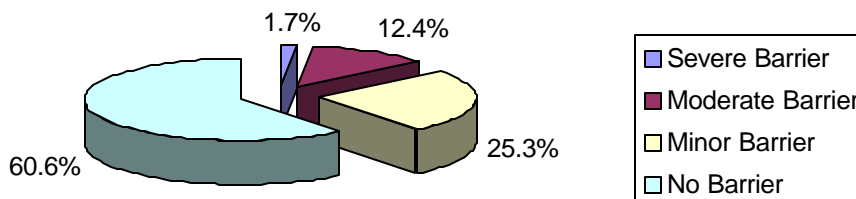
Chart 9. Lack of Upward Mobility as Retention Barrier



Unwillingness to practice in Multiple Clinical Areas

Most employers, 60.6%, answered that no barrier existed because of unwillingness to practice in multiple clinical areas. Smaller numbers, 14.1% reported the condition as a severe or moderate barrier.

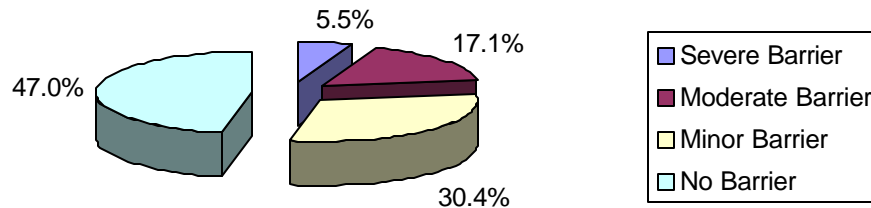
Chart 10. Unwillingness to Practice in Multiple Clinical Areas as Retention Barrier



Unwillingness to Practice without Backup Staff

Employers said that an unwillingness to work without backup staff was a retention barrier in some cases. It was a severe barrier for 5.5% of employers and a moderate barrier for 17.1% of employers.

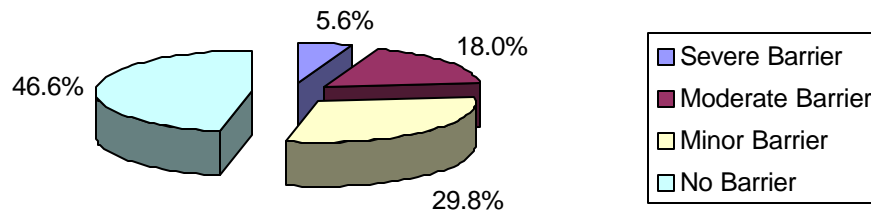
Chart 11. Unwilling to work without Backup Staff as Retention Barrier



Employment Opportunity for Significant Other

Forty-six point six percent of employers said lack of employment for nurses' spouses was not a barrier. Twenty-three point six percent of employers did find lack of opportunity for spouses to be a severe or moderate barrier to retaining nurses.

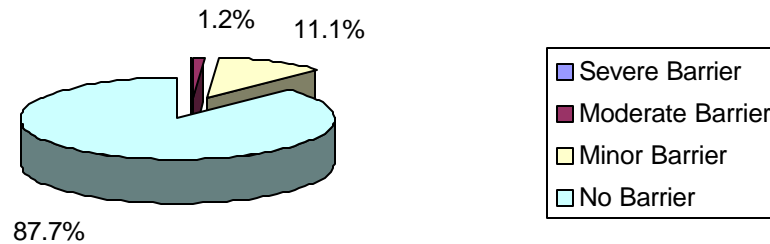
Chart 12. Lack of Employment Opportunity for Significant Other as Retention Barrier



Lack of Funds for On-Site Interviews

Funds for on-site interviews were not deemed a barrier to retention by 87.7% of participants in the study.

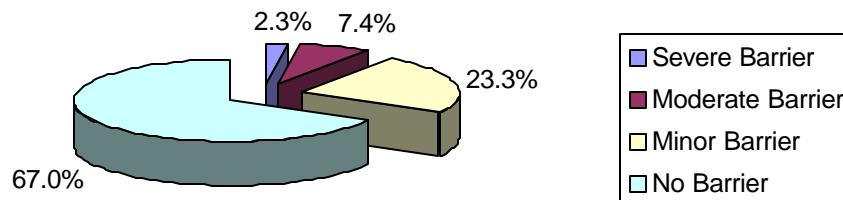
Chart 13. Lack of Funds for On-Site Interviews as Retention Barrier



Housing Not Available

Housing was seen as no barrier to retention by 67% of employers. Few, 9.7%, found housing to be a moderate or severe barrier.

