



Trends in New York Registered Nurse Graduations, 1996-2010



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PREFACE

This report summarizes the results of the 2009 survey of New York registered nursing education programs, which was conducted by the New York Center for Health Workforce Studies (the Center). Deans and program directors of nursing education programs are surveyed annually and asked questions about applications, admissions, and registered nurse (RN) graduations from their programs as well as barriers to expanding student capacity and their assessment of the local job market for newly-trained RNs. The primary goal of the survey is to document trends in nursing graduations statewide and regionally in New York and understand how these trends affect the supply of RNs. This survey is the ninth annual survey of nursing education programs in New York and was conducted during the spring and summer of 2009.

This report was prepared by Robert Martiniano, Alison Bates, and Jean Moore from the Center. The Center is not-for-profit research center of the School of Public Health, University at Albany, State University of New York. The Center's mission is to provide timely accurate data and conduct policy-relevant research about the health workforce. The ideas expressed in this report are those of the Center for Health Workforce Studies and do not necessarily represent views or positions of the School of Public Health, the University at Albany, or the State University of New York.

BACKGROUND

The Center for Health Workforce Studies (the Center) surveys deans and program directors of registered nursing education programs in New York annually to better understand trends affecting the production of RNs in the state. The most recent survey was conducted in the spring and summer of 2009. The survey included questions about applications, acceptances, and graduations for 2008 as well as projected graduations through 2010. The survey also asked about barriers to admitting more students and perceptions about the local job market for new RNs. This report summarizes the findings from the 2009 survey.

Of the 115 nursing programs in New York, 107 responded to the survey for a 93% response rate. Data for the eight nonrespondents were imputed from responses to previous surveys; consequently, the following data reflect estimated enrollments and graduations for all registered nursing programs in the state. Not all RN graduations represent new RNs, however, as many RNs who have completed associate degrees (ADN) or diplomas in nursing return to school for bachelor's degrees in nursing (BSN). Based on survey responses, the Center estimates that approximately 26% of 2009 BSN graduates were already licensed RNs. Consequently, approximately 11% of all 2009 RN graduates in the state were already licensed as RNs.

While not every RN educated in New York practices in the state, and some RNs practicing in New York were educated outside of the state, RNs educated in New York were by far the single largest source of RNs practicing in the state. Data from the 2004 National Sample Survey of RNs indicated that more than 82% of RNs actively practicing in New York received their initial nursing degree in New York.¹

¹ 2004 National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses.

FINDINGS

Summary of Findings

RN graduations in New York increased in 2009, rising by 762 or by nearly 9% over 2008 graduations, the seventh consecutive annual increase. Additionally, RN graduations are expected to continue to rise in 2010, with total graduations projected to be just over 15% higher than graduations in 2008, the previous high point for RN graduations in New York.

While graduations continue to rise, the current economic downturn has adversely impacted the job market for newly-trained RNs. In stark contrast to previous years, significantly fewer program directors reported many available job opportunities in their region for newly-trained RNs. While enrollments and graduations continue to increase, the perceived lack of available RN positions may result in a leveling off of RN graduations in the future.

Key Findings

- 1. For the seventh consecutive year, the number of RN graduates in New York in 2009 increased over the number of RN graduations in the previous year.**

It is estimated that nearly 9,300 individuals graduated from RN education programs in New York in 2009. This was the seventh successive year that RN graduations have increased, following six consecutive years of declines. The total graduations for 2009 represents an increase in RN graduations of nearly 81% since 2002 (Figure 1 and Table 1).

- 2. RN graduations in New York are projected to continue to rise in 2010.**

The number of RN graduations in New York in 2010 is expected to be almost 92% higher than the number of RN graduations in 2002. For the fourth consecutive year, the number of RN graduations eclipsed the previous high point of RN graduations in 1996 (Figure 1 and Table 1).

3. **Graduations in both ADN and BSN programs have steadily risen since 2003 with the exception of a slight decline in ADN graduations between 2007 and 2008. The number of graduations from both ADN and BSN programs in New York is projected to continue to rise between 2009 and 2010.**

In 2009, ADN and BSN graduations increased over 2008 graduations by 10% and 8% respectively. The number of graduations from both ADN and BSN programs are expected to continue to rise in 2010 and are projected to exceed 1996 ADN and BSN graduation levels (Figure 1 and Table 1).

