

An Overview of New York State Nurse Practitioners

Highlights

- Over 75% of the state's nurse practitioners (NPs) report working in a position requiring an NP certification.
- There are fewer NPs per capita downstate compared to upstate.
- New York's active NPs are less racially/ethnically diverse than the state's population, especially Hispanics Latinos.
- More than 52% of the state's NPs are 50 years of age or older.
- The majority of NPs hold either a post-master's certificate or a master's degree.
- Most active NPs completed their NP and RN education in New York.
- Well over half of the state's active NPs work in health centers, clinics, or hospital outpatient settings.
- Nearly one-third of the state's active NPs provide primary care services.

Background

Health reform is driving dramatic changes in New York's health care delivery system as providers aim to improve population health, enhance the patient experience, increase quality and patient safety, and improve the cost-effectiveness of the health services provided. As a result, the health care delivery system is shifting its focus from acute care to ambulatory care, particularly primary care and prevention. As the demand for basic health services grows, there is concern about the adequacy of the supply of health care practitioners, including physicians, NPs, physician assistants (PAs), and midwives. It is critical to better understand the supply and distribution of health care practitioners to inform programs and policies to address maldistribution. Health workforce monitoring using timely and available data can inform programs and policies designed to address health workforce maldistribution and increase access to needed services for the all New Yorkers.

Effective September 1, 2015, all NPs in New York were required by law to provide information and documentation at the time of recertification. The Center for Health Workforce Studies (CHWS), in collaboration with the New York State Education

Department (SED), and the New York State Department of Health (DOH), developed a short survey that asked NPs about demographic, educational, and practice characteristics, based on federal minimum data set guidelines* for health workforce data collection, as well as questions about relationships with collaborating physicians. The survey was embedded in the online NP recertification materials; a paper copy of the survey was available to NPs unable to complete the survey online.

Methods

The analysis completed by CHWS and presented in this brief is based on responses to the NP recertification survey received from September 1, 2015 through August 31, 2016. Since NPs must recertify every 3 years, this analysis represents approximately one-third of all NPs in New York. Since it is not clear whether this cohort of NPs is representative of the entire population of the state's NPs, sub-state analyses were limited to two regions – upstate and downstate New York.†

* http://www.healthworkforceta.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/MDS_Resource_Brief.pdf.

† Downstate New York includes the counties of Dutchess, Orange, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester in the Mid-Hudson region; Nassau and Suffolk in the Long Island region; and the five New York City counties. The remaining counties upstate New York.

NPs in New York must be licensed as registered nurses (RNs) and certified as NPs based on either national certification or graduation from an SED recognized NP program. In New York, NPs may be certified under one or more of 16 different specialties, including acute care, women’s health, school health, oncology, and pediatrics, among others. NPs with more than one certification are required to recertify once for each certification held.

Redundant submissions (ie, individuals with more than one NP certification) as well as those NPs practicing outside of New York were removed for this analysis. This brief is based on an analysis of 5,656 submissions as outlined in Table 1, with more detailed information about NPs actively practicing in New York.

Table 1. Counts of New York’s NPs

Category	Count
Electronic Surveys Received	6,287
Paper Surveys Received	121
Total Surveys Received	6,408
Out of State Practice	-451
Duplicates	-301
Total Surveys Analyzed	5,656

Findings

Over 75% of the state’s NPs report working in a position requiring an NP certification.

About 76% of NPs in New York were working in positions requiring an NP certification, and another 14% were working in RN positions (Table 2). Nearly 10% of NPs were not working, including those currently not working (6.2%) and those who had retired (3.6%).

Table 2. Work Status of New York’s NPs

Work Status	Percent of NPs ^a
Working Position Requiring NP Certification	76.4%
Working in RN Position	14.1%
Working, but Neither as an NP or RN	2.0%
Volunteering in an NP Position	1.4%
Not Currently Working	6.2%
Retired	3.6%

^a NPs may hold more than one job, so the total exceeds 100%.

