

LOUISIANA CENTER FOR NURSING

A Division of the Louisiana State Board of Nursing

New Graduate Survey: Finding Employment in Louisiana as a Newly Licensed RN

February, 2013



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Acknowledgements

The Louisiana Center for Nursing would like to thank the newly licensed Registered Nurses that completed the Louisiana Center for Nursing (LCN) New Graduate Survey (2011) for taking the time to give back to their profession. Valuable insight will be gained from the information that you have shared and will be used by nurse educators, nurse employers, and other interested stakeholders in addressing issues related to the transition from education to meaningful employment as a registered nurse for students graduating from Louisiana's pre-RN licensure programs. The Center for Nursing would like to thank Ms. Deloras Jones, former Executive Director, California Institute for Nursing and Health, and the University of California Los Angeles School of Nursing for allowing LCN to use their New Graduate Survey as a prototype for Louisiana. We would also like to acknowledge Mrs. Barbara Morvant, the Executive Director for the Louisiana State Board of Nursing, who offered invaluable assistance, support, and guidance throughout this project. And finally, LCN would like to thank Mrs. Kimberly Chustz for creating the beautiful report cover and Ms. Sarah Sullivan for her many reviews and excellent input during the writing of the report.

Executive Summary

Employment of Registered Nurses (RNs) is expected to grow 26% from 2010 to 2020, faster than the average for all occupations according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012). Much of this projected growth is due to technological advancements, an increased emphasis on preventative care, and the large, aging baby-boomer population that will demand more healthcare services as they live longer lives. In addition, there could be up to 32 million individuals added to the health care insurance rosters as a result of the implementation of the Affordable Care Act which will require a substantial increase in the need for primary care services (The Institute of Medicine Report on the Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health, 2011). In spite of this impressive occupational outlook for RNs, there have been reports across various regions of the U. S. that employment opportunities for new RN graduates are not as plentiful, and in some areas finding a position as a newly licensed RN can be challenging to say the least (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2011; Terry & Whitman, 2011).

The current report provides an analysis and evaluation of the job seeking experiences of newly licensed RNs in Louisiana. The 2011 Louisiana Center for Nursing (LCN) New Graduate Survey was sent to new RN graduates receiving their initial license to practice in Louisiana between January 2009 and May 2011. Newly licensed RNs in Louisiana were asked to respond to questions about how long did it take to find a job, the number of jobs applied for prior to securing a position, and satisfaction with employment as an RN. Over eleven hundred newly licensed RNs (1,137) completed the survey, yielding a 19.4% response rate (surveys were emailed to 5,856 newly licensed RNs) which is comparable to the 19% response rate obtained by the California Institute for Nursing & Health for their 2011 New Graduate Survey, and exceeds the 6% response rate for California's 2007 survey of new RN graduates.

Major Findings from the 2011 Louisiana Center for Nursing New Graduate Survey:

- The vast majority (94%) of newly licensed RNs responding to the new graduate survey were able to find employment as an RN.
- Ninety-one percent (91%) of the new RNs were working full-time, 5% were working part-time, and 4% were not employed as an RN.
- Overall, the majority (63%) of the newly licensed RNs were between 20 and 30 years of age.
- In 2008, 2009, and 2010, the percentage of newly licensed RNs taking more than 6 months to find a position as an RN increased each year (6%, 12%, and 15%, respectively).
- The majority (90%) of the newly licensed RNs completed their nursing education in Louisiana.
- Acute care hospitals employed 75% of the new RN graduates and long-term care or skilled care facilities hired a little over 5% of the new RN graduates.
- Seventy-six percent (76%) of the newly licensed RNs indicated that they were interested in pursuing an advanced degree in nursing.
- Eighty-five percent (85%) of the newly licensed RNs are working in their job of choice.

- The top four avenues for seeking employment were: 1) hospital or health facility websites; 2) previous employment at the hospital or health care facility in a non-RN position; 3) knowing someone at the hospital or health facility; and 4) clinical experience at the hospital or facility
- There were statistically significant differences found between newly licensed RNs prepared at the Associate Degree (AD) and Baccalaureate (BSN) degree levels in the following areas:
 - A greater percentage of BSN graduates (96%) completed their nursing education in Louisiana when compared to AD graduates (83%).
 - Overall, BSN graduates were younger (81% were between 20 and 30 years of age) than AD graduates (45% between 20 and 30 years of age).
 - Acute care hospitals hired more BSN graduates (79%) than AD graduates (65%).
 - Long-term care and skilled nursing facilities hired more AD graduates (7.4%) when compared to BSN graduates (3.4%).
 - A larger percentage of BSN graduates (90%; N = 486) were able to find employment as an RN within the first 6 months post graduation when compared to AD graduates (84%; N = 451).

Recommendations that stem from this report include but are not limited to the following:

- Students nearing completion of their programs should begin the job search early, and while still in school, students should look for internships and externships that may lead to future employment.
- Developing community-based partnerships between education and practice to formulate nurse residency programs is an essential step in allowing for a smooth transition between academia and practice for newly licensed RN graduates.
- Discussions related to the development of nurse residency programs should include not only acute care settings, but in light of the findings of this study, it will also be important to develop residency programs in specialty areas such as community based settings and long-term care and skilled care facilities so that new RNs will be able to safely transition into these practice settings.
- RN to BSN programs will be key to improving the marketability of RNs prepared at the AD or Diploma level. It is important that universities and community colleges create partnerships that will allow for the seamless transition from Diploma or AD to BSN.
- Deans and Directors of Schools of Nursing with pre-RN licensure programs will need to place greater emphasis on enhancing the job seeking skills of new graduates by focusing on interviewing skills, resume development, and professionalism. In addition, Schools of Nursing may need to refrain from using language in student recruitment communications that may imply that finding a job in nursing is a guarantee upon graduation.
- Repeat the New Graduate Survey every two years to monitor trends in hiring practices experienced by newly licensed RNs as changes occur in the state's health care system, economy, and nursing workforce, in order to better inform

policy makers, schools of nursing, prospective nursing students, and other interested stakeholders.

The current report gives very valuable insight into the job seeking challenges experienced by newly licensed RNs in Louisiana, yet the low response rate for the 2011 LCN New Graduate Survey does not allow for the findings to be generalized outside of the sample population surveyed. In an effort to increase response rates for future surveys, LCN will work with Schools of Nursing and the Louisiana Association of Student Nurses (LASN) to first of all inform nursing students (especially senior nursing students) about the survey, the findings obtained with the initial survey and how these findings can be used to impact policy decisions related to transition to practice, and to encourage students to complete the survey when they receive it after obtaining their initial RN license. LCN will also work with the Louisiana State Board of Nursing (LSBN) to insert information about the New Graduate Survey in communications sent to new licensees.

