

New York Registered Nursing Graduations, 1996 – 2007

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PREFACE

This report summarizes the results of a survey of New York registered nursing (RN) education programs conducted by the New York Center for Health Workforce Studies (the Center) in the fall of 2005 and the spring of 2006. This survey, administered annually, asks questions related to RN graduations, applications, acceptances, barriers to expanding student capacity, and the job market in New York 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 they impact on the supply of RNs. The year 2005 was the sixth year of the survey.

This report was prepared at the New York Center for Health Workforce Studies by Robert Martiniano and Jean Moore. The Center is not-for-profit research center operating under the auspices of the School of Public Health at the University at Albany, State University of New York, and Health Research, Incorporated (HRI). 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 University at Albany, State University of New York, the School of Public Health, or HRI.

BACKGROUND

The Center for Health Workforce Studies (the Center) surveys registered nursing education programs in New York annually to better understand trends affecting the supply of registered nurses (RNs) in the state. The most recent survey was conducted in 2005. The brief survey included questions on applications, acceptances, and graduations for the current year as well as projected graduations through 2007. It also asks about barriers to admitting more students and perceptions about the job market for new RNs. This report summarizes the responses to the 2005 survey.

Of the 107 nursing programs in New York, 96 responded to the survey for a 90% response rate. Data for the 11 nonrespondents were imputed from responses to previous surveys; consequently, the following data reflect enrollments and graduations for all registered nursing programs in the state. It is important to note that *not all RN graduations represent new RNs* as many RNs who have completed an associate degree (ADN) or diploma program return to school to obtain a bachelor's degree in nursing (BSN). Based on survey responses, the Center estimates that approximately 33% of 2005 bachelor's degree graduates already were licensed as RNs, which means that approximately 12% of all RN program graduates in the state were previously licensed RNs.

While not every RN educated in New York will become licensed and practice 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 Registered Nurses indicated that more than 82% of RNs actively practicing in New York received their initial nursing degree in New York¹.

¹ 2004 National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

RN graduations in New York increased in 2005, rising by more than 800 graduations or 14% over 2004 graduations, the third consecutive annual increase. Additionally, RN graduations are expected to continue to rise in 2006 and 2007, with 2007 graduations 10% higher than in 1996.

An increasing number of nursing education programs reported turning away qualified applicants, primarily due to admission limits. Additionally, a growing percent of programs reported no increase in program acceptances, which may lead to a leveling off of RN graduations in the future.

KEY FINDINGS

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

It is estimated that nearly 7,000 individuals graduated from RN education programs in New York in 2005. This was the third successive year that RN graduations have increased, following six consecutive years of declines. This represents an increase in RN graduations of more than 36% since 2002, the year with the fewest number of graduates between 1996 and 2005 (Table 1 and Figure 1).

- 2. RN graduations are projected to continue to rise in 2006 and 2007.**

The number of RN graduations in 2006 is expected to be more than 53% higher than the number of RN graduations in 2002, and the number of RN graduations in 2007 is projected to be 65% higher than in 2002. With these anticipated increases, RN graduations in 2007 are expected to surpass RN graduations in 1996, when the number of nursing graduations was at an all time high for the state (Table 1 and Figure 1).

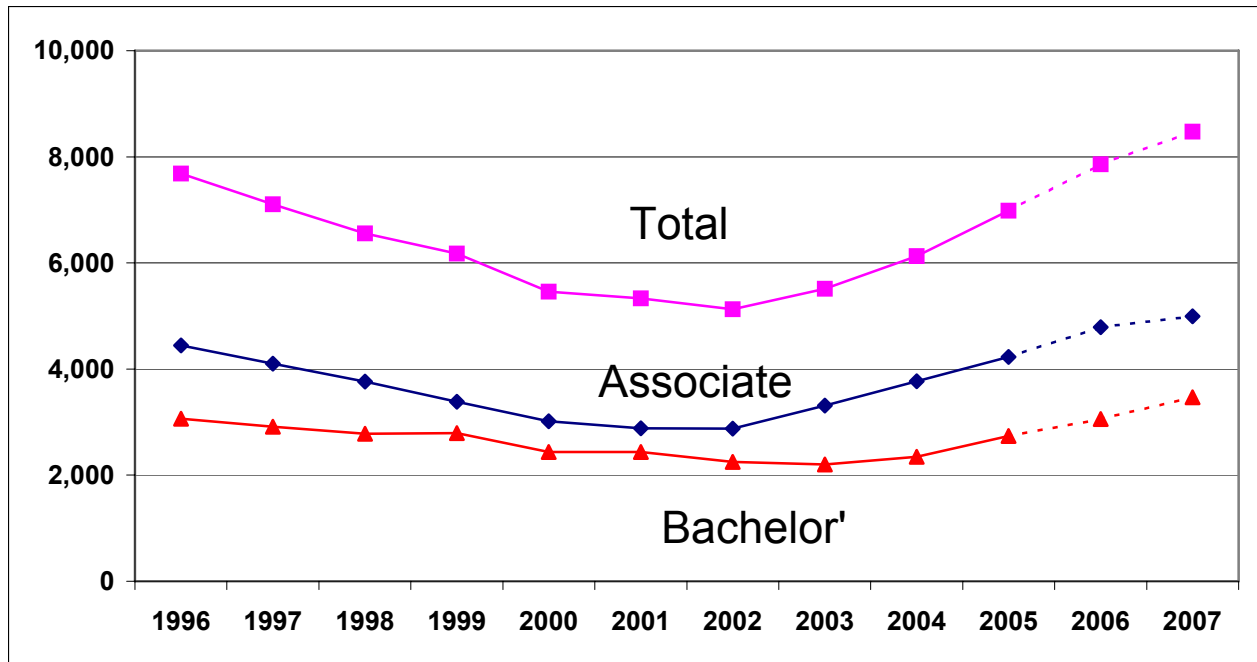
3. **The number of graduations from both ADN and BSN programs rose in 2005 and is projected to continue to rise through 2007.**