**Figure 1
New York RN Graduations by Degree Type, 1996 to 2010**

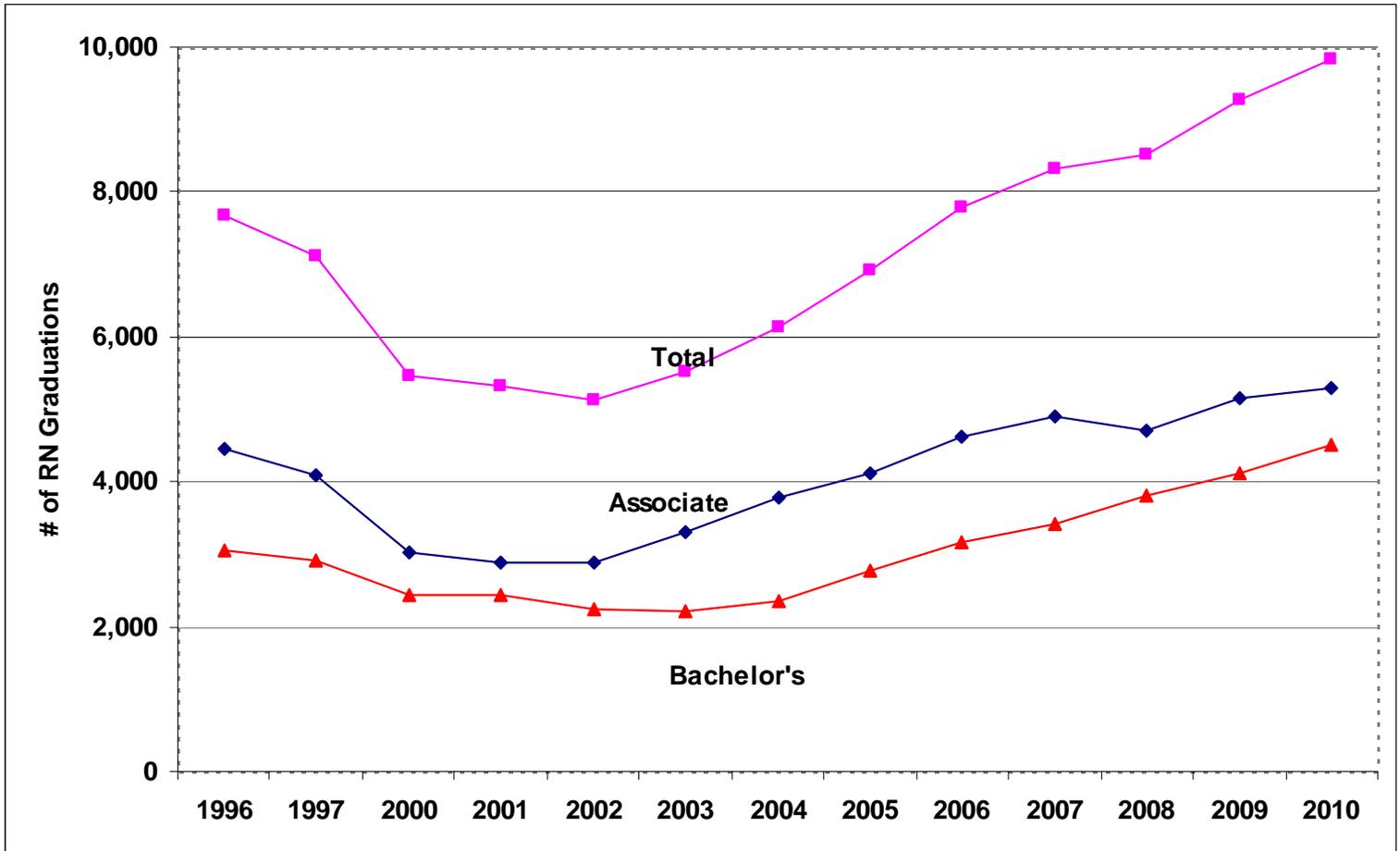


Table 1
New York RN Graduations by Degree Type, 1996 to 2010

School Year		Degree Type			Totals
		ADN	BSN	Diploma	
Actual Graduations	1996	4,447	3,062	176	7,685
	1997	4,102	2,911	94	7,107
	1998	3,763	2,780	13	6,556
	1999	3,381	2,792	4	6,177
	2000	3,015	2,437	4	5,456
	2001	2,885	2,437	12	5,334
	2002	2,877	2,248	3	5,128
	2003	3,311	2,199	3	5,513
	2004	3,772	2,344	11	6,127
	2005	4,119	2,779	14	6,912
	2006	4,620	3,173	8	7,801
	2007	4,911	3,410	9	8,330
	2008	4,699	3,811	7	8,517
2009	5,158	4,112	9	9,279	
Projected Graduations	2010	5,299	4,509	12	9,820

4. Between 2002 and 2010, RN graduations are projected to increase in all regions of New York.

All regions² in New York are projected to experience significant increases in RN graduations between 2002 and 2010, ranging from nearly 17% in the North Country region to almost 160% in the Finger Lakes region. Two other regions are also projected to more than double their RN graduations between 2002 and 2010 (Southern Tier and Long Island). RN graduations in 2010 are projected to surpass 1996 RN graduations in eight of the 10 regions of the state (Figure 2 and Table 2).

² The 2008 New York State Department of Labor regions were used in this report.