Introduction

There have been formal and informal discussions in various arenas across the country that have implied that health care facilities are not hiring new Registered Nurse (RN) graduates at the same rate that they did prior to the economic recession which officially began in December 2007 (Staiger, Auerbach, and Buerhaus, 2012). That, in fact, the employer's preference appears to be for experienced nurses, which eliminates the cost associated with orienting new RN graduates. The pool of experienced nurses that are ready and willing to take on available nursing positions has been more than sufficient since the recession due to a number of factors such as older experienced nurses delaying retirement, and nurses that were working part-time returning to full-time employment to maintain economic stability in the home due to the absence of their spouse's salary. Therefore, employers appear to be somewhat complacent, feeling that there is no longer a nursing shortage, which has impacted hiring practices of new RN graduates. In addition, due to external influences, especially for hospitals having or pursuing Magnet Status, new graduates prepared at the baccalaureate level are given preference over associate degree and diploma RNs (AACN, 2011). These are just a few of the challenges that new RN graduates report they are facing across the country as they pursue employment.

Purpose

In an effort to obtain objective data about the actual and potential employment challenges experienced by new RN graduates in Louisiana, the Louisiana Center for Nursing (LCN) surveyed RNs that received their initial RN license between January 1, 2009 and May 31, 2011 which included 2008, 2009 and 2010 graduates from pre-RN licensure programs. Findings obtained with this survey will be shared with stakeholders that have a vested interest in assuring that Louisiana has an adequate workforce that is prepared to administer quality care to Louisiana's citizens.

Methods

The items for the Louisiana Center for Nursing (LCN) New Graduate Survey 2011 were adapted from the New Nurse Graduate Survey developed by the California Institute for Nursing & Health Care (2011) which included approximately 20 questions (see Appendix A). Newly licensed RNs in Louisiana were asked to respond to questions about how long did it take to find a job, the number of jobs applied for prior to securing a position, and satisfaction with employment as an RN (Appendix A). The statewide survey included 64 parishes and 9 regional areas designated in the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) Administrative Regional map (2012). New RNs were surveyed through the Louisiana State Board of Nursing (LSBN) database. On August 5, 2011 an email blast with the link to the 2011 LCN New Graduate Survey went out to a total of 5,856 new RNs that received their initial RN license between January 1, 2009 and May 31, 2011 via survey monkey. Follow-up email blasts were sent at two and three week intervals, and one week prior to the close of the survey. The survey was closed on September 20, 2011 with a total of 1,137 new RNs completing the survey yielding a 19.4% response rate which is comparable to the 19% response rate for the 2011 California Institute for Nursing & Health New Nurse Graduate Survey. In 2007, the response rate for California's New Graduate Survey was 6%.

Limitations

Valuable information has been gained from the 1,137 new RNs that completed the 2011 LCN New Graduate Survey. However, a limitation of the current study is the low response rate which affects the ability to generalize findings outside of the sample of newly licensed RNs completing the survey. In the future, efforts will be made to obtain a larger response rate by engaging Deans and Directors of Louisiana’s pre-RN licensure programs and student nursing organizations early on in getting the word out to new graduates about the importance of responding to LCN’s New RN Graduate survey.

Findings

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Gender – As shown in Figure 1, the vast majority of the 1,137 respondents to the 2011 LCN New Graduate Survey were female (88%), which is in close alignment with the gender make-up of licensed RNs in Louisiana - 89% female and 11% male (LSBN Annual Report, 2011).

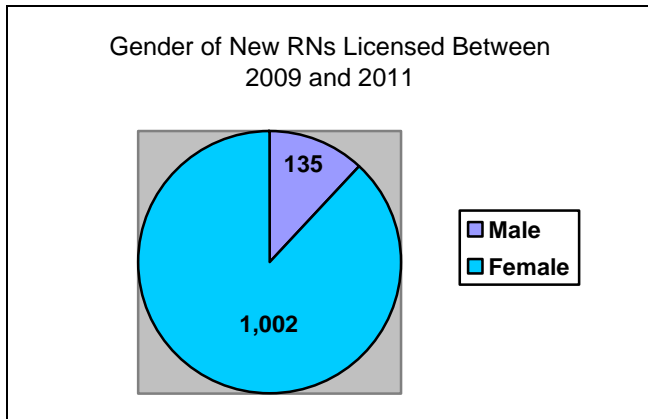


Figure 1. Gender of new RNs licensed in Louisiana between 2009 and 2011.

Race - The racial makeup of the newly licensed RNs was 74% (N = 839) White, 21% (N = 242) Black, 2% (N = 19) Asian, 2% (N = 19) Hispanic, and 1.6% (N = 18) other (see Figure 2). The racial make-up for all licensed RNs in Louisiana for 2011 was 80% White, 14% Black, 1% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 0.8% other (LSBN Annual Report, 2011).

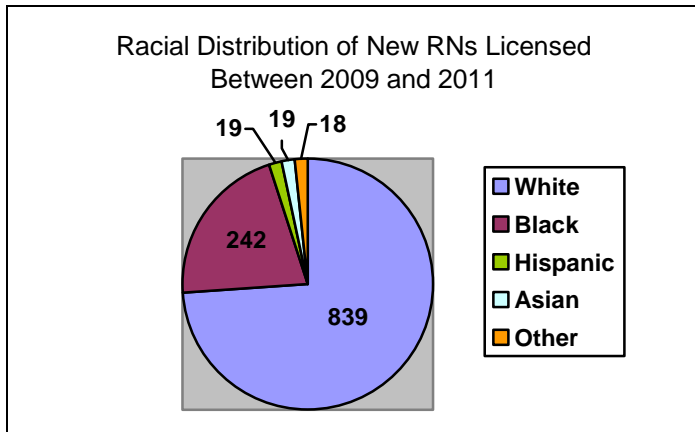


Figure 2. The racial make-up of newly licensed RNs in Louisiana between 2009 and 2011.

Age – Overall, newly licensed RNs were relatively young in this sample population (Figure 3). Approximately two-thirds (63%) of the new RNs were between 20 and 30 years of age as compared to 25% of licensed RNs in 2011 (LSBN Annual Report, 2011). Twenty-three percent were between 31 and 40 years of age, 10% between 41 and 50 years of age, and two participants were between 61 and 70 years of age.