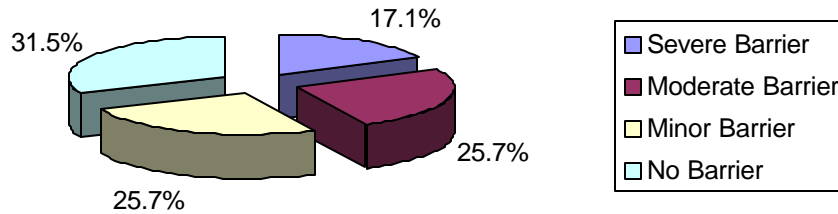
Chart 14. Housing Not Available as Retention Barrier



Required Shifts

Only 31.5% of employers stated that required shifts were not a barrier. Severe barrier was selected by 17.1% of responding employers, moderate by 25.7% of employers and minor by 25.7% of employers.

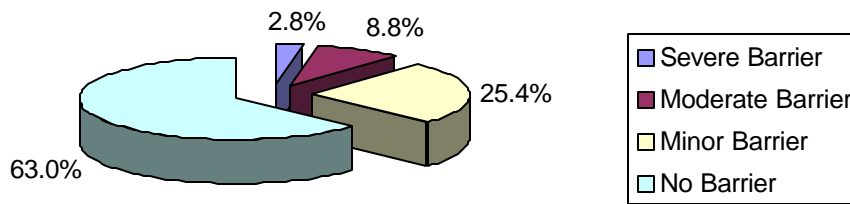
Chart 15. Required Shifts as a Retention Barrier



Physician Interaction

Physician interaction was not a barrier to retention for 63.0% of employers. Only 2.8% of employers found physician interaction to be a severe retention barrier.

Chart 16. Physician Interaction as a Retention Barrier



A category of “Other retention barriers” was a choice selected by some employers. Of these 16.7% reported severe barrier, 33.3% moderate, 11.1% minor and 38.9% no barrier. The condition of this “Other” category is a part of a separate report.

A summary of identified retention barriers can be found in Table 2, Barriers to Retention. This table highlights salary and benefits as conditions that most impact retention for employers.

Table 1. Summary of Barriers to Retention

Barrier	Severe Barrier	Moderate Barrier	Minor Barrier	No Barrier
Inadequate Personnel	23.4%	27.2%	26.0%	23.4%
Insufficient Salary	17.1%	33.7%	36.4%	12.8%
Required Shifts	17.1%	25.7%	25.7%	31.5%
Other Barriers	16.7%	33.3%	11.1%	38.9%
Isolated Location	8.9%	17.8%	29.4%	43.9%
Inexperienced Available Personnel	7.6%	14.6%	40.0%	37.8%
Inadequate Benefits Package	6.0%	28.5%	36.0%	29.5%
Lack of Employment Opportunity for Significant Other	5.6%	18.0%	29.8%	46.6%
Unwillingness to Work Without Backup Staff	5.5%	17.1%	30.4%	47.0%
Physician Interaction	2.8%	8.8%	25.4%	63.0%
Housing Not Available	2.3%	7.4%	23.3%	67.0%
Lack of Educational Advancement	2.2%	19.8%	43.4%	34.6%
High Cost of Living	1.7%	13.6%	33.0%	51.7%
Unwillingness to Practice in Multiple Clinical Areas	1.7%	12.4%	25.3%	60.6%
Lack of Opportunity for Upward Mobility	1.6%	30.4%	43.0%	25.0%
Lack of Specific Language Skills	1.1%	1.1%	12.4%	85.4%
Lack of Funds for On-site Interview	0%	1.2%	11.1%	87.7%

Recruitment

Recruitment of new nurses was an area where employers were asked to identify barriers. Of the options, the most severe barrier to recruitment for employers was inadequate personnel, 34.3%. Moderate barriers to recruitment cited by the highest number of respondents were insufficient salary and inadequate benefits. Salary and benefits were also found to be a minor barrier for 30.7% of employers and 35.0% of employers respectively. Table 2 shows the type of barriers identified as recruitment barriers and the percent of employers reporting whether they were severe, moderate or minor.