Figure 2
Projected Percentage Increase in RN Graduations, 2002 – 2010, by Region

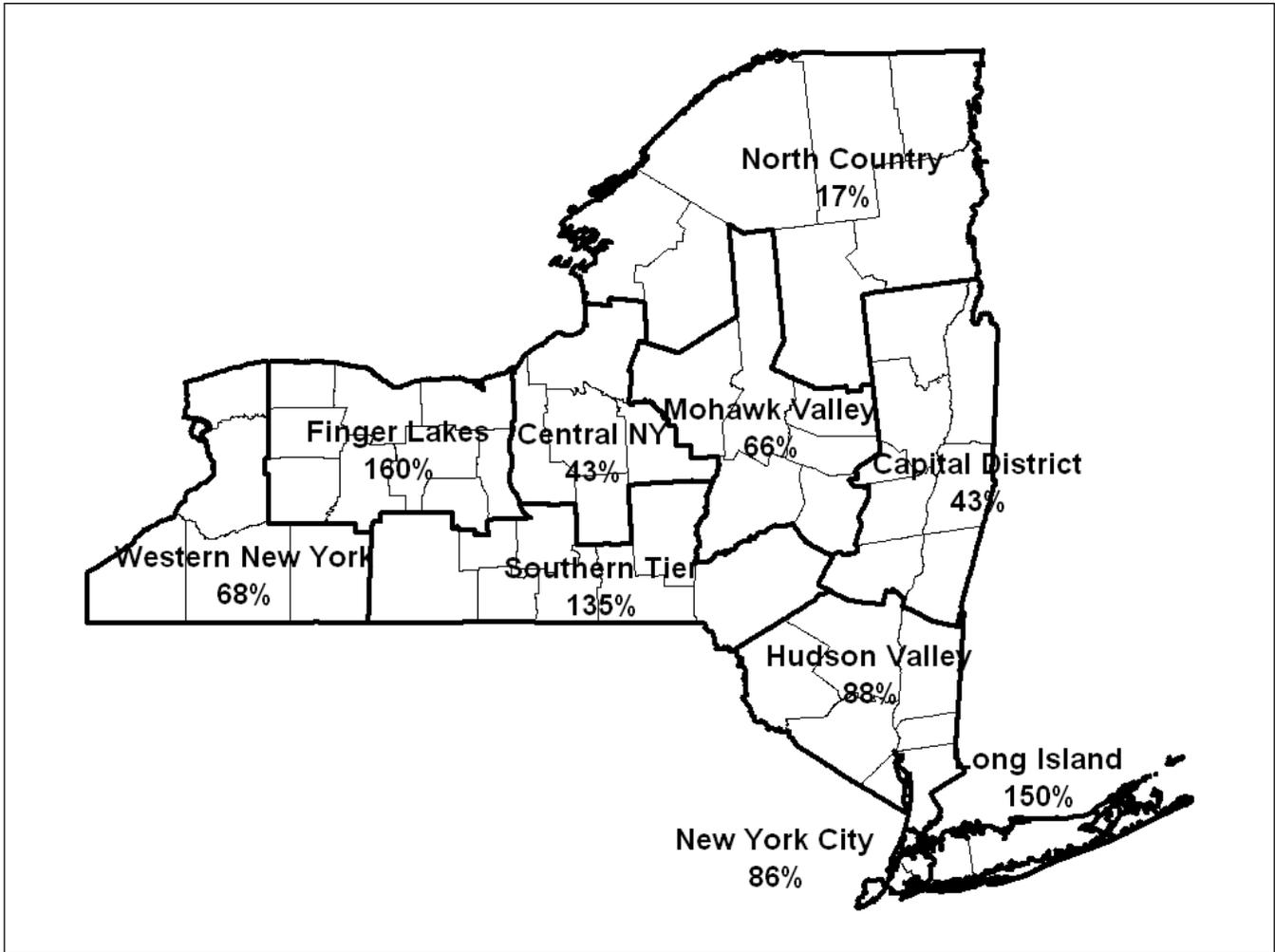


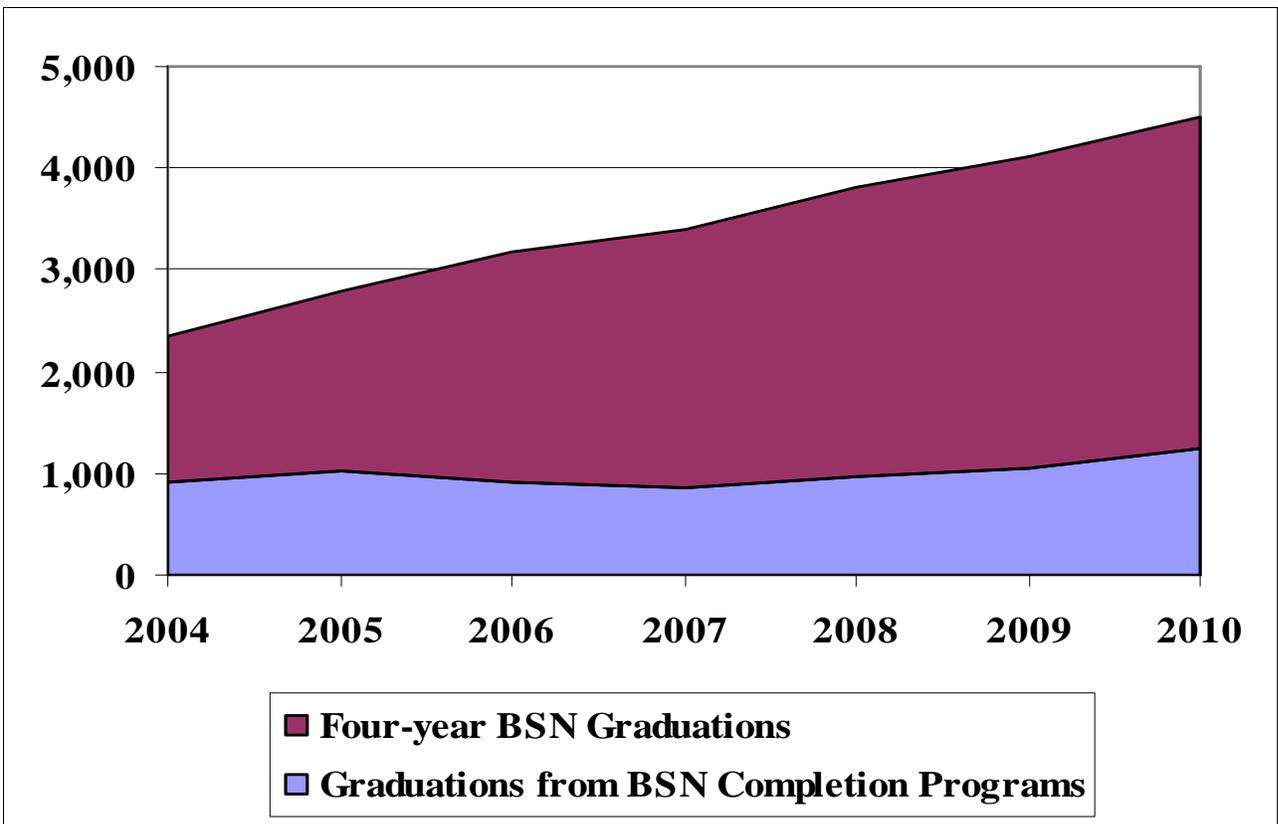
Table 2
Percent Change in the Number of RN Graduations by Region

Region	1996	2002	2003	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 Projected	% Change		
									96 to 02	02 to 10	96 to 10
Capital District	404	358	395	458	456	449	465	511	-11.4%	42.7%	26.5%
Central New York	518	325	331	398	388	395	394	466	-37.3%	43.4%	-10.0%
Finger Lakes	518	385	431	657	698	793	880	999	-25.7%	159.5%	92.9%
Hudson Valley	1,058	616	689	1,045	1,005	1,053	1,103	1,157	-41.8%	87.8%	9.4%
Long Island	937	677	795	1,302	1,606	1,471	1,578	1,693	-27.7%	150.1%	80.7%
Mohawk Valley	299	210	226	305	284	330	338	349	-29.8%	66.2%	16.7%
New York City	2,258	1,544	1,605	2,244	2,438	2,584	2,791	2,867	-31.6%	85.7%	27.0%
North Country	232	170	166	227	208	161	185	198	-26.7%	16.5%	-14.7%
Southern Tier	377	236	335	462	490	470	514	555	-37.4%	135.2%	47.2%
Western New York	890	535	473	644	679	724	907	898	-39.9%	67.9%	0.9%

5. **The number of graduates from BSN completion programs is projected to increase slightly between 2009 and 2010.**

Between 2004 and 2010, the number of four-year BSN graduations is projected to more than double, increasing from 1,437 to 3,271. In addition, the number of graduations from BSN completion programs is expected to increase by nearly 37% over the same period. It is estimated that in 2010, BSN completers will represent almost 13% of all graduations (Figure 3). Most of the newly accredited nursing programs in New York are BSN completion programs, and, consequently, the proportion of BSN completers to all BSN graduates and to all RN graduates is likely to increase.