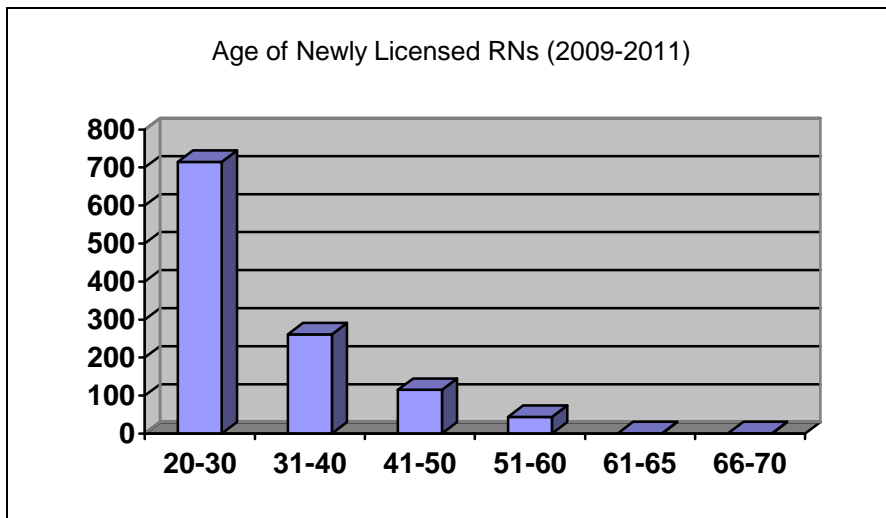


Figure 3. Age range for new RNs licensed between 2009-2011.

Residence - The five regions with the largest number of respondents based upon the DHH Administrative Regional Map were: Region 1 – Greater New Orleans Area (n =251); Region 2 – Capital Area (n=199); Region 4 – Acadiana (n=132); Region 7 – Northwest Louisiana (n=122); and Region 9 – Northshore Area (n=108) (see Table 1 and Appendix B).

Table 1. Residence of Respondents According to Region at Time of Survey

Region	Respondents #	Respondents %
Region 1 – Greater New Orleans Area	251	22.1%
Region 2 – Capital Area	199	17.5%
Region 3 – South Central Louisiana	98	8.6%
Region 4 – Acadiana	132	11.6%
Region 5 – Southwest Louisiana	67	5.9%
Region 6 – Central Louisiana	63	5.5%
Region 7 – Northwest Louisiana	122	10.7%
Region 8 – Northeast Louisiana	56	4.9%
Region 9 – Northshore Area	108	9.5%
Not Sure of Region /Do not live in Louisiana at this time	41	3.6%
Total	1,137	100%

Nursing Education - The vast majority of the respondents (89.5%) completed their RN nursing school education in Louisiana, while 10.5% indicated that their nursing school education occurred in a state other than Louisiana (see Figure 4).

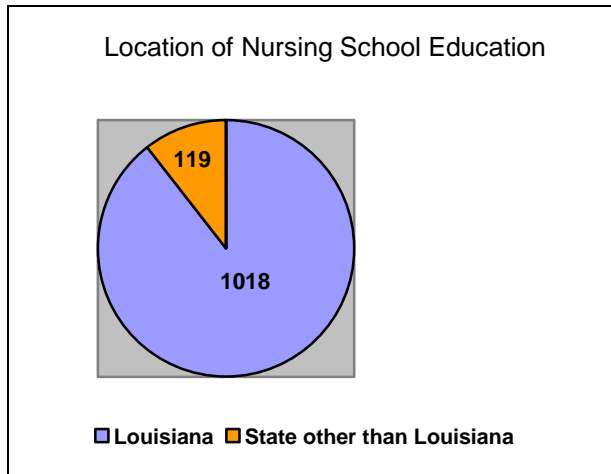


Figure 4. Location of nursing school education for newly licensed RNs in Louisiana (2009-2011)

There was a relatively even split between the number of newly licensed RNs responding to the survey that were prepared at the Associate Degree level (49.1%) and the Baccalaureate level (48.8%), as compared to 2.1% prepared at the Diploma level (see Figure 5). The majority of the new RNs graduated in December (45%) or May (38%), with 9% graduating in July or August. In terms of the year of graduation, 51% of the respondents graduated in 2010, 39% in 2009, and 10% in 2008.

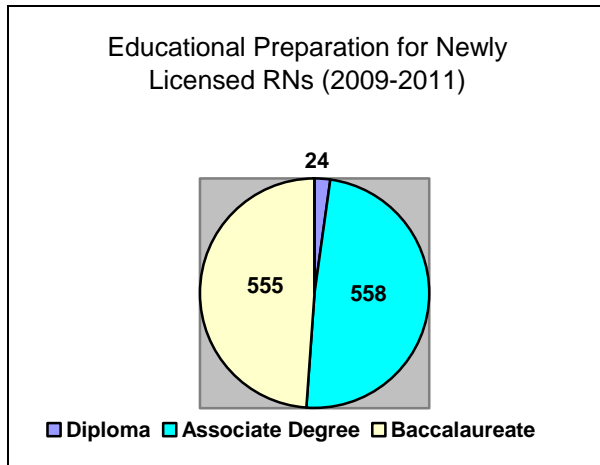


Figure 5. Educational preparation for newly licensed RNs in Louisiana (2009-2011).

One hundred percent of the respondents had taken and passed the NCLEX-RN Examination. Three-fourths (75.6%) of the respondents indicated that they were interested in pursuing an advanced degree and 24.4% did not list advanced education as something they would be interested in obtaining.

Employment

The majority of the newly licensed RNs had found employment as a RN (94%), while 6% had not (see Figure 6). Of those RNs reporting that they were not working as an RN, 11 were 2008 graduates, 16 were 2009 graduates, and 40 were 2010 graduates. The majority of the newly licensed RNs that were not employed as RNs were educated in Louisiana (91%). Approximately 60% graduated in 2010, 24% in 2009, and 16% in 2008. Thirty-eight (38) of the newly licensed RNs that were not employed graduated from an AD program (57%) and twenty-eight (42%) graduated from a BSN program. Sixty percent (40) were between 20 and 30 years old, yet 3 were between 51 and 60 years of age, and one reported being between 61 and 65. Eighty-seven (87%) were female, 67% were white, and 27% were Black. Forty-nine percent (N = 33) reported applying for greater than 12 RN positions, and 57% (N = 38) were interested in pursuing an advanced degree in nursing.

