



Future Nursing Supply Set to Drop



As previously predicted, nursing shortage ten years from now may not be as dire as initially forecasted. However research still suggests that there will be approximately a 4 percent shortfall (130,000 nurses) by 2025. The findings are published in the current issue of *Medical Care*.

Researchers from Montana State University and Dartmouth College found that the Great Recession prompted nurses to remain in the nursing field. As a result, more students went to nursing school than initially expected thus promoting nursing as a career and increasing the number of nurses.

Around 40 percent of registered nurses are older than 50 as pointed out by co-author and healthcare economist David Auerbach. But the age of the RN force is peaking at 44.4 years this year and the average age of nurses is expected to decline over the next 10 to 15 years. This will mean that younger nurses will come on board as the older nurses leave the workforce.

The study projects the number of registered nurses will increase from 2.7 million in 2013 to 3.3 million by 2030. However, these forecasts are based on the number of nurses entering the workforce today. It is important to note that the enrollment rates in nursing school is already levelling off. Also, the number of nurses leaving the workforce each year will increase to nearly 80,000 by 2020 as compared to 20,000 in 2005.

As far as nursing jobs are concerned, acute care hospitals remain the most competitive. Vacancy rates at hospitals have doubled because hospitals are more prone to hire nurses that have more experience.

Nursing shortage is a complex issue and is mainly triggered because of a shortage of nursing school faculty. The number of students that are trained is limited. In addition, nurses face other work-related issues such as burnout, work-related injuries and organisational culture.

Overall, the study authors conclude that "the unexpected surge of entry of new RNs into the workforce will lead to continued net growth of the nursing workforce, both in absolute FTE and FTE per capita. While this growth may not be sufficient to meet demand, such projections are uncertain in the face of a rapidly evolving health care delivery system."

Source: [Medical Care](#)

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