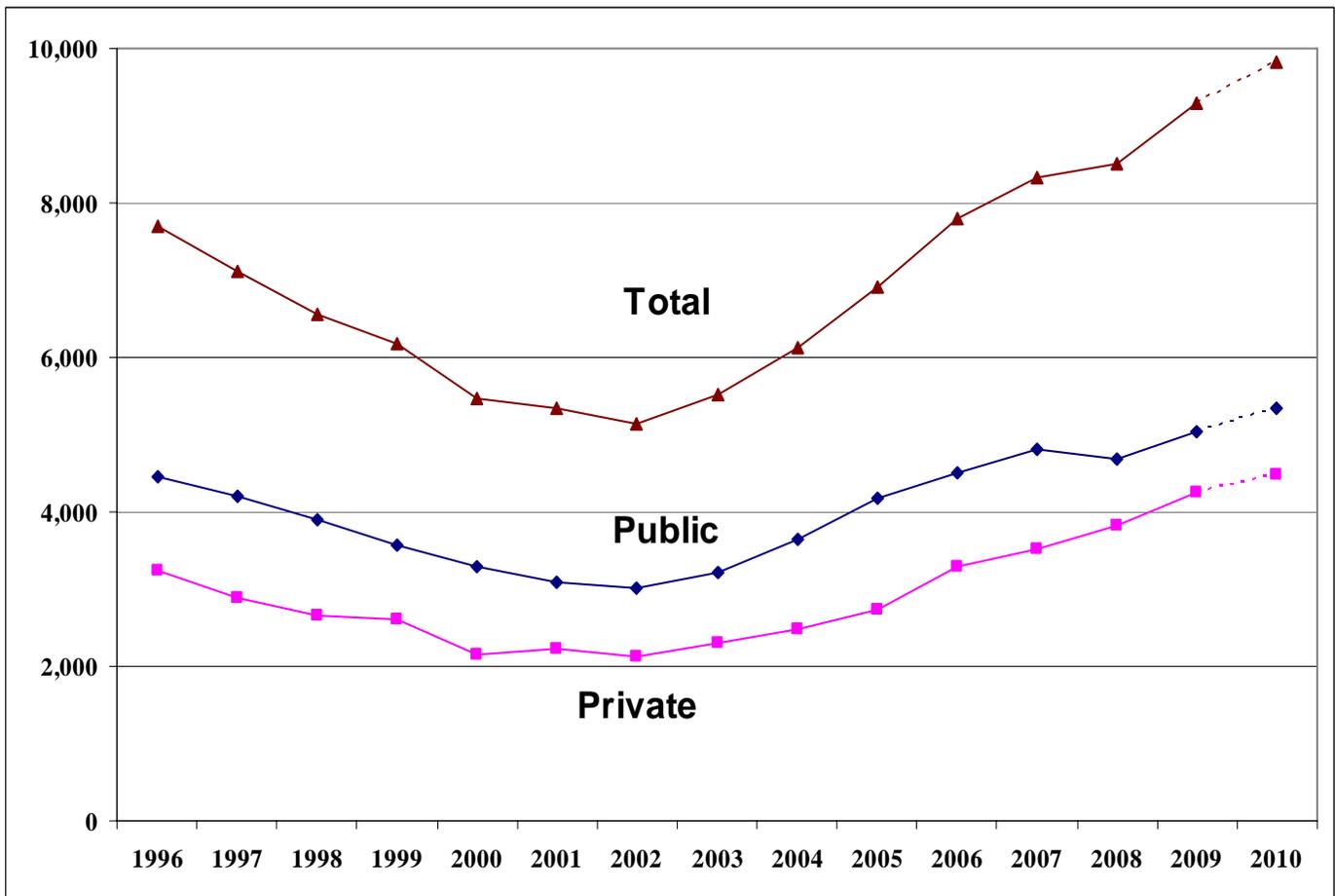
**Figure 3
Graduations from BSN and BSN Completion Programs
2004-2010**



6. RN graduations from privately sponsored nursing education programs are increasing faster than RN graduations from publicly sponsored programs.

Between 2002 and 2010, RN graduations from publicly sponsored programs – the State University of New York (SUNY) and the City University of New York schools (CUNY)) – are projected to increase by about 80% while RN graduations from privately sponsored programs (including hospital-run programs) are expected to grow by more than 110% (Figure 4).

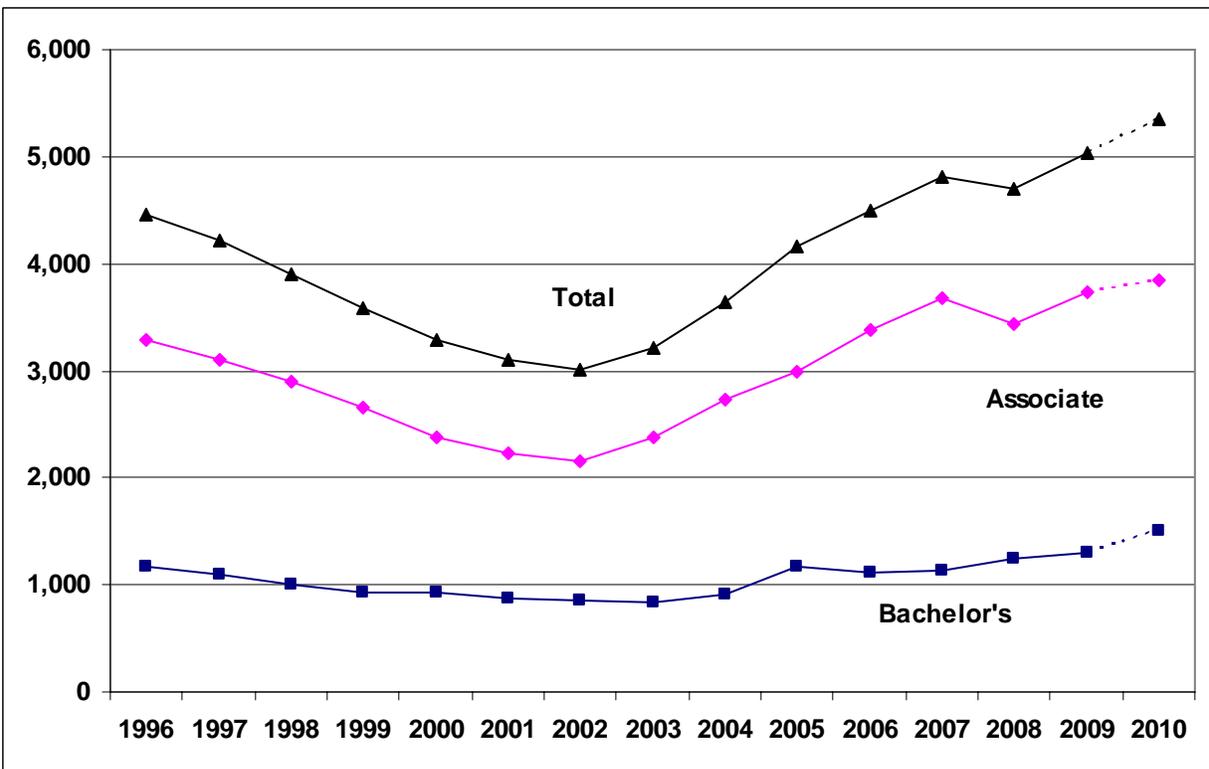
**Figure 4
Change in RN Graduations in Public and Private Nursing Programs, 1996 to 2010**



7. Graduations from publicly sponsored ADN programs are projected to increase by more than 1,700 between 2002 and 2010.

SUNY and CUNY sponsored ADN programs are projected to increase their graduations by slightly more than 1,700, or nearly 80% between 2002 and 2010. SUNY and CUNY sponsored BSN programs are projected to increase the number of their graduations by nearly 650, or 75%, during the same period (Figure 5).