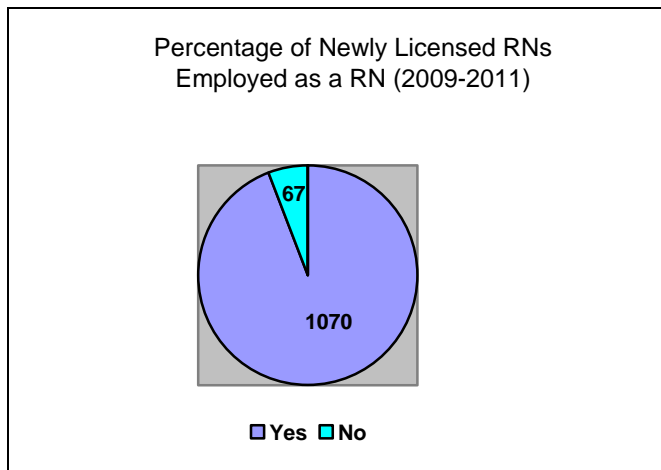


Figure 6: New RN graduates that received their initial RN license between 2009 and 2011 and were working as an RN at the time of the survey.

Acute care hospitals employed 75% of the new RN graduates, with long-term care hiring 5.4% of the newly licensed RNs (see Table 2).

Table 2. Health Care Facilities Employing Newly Licensed RNs in Louisiana

Type of Facility Employing New RNs (2009-2011)	New RNS	
	No.	%
Acute Care Hospital	822	74.7
Behavioral Health	17	1.5
Clinic/Ambulatory Care	29	2.6
Corrections (Jails and Prisons)	2	0.2
Dialysis Centers	15	1.4
Home Health/ Community/Public Health	22	2.0
Hospice	11	1.0
Long-Term Care or Skilled Nursing Facility	60	5.4
Physician Office	19	1.7
Psychiatric Hospital	12	1.1
Rehabilitation Hospital	9	0.8
School Health	6	0.5
Staffing Agency	7	0.6
Other	70	6.4
Total	1,101	

Employment Seeking Experiences

Length of Time to Find a Job

Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the respondents were able to find a job as an RN in less than 3 months, 19% in 3 to 6 months, and 8% in 6 to 9 months (see Figure 7). Finding a position as an RN took over 12 months for approximately 3% of the respondents.

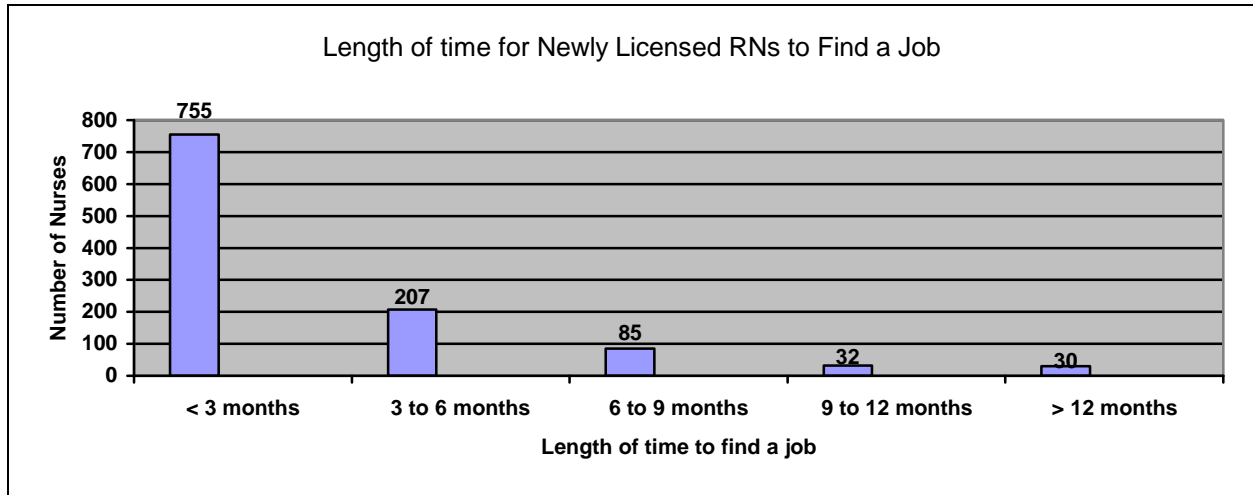


Figure 7. Length of time for newly licensed RNs in Louisiana to find a job (2009-2011)

When examining the time it took the new RNs to find a job within the context of the year of graduation, 81% of the 2008 graduates found a position as an RN in less than 3 months, 71% of the 2009 graduates, and 60% of the 2010 graduates. It took 11% of the 2008 graduates to find a job within 3 to 6 months, 17% of the 2009 graduates, and 21% of the 2010 graduates. Approximately 7% of the new RNs graduating in 2009 reported that it took 6-9 months to find a job as compared to 9% of the 2010 graduates. Each year, the percentage of new RN graduates finding employment within six months decreased (92% in 2008; 87% in 2009; 81% in 2010) which indicates that each year it is taking longer for new RNs to find employment.

Number of Applications

When asked about the number of jobs the new RNs applied for before being successful in securing a position as an RN, 53% indicated that they applied for less than 3 jobs and 12% reported applying for 3 to 6 positions before acquiring employment as an RN (see Figure 8).

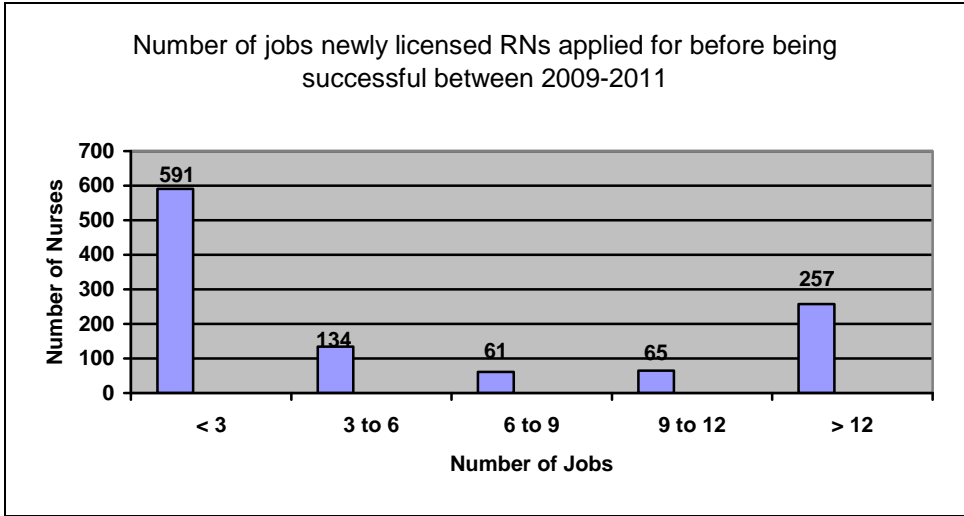


Figure 8. Number of jobs applied for by newly licensed RNs before securing a position as an RN in Louisiana.