Table 2. Barriers to Recruitment of Nurses

Barrier	Severe Barrier	Moderate Barrier	Minor Barrier	No Barrier
Inadequate Personnel	34.3%	27.6%	19.5%	18.6%
Other Barriers	23.9%	23.9%	18.9%	33.3%
Insufficient Salary	21.9%	32.8%	30.7%	14.6%
Isolated Location	17.0%	20.0%	22.0%	41.0%
Required Shifts	12.0%	28.7%	27.7%	31.6%
Inexperienced Available Personnel	9.2%	26.6%	36.7%	27.5%
Lack of Employment Opportunity for Significant Other	7.9%	19.1%	23.5%	49.5%
Inadequate Benefits Package	5.7%	28.7%	35.0%	30.6%
Unwillingness to Work Without Backup Staff	5.1%	13.1%	28.3%	53.5%
Lack of Educational Advancement	4.0%	21.0%	40.5%	34.5%
Unwillingness to Practice in Multiple Clinical Areas	4.0%	13.9%	23.9%	58.2%
Housing Not Available	3.5%	11.5%	20.5%	64.5%

Physician Interaction	3.0%	4.0%	24.0%	69.0%
High Cost of Living	2.0%	9.6%	33.0%	55.4%
Lack of Specific Language Skills	2.0%	1.0%	18.7%	78.3%
Lack of Opportunity for Upward Mobility	2.0%	25.7%	42.2%	30.1%
Lack of Funds for On-site Interview	1.0%	2.0%	14.7%	82.3%

Turnover Rates

Employers were asked to report their turnover rates for the past twelve months. An average (mean) percent of staff that turned over and the total number are reported in Table 3. For RNs, 1863 positions turned-over during the period. LPNs turned over 1901 positions, and Unlicensed Assistive Personnel had 3386 positions that turned over.

Table 3. Turnover Rates for Nursing Personnel During Past 12 Months

RNs			LPNs			Unlicensed Assistive Personnel		
Past 12 Months			Past 12 Months			Past 12 Months		
Mean Turn-over Rate (%)	Standard Deviation	Total	Mean Turn-over Rate (%)	Standard Deviation	Total	Mean Turn-over Rate (%)	Standard Deviation	Total
6.2939	15.812	1863	6.4223	17.2631	1901	11.4392	22.9695	3386

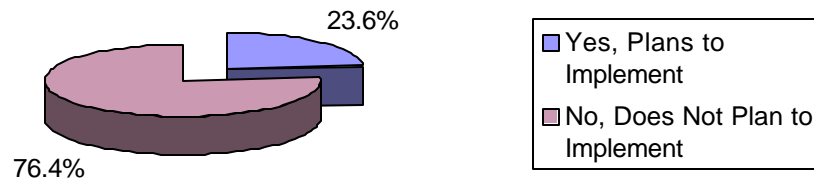
Nursing Redesign Strategies Implementation Plans

Employers were asked whether they had plans to implement a nursing redesign strategy. Fifty-eight (23.6%) of the respondents did plan to implement redesign. Table 4 shows the number and percent of employers with and without plans for nursing redesign strategies. Chart 17 depicts this data in a graph.

Table 4. Number and Plans of Nursing Redesign Strategies

	Does Plan to Implement Nursing Redesign Strategies	Does Not Plan to Implement Nursing Redesign Strategies	Total
Percent	23.6%	76.4%	100%