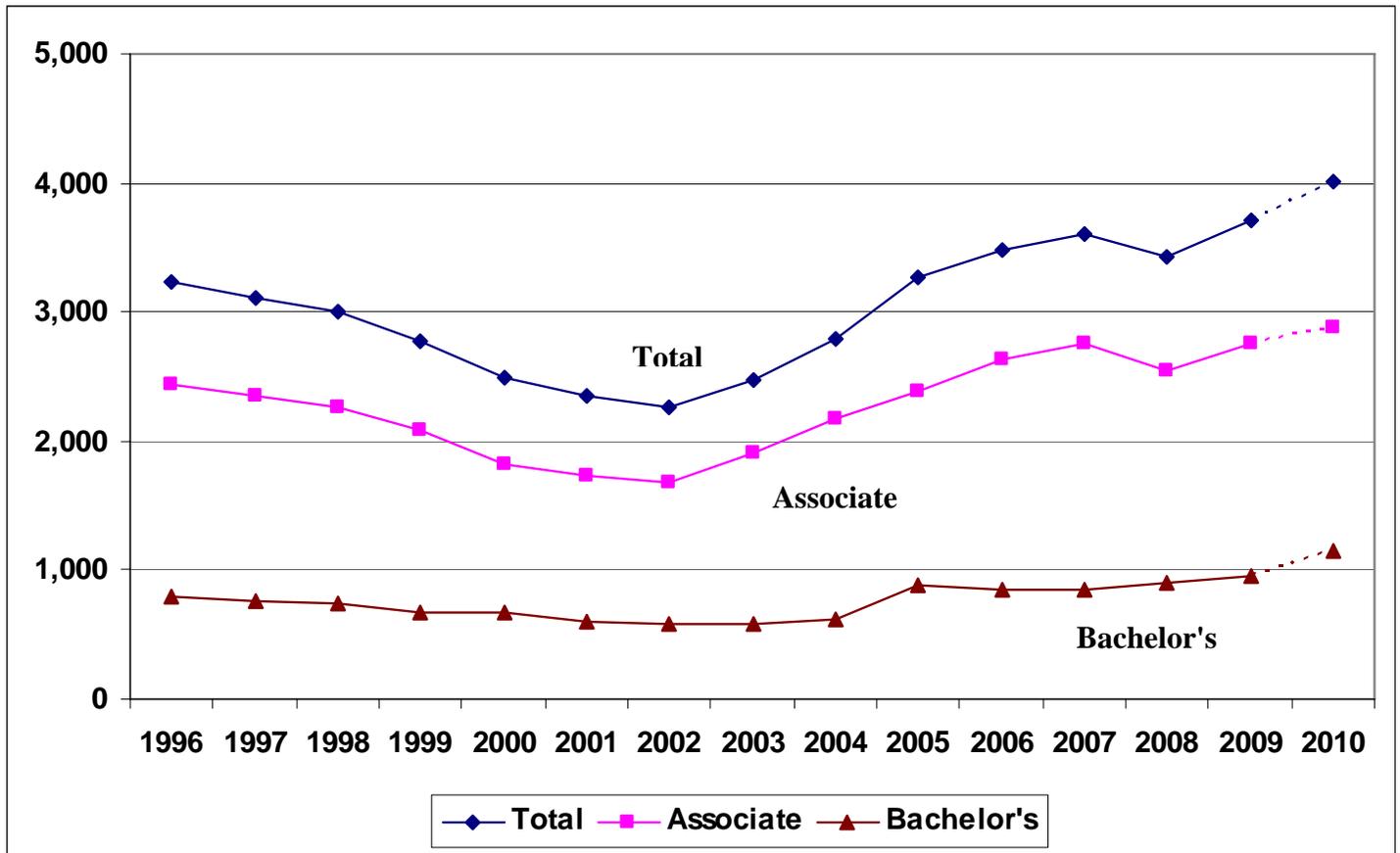
**Figure 5
Publicly Sponsored RN Graduations by Degree Type, 1996 to 2010**



8. Graduations from ADN programs at SUNY community colleges accounted for about 75% of total RN graduations in 2009 from SUNY sponsored programs.

In 2009, ADN graduations represented slightly more 74% of all graduations from SUNY sponsored RN education programs. It is projected that in 2010 ADN graduations will represent 71% of all graduations from SUNY sponsored RN education, the lowest proportion it has been since before 1996. SUNY sponsored BSN programs are projected to increase RN graduations by almost 94% between 2002 and 2010. All SUNY sponsored RN graduations (both ADN and BSN) are projected to be 20% higher in 2010 than they were in 1996 (Figure 6).

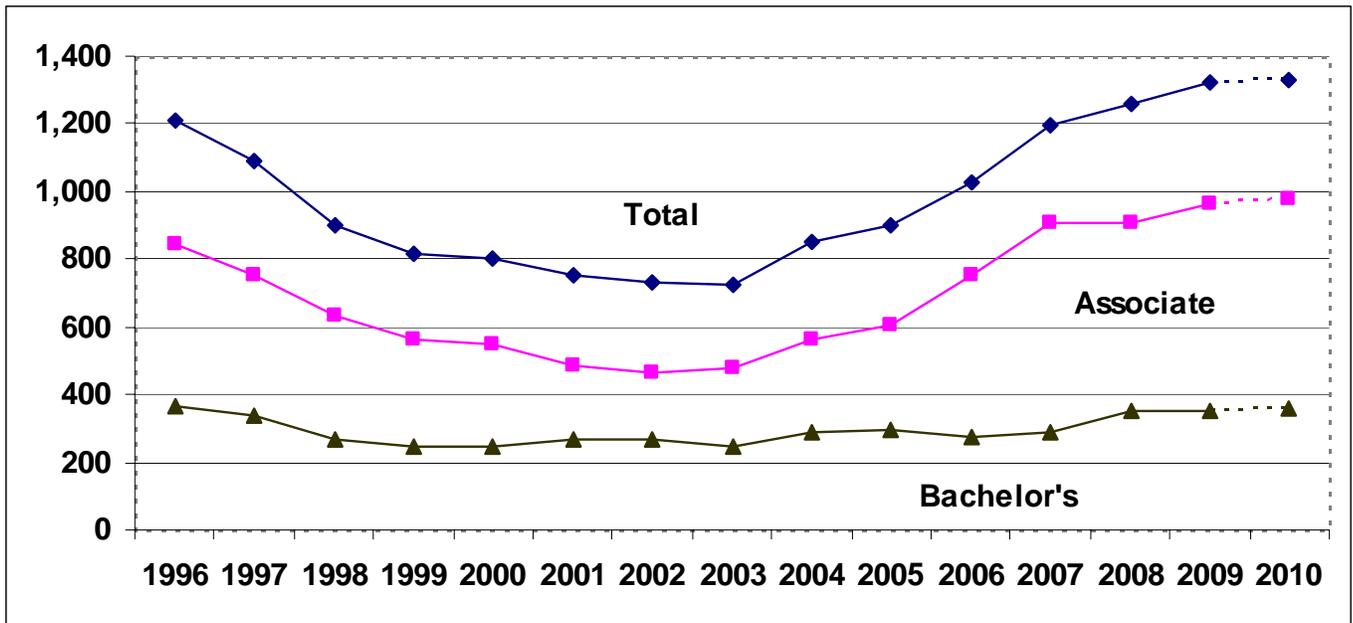
**Figure 6
State-sponsored RN Graduations by Degree Type, 1996 to 2010**



9. **Between 2002 and 2010, ADN graduations from CUNY RN programs are projected to increase at a faster rate than BSN graduations from CUNY RN programs.**

Between 2002 and 2010, ADN graduations at CUNY nursing programs are expected to more than double, while BSN graduations are projected to increase by 34%. Between 1996 and 2009, total CUNY RN graduations increased by 9%, with ADN graduations rising by slightly more than 14% and BSN graduations declining by nearly 3% (Figure 7).