Sixty percent (60%) of the new RNs that graduated in 2009 reported that they applied for less than 3 positions before acquiring their first job as an RN as compared to 41% of the 2010 graduates. In addition, 17 % of the 2009 graduates reported that they applied for more than 12 jobs as compared to 30% of the 2010 graduates.

Job of Choice

Eighty-five percent (85%) of the new RNs reported they were working as an RN in their job of choice, where as 15% indicated that they were not working at their job of choice (see Figure 9). Eighty-seven percent (87%) of the 2009 graduates reported working at their job of choice, while 78% of the 2010 graduates indicated that their current employment as an RN was their job of choice.

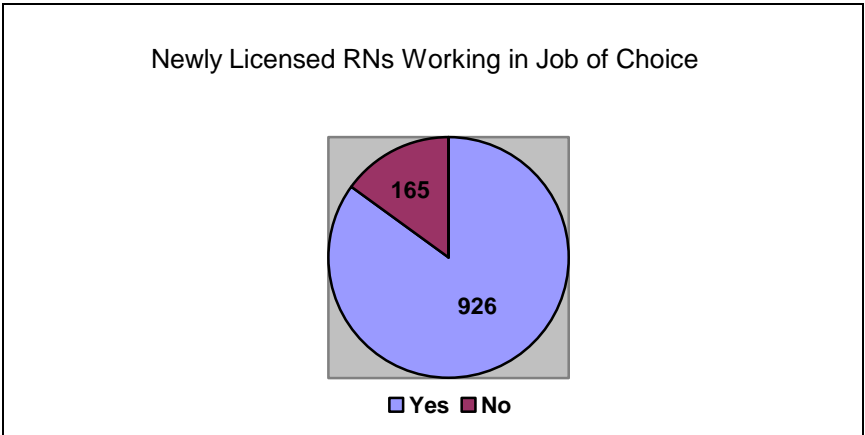


Figure 9. Number of newly licensed RNs in Louisiana working in job of choice.

Method for Finding Employment

The top four avenues for seeking employment reported by the respondents were hospital or health facility websites, previous employment at the hospital or health facility in a non-RN position, knowing someone at the hospital or health facility, and clinical experience at the hospital or health facility (see Figure 10).

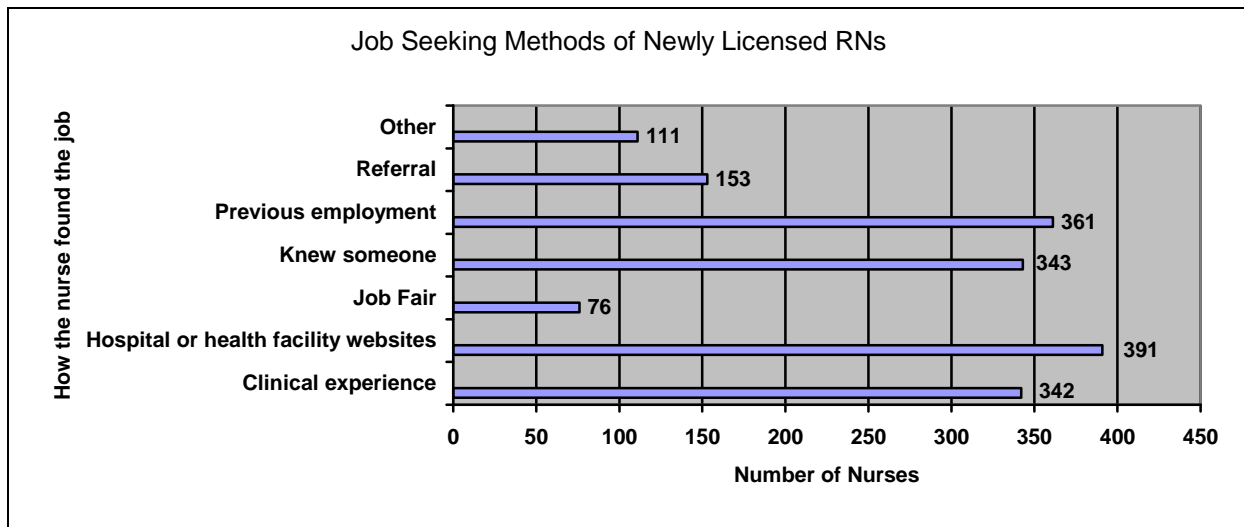


Figure 10. Job seeking methods of newly licensed RNs in Louisiana.

Differences in Demographic Outcomes and Job Seeking Experiences of Newly Licensed RNs Prepared at the Associate Degree (AD) and Baccalaureate (BSN) Level of Education (2009 - 2011)

Five hundred and eleven (511) AD graduates and 494 BSN graduates completed the LCN 2011 New RN Graduate Survey. A two-way contingency table and chi-square (χ^2) analysis was used to evaluate whether job seeking challenges experienced by newly licensed RNs that graduated from AD programs were significantly different from those experienced by newly licensed RNs that graduated from BSN programs. Newly licensed RNs graduating from Diploma programs were not included in this analysis due to the small sample size (n=24). Further analysis of the data obtained with the LCN 2011 New RN Graduate Survey did reveal statistically significant differences between AD and BSN graduates on the following variables: 1) where newly licensed RNs completed their nursing school education; 2) age of newly licensed RNs; 3) employment setting; and 4) length of time to find initial employment.

Findings from the survey revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the percentage of BSN graduates (96%) completing their RN nursing school education in Louisiana, when compared to AD graduates (83%), Pearson χ^2 (1, N = 1,110) = 49.57, $p < .01$, which indicates that between January 2009 and May 2011 there were significantly more BSN graduates receiving their initial license in Louisiana that were educated in Louisiana when compared to AD graduates (see Figure 11).