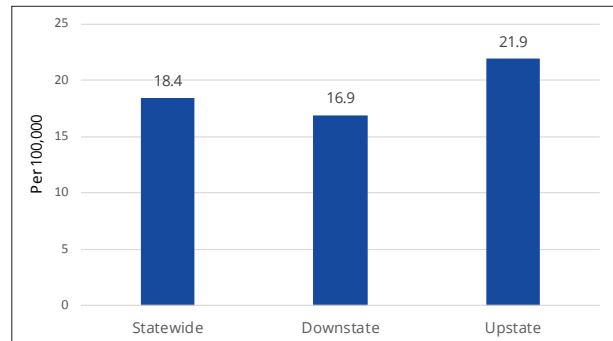
The remainder of this brief will describe characteristics of active NPs in New York, including those who work as

NPs and those who volunteer in NP positions.

There are fewer NPs per capita downstate compared to upstate.

There were 18.4 NPs per 100,000 population statewide with 21.9 NPs per capita upstate, compared to 16.9 per capita downstate (Figure 1).

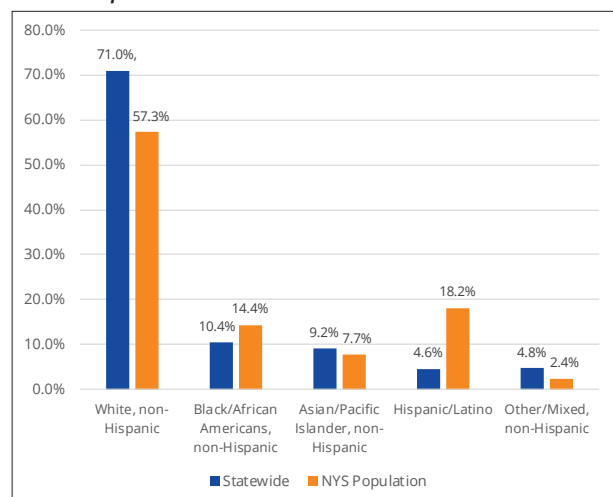
Figure 1. Count of NPs Per Capita by Location



New York’s active NPs are less racially/ethnically diverse than the state’s population, especially Hispanics/Latinos.

Seventy-one percent of the state’s NPs were White, non-Hispanic, compared to 57% of the state’s population (Figure 2).^{*} Only 5% of active NPs were Hispanic/Latino, substantially lower than their presence in the general population (18%). NPs who were Black/African American (10%) were also underrepresented compared to their presence in the general population (14%).

Figure 2. Race/Ethnicity of Active NPs Compared to the State’s Population



^{*} Statewide total includes those who indicated they were actively practicing as an NP but did not indicate a specific location and who could not be placed in a region.

More than 52% of the state’s NPs are 50 years of age or older.

Statewide, 29% of active NPs were between age 50-59 and 23% were age 60 or older. In all, about 52% of active NPs were age 50 or older (Table 3). There were significant age differences by region, with 46% of active NPs downstate age 50 or older compared to 61% upstate.

Table 3. NPs by Age Cohort and Geographic Location

Age Category	Percent of Total		
	Statewide ^a	Downstate	Upstate
20 – 29	1.3%	1.2%	1.6%
30 – 39	22.3%	25.9%	17.3%
40 – 49	24.2%	26.9%	19.9%
50 – 59	29.1%	26.9%	33.0%
60 plus	23.0%	19.1%	28.3%

^a Statewide total includes those who indicated they were actively practicing as an NP but did not indicate a specific location and who could not be placed in a region.

The majority of NPs hold either a post-master’s certificate or a master’s degree.

Eight-seven percent of active NPs in New York held a master’s degree, and another 13% held a post-master’s certificate (Table 4). Just over 5% reported a doctorate as their highest degree.

Table 4. Types of Degrees and/or Certificates Held by New York NPs

Degree Type	Statewide
Certificate	5.8%
Master’s	87.0%
Post-Master’s Certificate	12.6%
Doctorate	5.2%
Other	0.9%

Most active NPs completed their NP and RN education in New York.