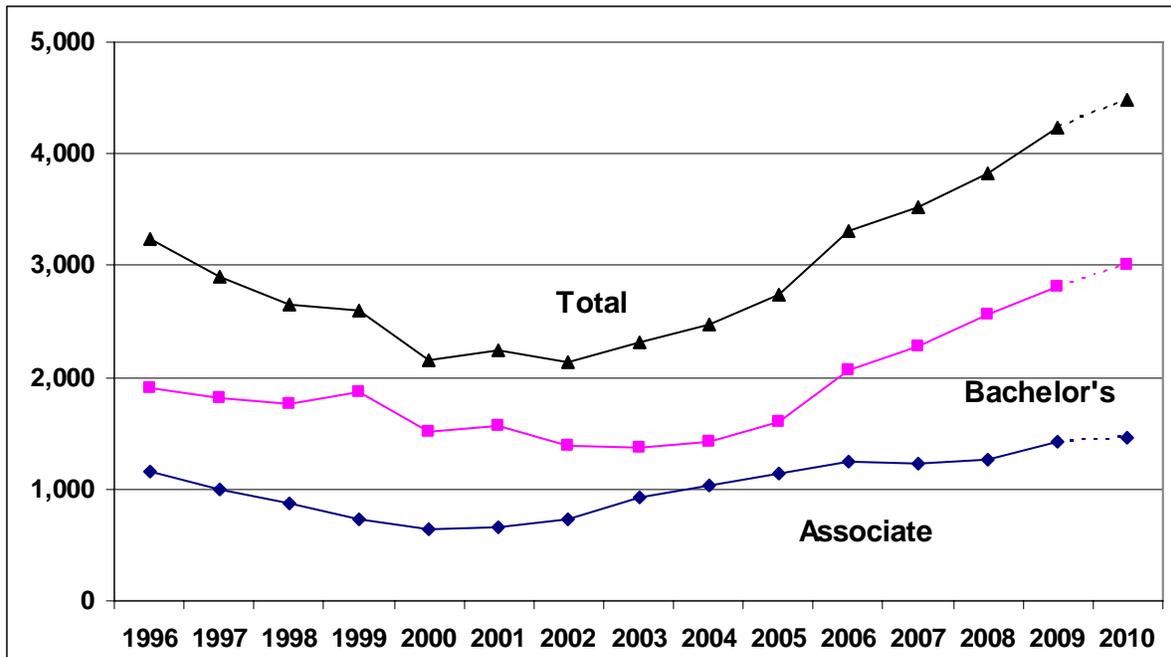
Figure 7
CUNY RN Graduations by Degree Type, 1996 to 2010



10. Graduations from privately sponsored RN education programs are projected to nearly double between 2002 and 2010.

Privately sponsored ADN and BSN program graduations are expected to rise by more than 110% between 2002 and 2010. The total number of RN graduations from privately sponsored RN education programs is expected to be more than 38% higher in 2010 than in 1996 (Figure 8). BSN programs accounted for nearly two-thirds of the total graduations from privately sponsored RN education programs in 2009.

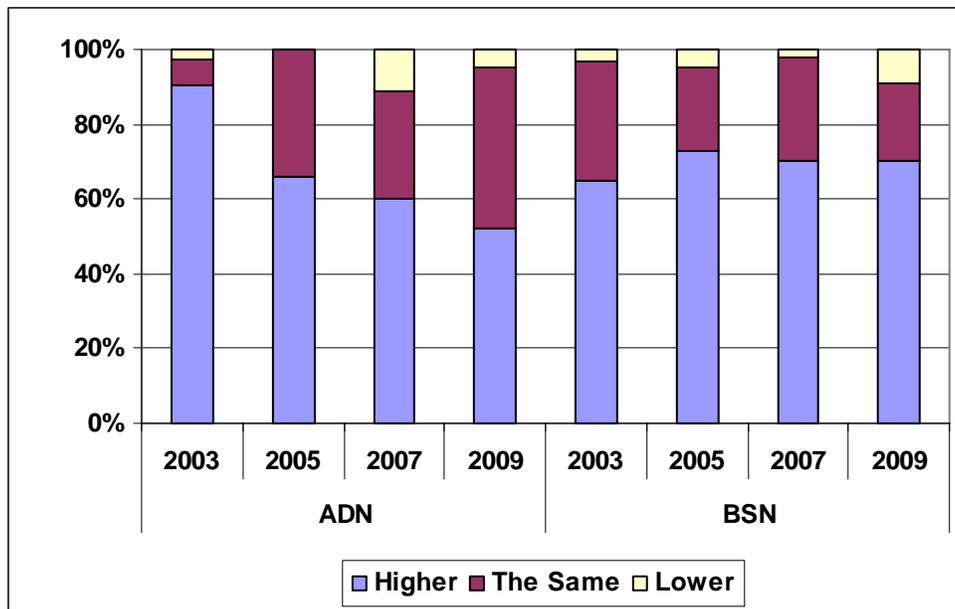
**Figure 8
Privately Sponsored RN Graduations by Degree Type, 1996 to 2010**



11. Fewer ADN program directors reported an increase in applications in 2009 than in 2007. BSN program directors reporting an increase in applications remained constant for those two years.

The percent of ADN program directors reporting a higher number of applications decreased 8% between the 2007 and 2009 surveys, while the percent of BSN program directors that reported an increase in the number of applications remained at 70% in 2009 (Figure 9). In 2009, the number of ADN program directors reporting no change in the number of program applications increased by 14%, while those reporting a decline in the number of applications decreased by 6%. Overall, fewer nursing program directors reported increases in the number of applications between 2007 and 2009 and more programs reported a decrease in the number of applications over that time period.