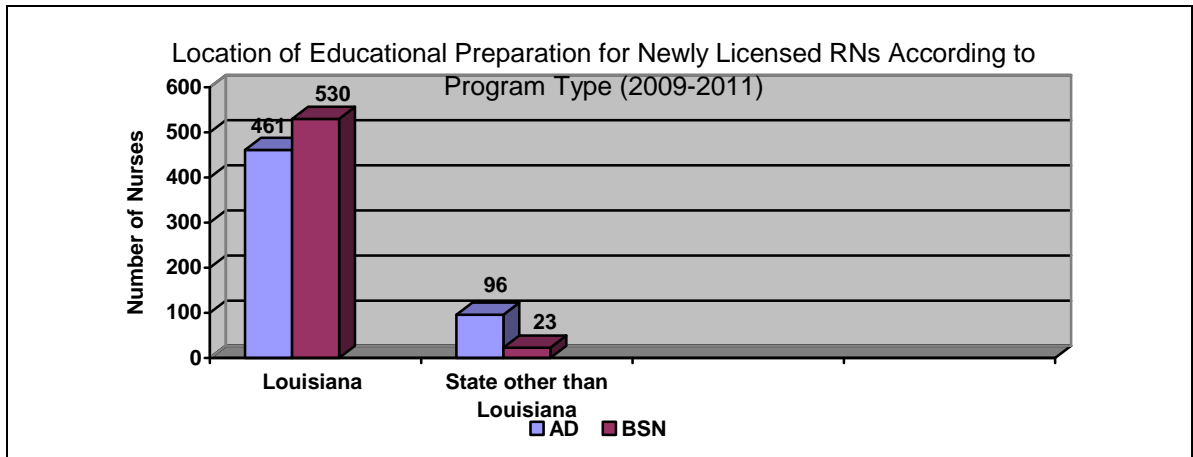


Figure 11. Newly licensed RNs educational preparation in Louisiana according to program type.

There was a statistically significant difference between AD graduates and BSN graduates in regards to age, Pearson χ^2 (5, N = 1,110) = 152.55, $p < .01$. As seen in Figure 12, 45% of the AD graduates were between 20 and 30 years of age, compared to 81% of the BSN graduates.

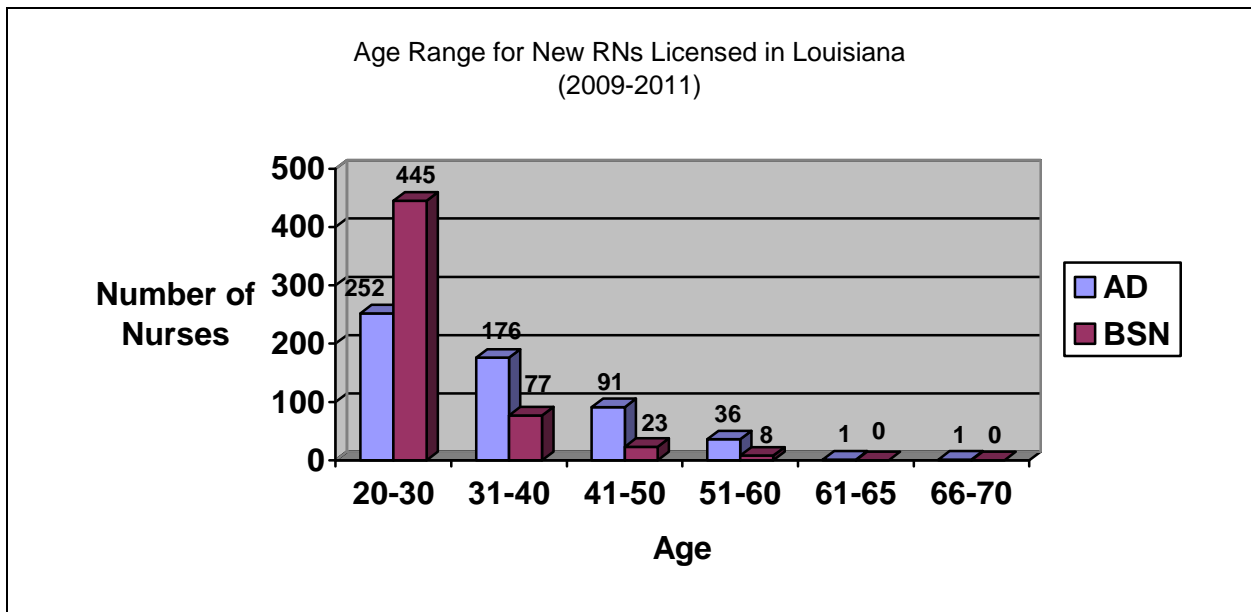


Figure 12. Age of newly licensed RNs between 2009 and 2011

It is also interesting to note that 65% of the AD graduates were employed by acute care hospitals, as compared to 79% of the BSN graduates (see Table 3). In addition, 7.4% of the AD graduates were employed by long term care or skilled nursing facilities, as compared to 3.4% of BSN graduates. These findings represent a statistically significant difference between the two groups Pearson χ^2 (13, N = 1,074) = 40.49, $p < .01$.

Table 3. Employment Obtained by New RNs According to Type of Degree

Employing Agency	Associate Degree RNs		Baccalaureate Degree RNs	
	No.	%	No.	%
Acute Care Hospital	361	64.8	438	79.2
Behavioral Health	11	2.0	6	1.1
Clinic/Ambulatory Care	14	2.5	12	2.2
Corrections (Jails and Prisons)	1	0.2	1	0.2
Dialysis Centers	13	2.3	2	0.4
Home Health/ Community/Public Health	14	2.5	7	1.3
Hospice	9	1.6	2	0.4
Long-Term Care or Skilled Nursing Facility	41	7.4	19	3.4
Physician Office	12	2.2	7	1.3
Psychiatric Hospital	6	1.1	6	1.1
Rehabilitation Hospital	7	1.3	2	0.4
School Health	5	0.9	1	0.2
Staffing Agency	2	0.4	5	0.9
Other	38	6.8	32	5.8
Total	534		540	

Lastly, there was a significant difference in the length of time it took to find initial employment as an RN between AD graduates and BSN graduates, Pearson χ^2 (4, N = 1,082) = 9.742, $p < .05$. As depicted in Figure 13, there were more BSN graduates that were able to find jobs in the first 6 months post graduation (N=486) when compared to AD graduates (451). Yet, there were more AD graduates (N=73) than BSN graduates (N=42) still seeking employment between 6 and 12 months post graduation.