Chart 17. Plans for Nursing Work Redesign Strategies

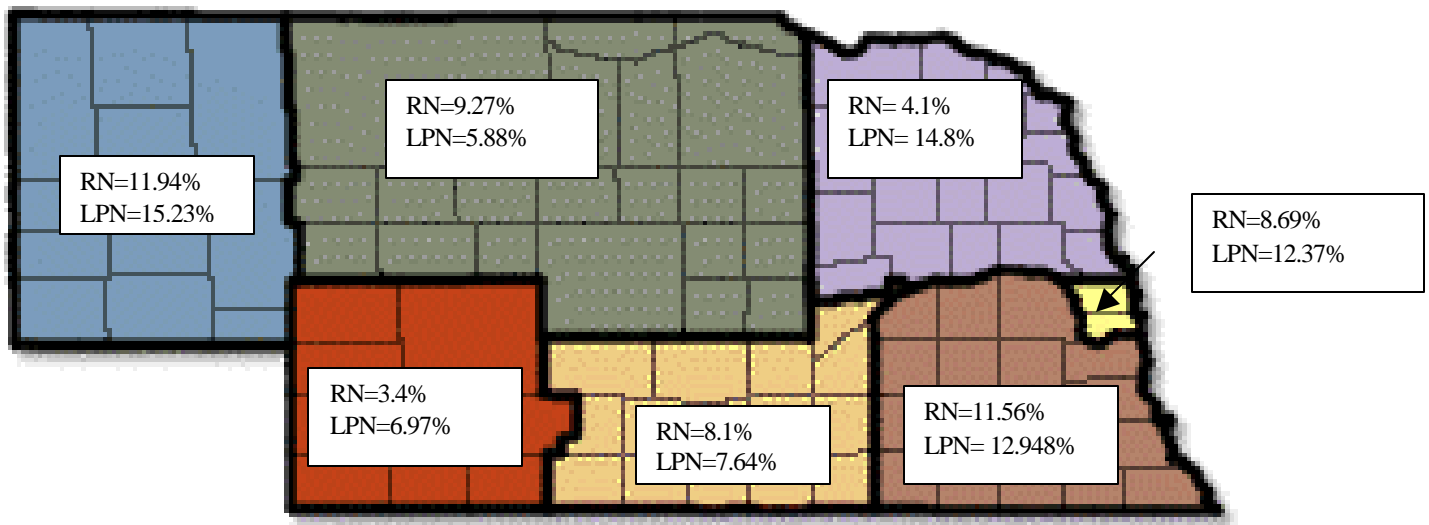


Staffing and Hiring Trends

Picture 1 displays the regional vacancy rates as reported by employers of nurses that were discernable from the incomplete data. Vacancy rate was determined by dividing the total number of vacancies by the number of current positions plus the number of vacancies.

$$\frac{\# \text{ Vacant positions}}{\# \text{ current positions} + \# \text{ Vacant positions}}$$

Picture 1. Regional Vacancy Rate for RNs and LPNs



Employers were queried by type of nursing specialty for current and vacant positions. Table 5 shows the total number for both LPNs and RNs. Of the selected categories, *administrators/managers* was the option identified with the most vacancies by respondents. The vacancy rate however was 3.454%. *Teachers/Instructors* was the second highest number of vacancies with 6.417% vacancy rate.

Table 5. Staffing and Hiring Trends by Specialty

Specialty	Vacancy Rate
Teachers & Instructors	6.417%
Quality Assurance & Utilization Review	1.923%
Nursing Researchers	3.846%
Case Management	5.309%

Administration & Management	3.454%
Charge Nurse	Not Available
CRNAs	10.52%
CNMs	Not Available
APRNs	19.047%
Clinical Specialists	Not Available

Summary

Employers of nurses responded to statewide mailed questionnaires which asked for information regarding the demand and need for nurses in Nebraska. Only 320 responded to the survey. Respondents identified *salary, inadequate personnel, benefits* and *required shifts* as the most predominate retention barriers. Severe recruitment barriers indicated by most employers *were inadequate personnel, salary* and *benefits*. Additionally, *isolated location, lack of educational advancement* and *lack of upward mobility* were found to be moderate and minor barriers to recruitment for many employers. Respondents reported that RN turnover was 6.2%, LPN turnover was 6.4% and unlicensed personnel turnover was 11.4%. Twenty-three percent of respondents plan to implement nursing redesign strategies. When employers, by county, were asked to identify staffing and hiring trends for RNs and LPNs, Southeast Nebraska appeared to have the largest vacancy rate of all regions. *Administrators/managers* and *teachers* were identified as the two specialty categories of highest vacancy.