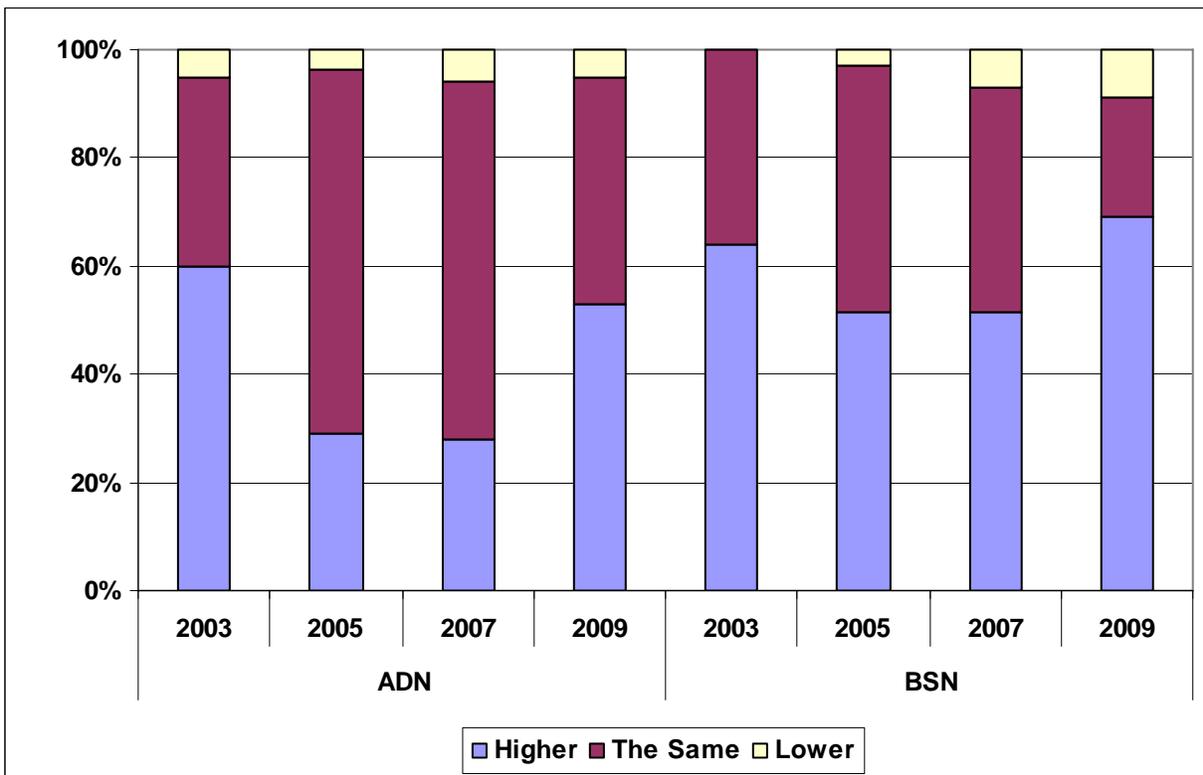
Figure 9
Percent Change in Number of Applications by Program Type, 2003 - 2009



12. The number of acceptances to RN education programs increased for both ADN and BSN programs between 2007 and 2009.

The percent of ADN program directors reporting a rise in the number of acceptances increased by 25% between the 2007 and 2009 surveys, and the percent of BSN program directors reporting an increase in the number of acceptances rose by 18% in 2009. The percent of ADN and BSN program directors that reported no change in the number of acceptances decreased between the 2007 and 2009 surveys. Overall, more nursing programs reported increases in the number of acceptances between the 2007 and 2009 surveys, while those reporting fewer acceptances remained the same (Figure 10).

Figure 10
Percent Change in Number of Acceptances by Program Type, 2004 – 2009



13. Half of nursing programs in New York wait-listed qualified applicants, with nearly two-thirds of ADN programs wait-listing qualified applicants.

Overall, 50% of RN education programs in New York placed qualified RN applicants on wait-lists rather than admitting them directly into the RN education program, with 62% of ADN programs and 35% of BSN programs placing qualified applicants on wait-lists. Nearly 42% of the ADN programs reported that a majority of the qualified applicants who were on a wait-list were expected to gain admission into the nursing program. In contrast, only 18% of BSN programs reported that a majority of the qualified applicants on a wait-list were expected to gain admission into the nursing program.

14. Compared to 2007, fewer nursing education programs reported turning away qualified applicants in 2009.

Forty-two percent of nursing program directors reported turning away qualified applicants in 2009, compared to 54% in 2007 and 59% in 2006. ADN programs were more likely to turn away qualified applicants than BSN programs. Nearly half of ADN programs and one-third of BSN programs reported turning away qualified applicants in 2009 (Table 3).

**Table 3
Percent of Respondents Reporting
Turning Away Qualified Applicants by Program Type, 2004 - 2009**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009
All Programs	57%	67%	59%	54%	42%
ADN	73%	80%	72%	65%	48%
BSN	39%	50%	43%	41%	33%

15. More qualified applicants were denied admission to nursing education programs in 2009 than in 2007.

While a lower percentage of programs reported turning away qualified applicants, those that did turn away qualified applicants reported turning away more of them (Table 4). Based on survey

responses, it was estimated that about 2,100 qualified applicants were turned away from New York’s nursing education programs in 2009; slightly higher than the number turned away in 2007, but down from nearly 2,200 in 2006 and about 3,000 in 2005. Since applicants may apply to more than one nursing education program, these numbers do not represent an unduplicated count of qualified applicants denied admission to nursing education programs in the state. Additionally, the estimate does not consider students who were waited-listed.

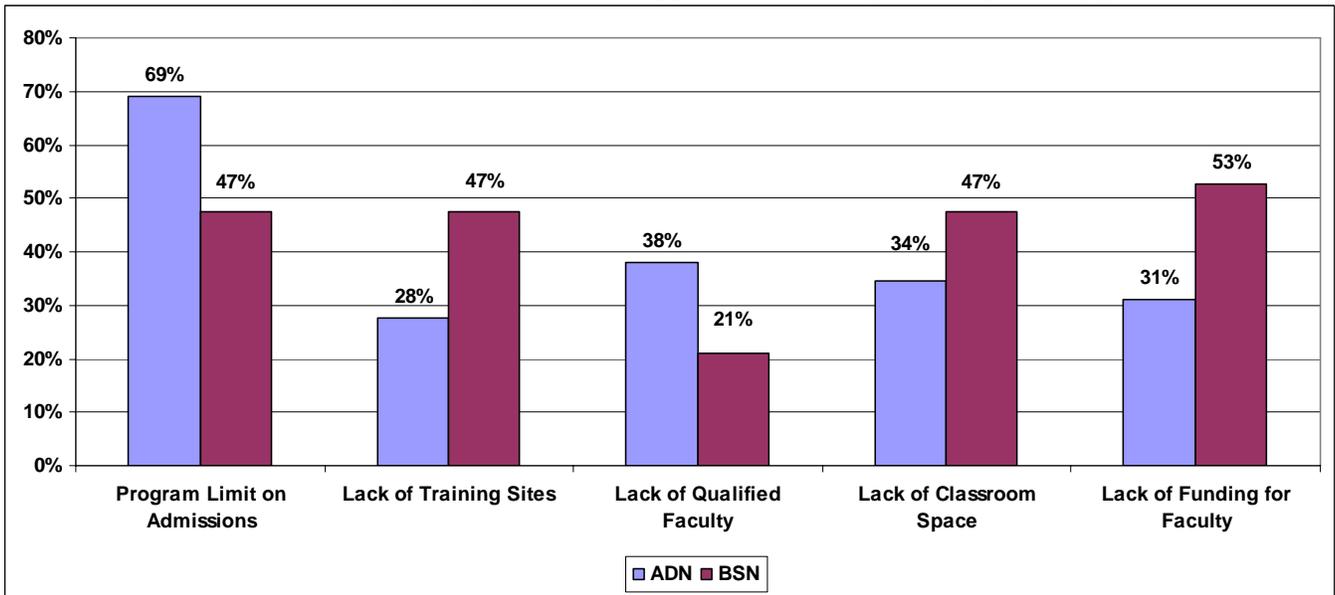
Table 4
Number of Qualified Applicants Turned Away
by Program Type