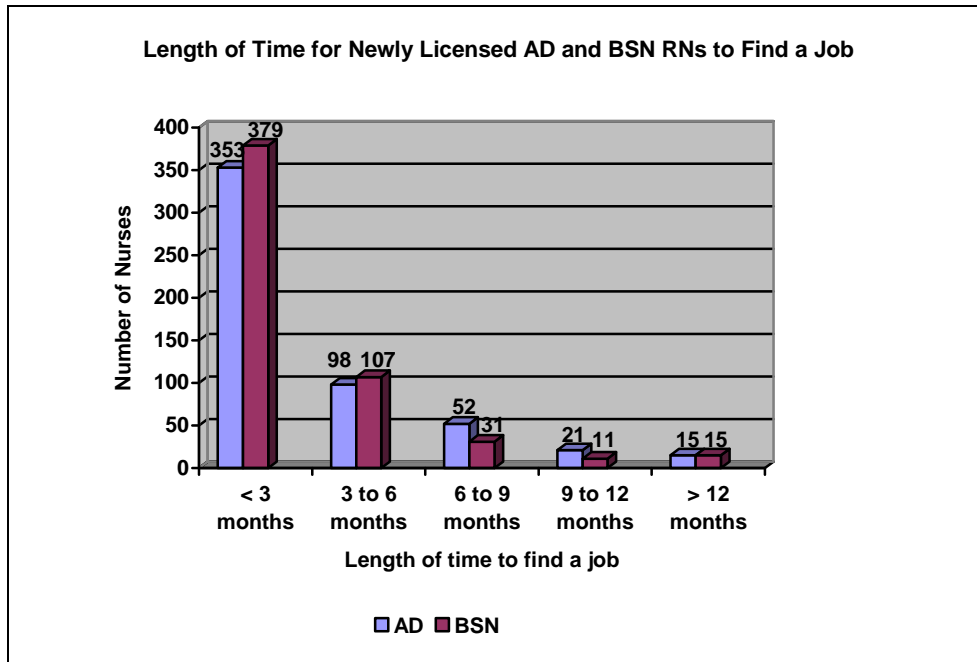


Figure 13. Length of time for newly licensed AD and BSN RNs to find employment post graduation.

There were no statistically significant differences found between newly licensed RNs prepared at the AD level and those prepared at the BSN level in the following areas; 1) the number of jobs applied for; 2) employment status (full vs part-time employment); and 3) working in job of choice.

Newly Licensed RNs in Louisiana Share Information About Their Job Seeking Experiences: A Qualitative Perspective

The last question on the 2011 LCN New Graduate Survey asked newly licensed RNs to share comments/concerns about their employment seeking experiences in Louisiana. Over 400 newly licensed RNs shared comments about the successes and challenges they faced during their pursuit of employment as an RN. A few of the comments will be shared in this report in an effort to give a voice to the new RNs. The comments are in the authentic language of the respondent. In order to maintain anonymity for all entities involved, the letter ‘X’ will be used when referring to a specific health care agency. Qualitative analysis of the comments made by newly licensed RNs responding to the New Graduate Survey will be conducted at a later date.

Difficulty Finding Employment

Apparently I chose the wrong time to become a nurse because I thought nurses were always suppose to be able to find a job. I graduated in December 2010, passed boards in February 2011, and still do not have a job as an RN. I am searching from Lafayette, to Slidell and New Orleans.

It was very difficult to find employment and I have only very recently done so. It seems there is a need for nurses, but most facilities want nurses with experience. It is very disheartening to go through nursing school, pass nclex, and then discover no one really wants you. I also found you have many HR recruiters at larger facilities that are not nurses. I question the number of great new nurses they passover looking for some computer generated keywords in applicants' resumes and cover letters.

I believe that it is semi easy to find a job in nursing here although is very difficult to find the job that you actually want. Most people just settle on a job

It was very difficult finding a full time RN position after graduating, I had to begin paying student loans back before I had found full time employment. I still am not in the area I would like to be in but had to accept the first full time position I was offered. Many facilities stated they just were not hiring new grads. The whole experience was and still is very discouraging and made me question whether I made the right decision going into the medical field as a nurse.

I was very disappointed that finding a job was not nearly what instructors at nursing school made it out to be. There were very few jobs available to new graduates at this time.

Lack of Nursing Experience

I knew that getting a job might not be easy, but I was surprised at how long it took me to get a position as an RN. It took 1 year, and I was also surprised at the hospitals just brushed me off "oh new grad, no experience, we don't hire", unless you were tech at a hospital, and for some of us that wasn't an option while in school. How do they expect us to get any experience if they don't give us a chance. I have a fellow classmate who still doesn't have a job, I guess that says a lot about those nursing recruitment commercials.... Ya go to school, but you might not get a job. I know that I sound condescending, and I'm very much grateful and happy with the education that I received, but I'm just disappointed in the hospitals and other healthcare facilities that doesn't give a new graduate a chance. Thank You for your time.

The job market in Louisiana for new graduate RNs is very hard presently, I applied to over 20 hospitals/ nursing homes and went on several interviews before I was hired, everybody wants experienced nurses but how will you get experience if no one will hire you

It's is very very hard for a new nurse to find experience. If your interest is in a specialty area, like surgery, every single place u try to apply wants you to have "at least one years experience" in that area. How are you supposed to get the experience is no one will hire you? It has been very

challenging, and can get depressing at time trying to find a job. You go to school for so long and work so hard to accomplish what you did, and then can't do anything with it because your "new". It's almost like you are being punished for not having experience. Its sad really.

Employed

I found it easy to gain employment after graduation. I hear many people saying that it is very difficult for them to find current employment. I think most employers are looking for candidates that have experience in their field and at their facilities. Many people graduate with little to no job experience. While i was in nursing school i worked full-time at my facility of choice and was able to easily gain employment after graduation.

Personally, I had no problem. I was very lucky as I had only moved to Louisiana in May 2010 when I graduated. I found a job immediately. I had 2+ years working as a student nurse tech/intern however. I have noticed for people I know that it is VERY hard to find a nursing job here. It seems our demands are not nearly as high as other states.

No concerns, I found a job as an RN immediately after graduating completed an internship through the hospital during nursing school and was hired upon graduation as an RN.

Pay

I plan on leaving Louisiana soon to seek employment in a state that pays RN better. That's one of our states down fall and until hospitals offer nurses more money the state will continue to loose new graduates and loose great nurses.

The pay is awful for the amount of work that is required.

I was an LPN before becoming an RN and I love what I do. I have been in Nursing for 10 years now and the pay scales are ridiculous. Managment positions at McDonalds pay more than experienced RN's. I can't image any other career for me other than nursing. Louisiana needs a cost of living raise.

Saturated Nursing Market

I think we are starting to become oversaturated with nurses in this state. Also, with all of the changes in healthcare, facilities are noting that it's cheaper to hire an experienced RN rather than spending the money training

a new graduate RN.

I do believe it is more difficult now than it has ever been to find jobs. The market seems to be saturated. I do feel that this is due to a combination of increase in number of nursing programs especially the accelerated types as well as a decrease in the number of facilities post-Katrina.

Nursing Schools

I think schools should help new grads find their first job. It would help if more schooling in job training as a new registered nurse was offered by a facility wanting the best for their patient's.

The school they grad attended should have at least one job fair before graduation. My school did not have one.