Eighty-nine percent of active NPs received their first NP degree or certificate in New York, with another 10% completing their NP training out-of-state. Almost 85% of active NPs received their RN degree in New York, and nearly 83% graduated from a New York high school.

Well over half of the state’s active NPs work in health centers, clinics, or hospital outpatient settings.

Fifty-six percent of the state’s active NPs worked in health centers, clinics, or hospital outpatient settings, followed by physician practices (18%) and hospital inpatient/emergency departments (12%) (Table 6). Five percent of NPs worked in independent NP practices, and another 5% worked in nursing homes/long-term care as their principal work location. There were some differences by geography, with a higher percentage of active NPs upstate who worked in physician practices (24%) than downstate (14%), while a higher percentage of active NPs downstate worked in health centers, clinics, or hospital outpatient clinics (58%) compared to upstate (52%).

Table 5. Principal Work Settings of New York NPs

Principal Work Setting	Percent of NPs		
	Statewide ^a	Downstate	Upstate
Health Centers, Clinics, Hospital Outpatient	55.6%	57.9%	51.6%
Hospices	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%
Hospital Inpatient/EDs	11.6%	12.1%	10.7%
Independent NP Practices	4.9%	5.5%	3.9%
Nursing Homes/Long-term Care	4.9%	5.2%	4.4%
Physician Practices	17.9%	14.4%	24.1%
State/County Public Health Departments	1.0%	0.9%	1.2%
Urgent Care Centers	1.5%	1.4%	1.6%
Other	2.2%	2.0%	2.2%

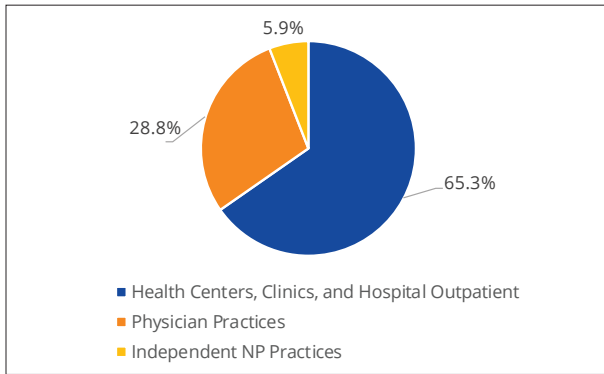
^a Statewide total includes those who indicated they were actively practicing as an NP but did not indicate a specific location and who could not be placed in a region.

Nearly one-third of the state’s active NPs provide primary care services.

Nearly 31% of the state’s active NPs worked in ambulatory settings and provided primary care services.* Statewide, there were 7 NPs per 100,000 population who provided primary care services in ambulatory settings. Nearly two-thirds of active NPs who provided primary care services worked in health centers, clinics, or hospital outpatient centers, followed by physician practices (29%) and independent NP practices (6%) (Figure 3).

* Based on working in an ambulatory setting and holding a certification in family practice, general practice, general internal medicine, obstetrics/gynecology, or general pediatrics. This excludes those NPs who provided primary care in specialty practices such as cardiology or gastroenterology.

Figure 3. Settings of Primary Care NPs



Discussion

Timely data and information on the supply and distribution of the New York's NPs is critical for effective health workforce planning. Findings from a required survey of NPs contribute to a better understanding of the state's NP workforce. Data drawn from survey responses were used to prepare this brief, which provides a high-level overview of active NPs in the state. Using these data, a more detailed report about New York's NPs will be prepared, with an emphasis on their contributions to primary care service delivery across the state.



This research was conducted at the Center for Health Workforce Studies (CHWS) by Robert Martiniano and Shen Wang. Support for this analysis was provided by the New York State Department of Health.

Established in 1996, CHWS is an academic research center based at the School of Public Health, University at Albany, State University of New York (SUNY). The mission of CHWS is to provide timely, accurate data and conduct policy relevant research about the health workforce. The research conducted by CHWS supports and promotes health workforce planning and policymaking at local, regional, state, and national levels.