Number of Qualified Applicants Turned Away	Type of Program											
	All Nursing Programs				ADN				BSN			
	2005	2006	2007	2009	2005	2006	2007	2009	2005	2006	2007	2009
1 – 20	29%	23%	25%	15%	34%	35%	30%	19%	23%	9%	20%	10%
21 – 40	6%	12%	13%	10%	7%	17%	18%	12%	5%	7%	7%	8%
41 – 60	8%	9%	5%	2%	7%	6%	5%	3%	3%	14%	4%	0%
61 – 80	4%	4%	2%	0%	4%	4%	4%	0%	5%	5%	0%	0%
81 or More	16%	10%	10%	14%	20%	11%	9%	14%	10%	9%	11%	15%

16. In 2009, the primary reason nursing education programs reported turning away qualified applicants was a limit on program admissions.

The majority of ADN and BSN programs that denied admission to qualified applicants cited limits on program admissions as the primary reason for doing so. Other reasons indicated by nursing education programs included lack of classroom space and lack of funding for faculty (Figure 11).

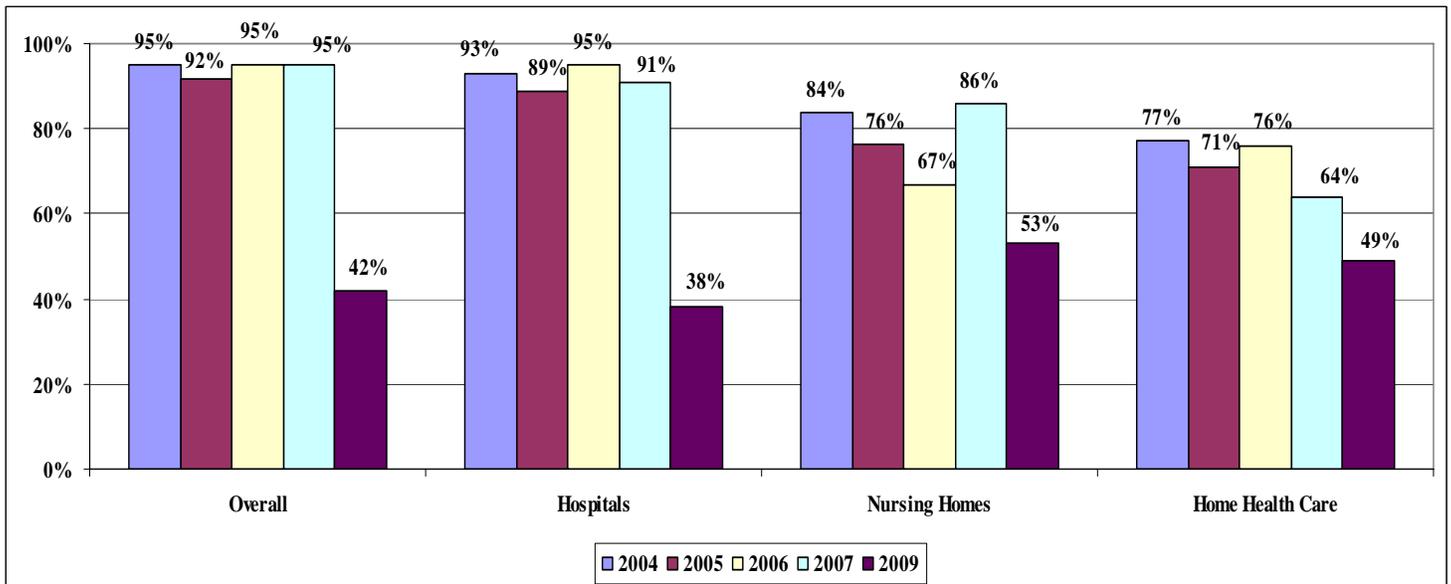
Figure 11
Reasons for Turning Away Qualified Applicants by Degree Program Type, 2009



17. Fewer nursing program directors reported “many jobs” available for new graduates.

The vast majority of nursing program directors consistently reported a strong job market for their graduates in the 2004 - 2007 surveys. However, in the 2009 survey, the percentage of program directors reporting “many jobs” for their graduates dropped by more than 50% (Figure 12).

Figure 12
Percent of RN Program Directors Reporting a Strong Job Market, 2004 - 2009



DISCUSSION

Both the supply of and demand for RNs have increased over the last decade. Until recently, the supply of RNs has not kept pace with demand for them. The current economic downturn has reduced the number of jobs available for newly-trained RNs and they now face a very competitive job market.

It is widely recognized that future demand for RNs is expected to continue to increase as the population grows and ages. Advances in technologies that require increased skills, a continuing focus on preventive health care services, and the aging of the nursing workforce will all contribute to increased demand. However, projections of future demand for RNs cannot easily account for future economic conditions or the impacts of health care reform, but both of these factors will affect the number of available nursing jobs and ultimately, the number of nurses available to fill them.

The short-term impacts of the economic downturn may have longer term consequences. If the job market for newly-trained RNs continues to be highly competitive, a possible market response to this perceived nursing surplus is a decline in interest in RN careers, leading to declines in RN enrollments and graduations. As a result, if the supply of RNs declines and the projections of future demand are accurate, then shortages will worsen.

It is important for planners and policy makers to recognize the potential consequence of a decline in the production of new RNs, given projected future demand. Nursing shortages of the 21st century may be driven by a much more extensive set of factors than previous shortages: an aging population projected to require more services, fewer young workers, an aging workforce, a lack of racial and ethnic diversity in nursing, expanded career choices for women, the challenging work environment of RNs, consumer activism, and efforts to reform the current health care delivery system. These potential nursing shortages could prove much harder to reverse given the broad array of factors that may contribute to them.