Age

I cannot afford my student loans now and I am 53 . I am telling you I am mature, and treat my very patients very well I care for them. I speak appropriately and proper english. I am an excellent RN I am just too old. The hospitals hire nothing but young people and will not give me the time of day. I am way more knowledgeable about nursing, caring and do not play around. I feel I am being discriminated against because of my age.

I have over 76 application in 26 hospitals in the last 6 months and still cant get a job. I was told in an Interview at 'Agency X' that I was too old to be precepted by people 1/2 my age on the unit.

Discussion and Conclusions

Prior to the economic recession, jobs for RN grads were plentiful which resulted in many college students pursuing nursing as a career choice (Terry and Whitman, 2011). Yet, more recent reports have indicated that it is getting increasingly more difficult for new RN grads to find employment (Mancino, 2011; Stokowski, 2011; Young, 2012). In a survey conducted by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing in 2010 (AACN, 2011), the job offer rate reported by schools of nursing for new BSN graduates varied across the country. In the South the job offer rate for new BSN graduates was 64%, 57% in the Midwest, 48% in the North Atlantic, and 42% in the West. There also appears to be a preference for new hires to have a BSN; over 76% of employers are expressing a strong preference for BSN program graduates (AACN, 2011; Business Wire, 2012).

It is reasonable to assume that over the next 15 years, the demand for RNs will grow significantly due to the increasing population, the enactment of the Affordable Care Act resulting in 32 million more Americans added to insurance rosters, 80 million baby boomers turning 65 beginning in 2011, many of whom will require more health care services, advances in technology, the aging nursing workforce, and the expected shortage of primary care physicians (Staiger,

Auerbach, & Buerhaus, 2012). According to Staiger, Auerbach & Buerhaus, employers and workforce policy makers may be lulled into a temporary state of complacency brought on by the recent recession which forced many experienced nurses to remain in the workforce, giving the appearance that there is no nursing shortage, which has in turn had an affect on the hiring practices related to newly licensed RNs.

Although, hiring practices for new RN graduates in Louisiana have not been impacted to the extent experienced by other regions of the country, based on the findings obtained with the current survey, it will be very important for Louisiana to be proactive in addressing issues confronted by new RN graduates seeking employment in Louisiana if we plan to be successful in assuring that there will be an adequate, well prepared RN workforce in the future.

Recommendations:

Recommendations that stem from this report include but are not limited to the following:

- Students nearing completion of their programs should begin the job search early, and while still in school, students should look for internships and externships that may lead to future employment.
- Developing community-based partnerships between education and practice to formulate nurse residency programs is an essential step in allowing for a smooth transition between academia and practice for newly licensed RN graduates.
- Discussions related to the development of nurse residency programs should include not only acute care settings, but in light of the findings of this study, it will also be important to develop residency programs in specialty areas such as community based settings and long-term care and skilled care facilities so that new RNs will be able to safely transition into these practice settings.
- RN to BSN programs will be key to improving the marketability of RNs prepared at the AD or Diploma level. It is important that universities and community colleges create partnerships that will allow for the seamless transition from Diploma or AD to BSN.
- Deans and Directors of Schools of Nursing with pre-RN licensure programs will need to place greater emphasis on enhancing the job seeking skills of new graduates by focusing on interviewing skills, resume development, and professionalism. In addition, Schools of Nursing may need to refrain from using language in student recruitment communications that may imply that finding a job in nursing is a guarantee upon graduation.
- Repeat the New Graduate Survey every two years to monitor trends in hiring practices experienced by newly licensed RNs as changes occur in the state's health care system, economy, and nursing workforce, in order to better inform policy makers, schools of nursing, prospective nursing students, and other interested stakeholders.

The current report gives very valuable insight into the job seeking challenges experienced by newly licensed RNs in Louisiana, yet the low response rate for the 2011 LCN New Graduate Survey does not allow for the findings to be generalized outside of the sample population surveyed. In an effort to increase response rates for future surveys, LCN will work with Schools of Nursing and the Louisiana Association of Student Nurses (LASN) to first of all inform nursing students (especially senior nursing students) about the survey, the findings obtained with the initial survey and how these findings can be used to impact policy decisions related to

transition to practice, and to encourage students to complete the survey when they receive it after obtaining their initial RN license. LCN will also work with the Louisiana State Board of Nursing (LSBN) to insert information about the New Graduate Survey in communications sent to new licensees.

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Appendix A

Louisiana Center for Nursing New Graduate Survey 2011

Louisiana Center for Nursing New Graduate Survey 2011

Thank you for agreeing to complete the Louisiana Center for Nursing 2011 New Graduate Survey. Your input will be extremely helpful as we plan for the nursing workforce of the future.

1. Did you receive your initial licensure as a RN between 2009-2011?

- Yes
 No

2. Where did you complete your RN nursing school education?

If you completed your education in another country, please indicate the country.

3. Which month did you graduate?

4. What year did you graduate?

5. What type of nursing program did you graduate from?

Other (please specify)

6. What region of the state did you reside in while attending nursing school? (Select the choice that best applies to your region)

Not sure of region - what is your zip code?

7. Have you taken and passed the NCLEX-RN exam?

8. Age

9. Gender

10. Ethnicity

Other (please specify)

Louisiana Center for Nursing New Graduate Survey 2011

11. In what region of the state do you currently reside? (Select the choice that best applies to where you are living)

Not sure of region - what is your zip code?

12. Are you currently working as a registered nurse?

13. How long have you been employed as a registered nurse?

14. What type of health facility are you working in?

Other (please specify)

15. Are you working full-time or part-time as a registered nurse?

16. If you are working as a RN, is this a job of choice?

Please explain:

17. How long did it take you to find a job as a RN?

18. How many jobs did you apply for before you were successful? (Estimate number)

19. How did you find the job? (Select all that apply)

- Clinical experience at the hospital or health facility
- Hospital or health facility websites
- Job fair
- Knew someone at the hospital or health facility
- Previous employment at the hospital or health facility in a non-RN position
- Referral

Other (please specify)

Louisiana Center for Nursing New Graduate Survey 2011

20. Do you plan to pursue an advanced degree in nursing?

21. Please share any comments/concerns that you may have regarding new graduates finding employment as a registered nurse in Louisiana.

Thank you for participating in our survey. Please click the submit button below to forward your response to the Louisiana Center for Nursing.

Acknowledgement: The Louisiana Center for Nursing 2011 Registered Nurse Graduate Survey was adapted from the 2009-2010 New Graduate Survey developed by the California Institute for Nursing & Health Care and UCLA School of Nursing.

Appendix B

Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Administrative Regions

Residence of Respondents According to Region at Time of Survey