In 2005, both ADN and BSN degree graduations increased by 12% and 17%, respectively, over 2004 graduations. Graduations for both ADN and BSN programs are expected to continue to increase and to exceed 1996 ADN and BSN graduations (Table 1 and Figure 1).

Table 1
New York RN Graduations by Degree Type, 1996 to 2006

School Year		Degree Type			
		Associate	Bachelor's	Diplomas	Totals
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	3,770	2,344	11	6,125
	2005	4,231	2,739	14	6,984
Projected Graduations	2006	4,787	3,059	12	7,858
	2007	4,995	3,467	11	8,473

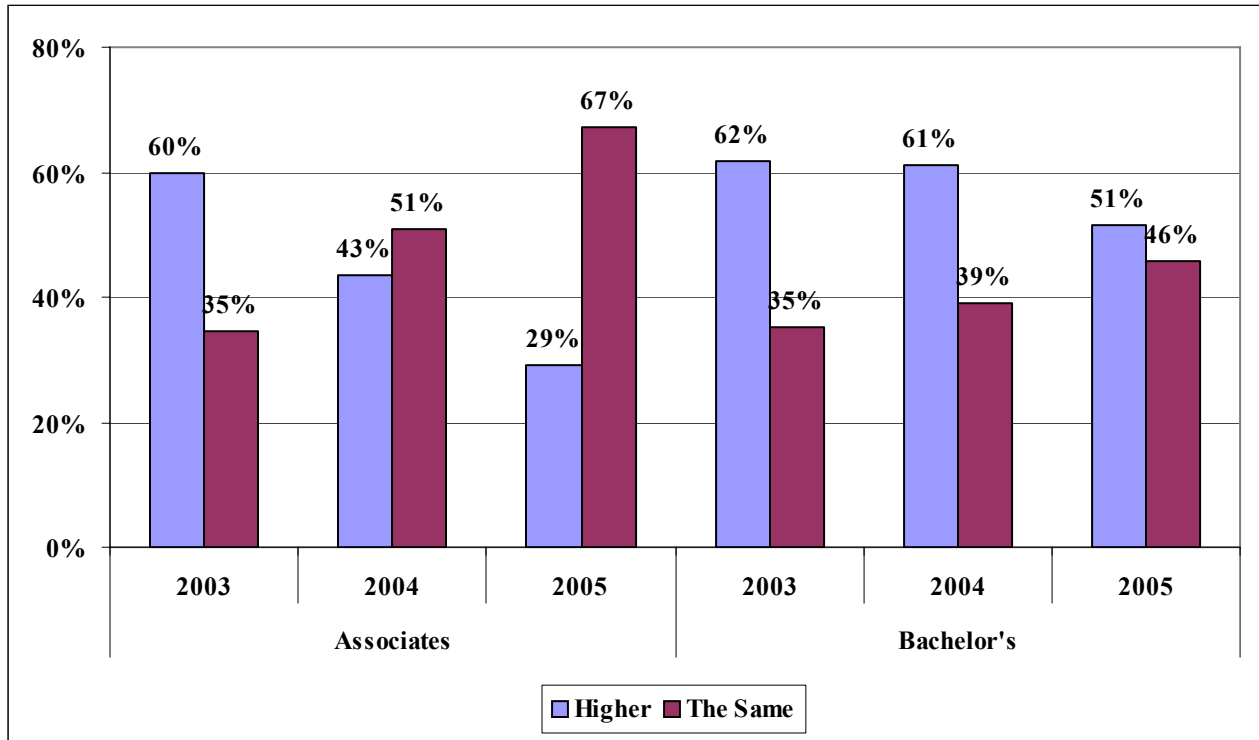
Figure 1
New York RN Graduations by Degree Type, 1996 to 2007



- 4. An increasing number of nursing education programs reported no growth in the number of admissions in 2005, compared to 2004.**

In 2005, a higher percent of nursing programs indicated that increases in acceptances into their programs had leveled off. In 2003, 35% of the ADN programs reported that acceptances had not grown from the previous year. By 2005, the percent of ADN programs reporting no growth in acceptances over the prior year grew to 67%. The percent of BSN programs reporting no growth in the number of acceptances over the previous year nearly doubled from 25% in 2004 to 46% in 2005 (Figure 2).

Figure 2
Percent Change in Number of Acceptances by Program Type, 2003 - 2005



5. Compared to 2003 and 2004, an increasing number of nursing programs reported turning away qualified applicants in 2005.

Sixty-seven percent of nursing programs reported turning away qualified applicants in 2005, compared to 57% in 2004 and 49% in 2003. ADN programs were more likely to turn away qualified applicants compared to BSN programs. Over three-fourths of ADN programs and one-half of BSN programs reported turning away qualified applicants in 2005.

Table 2
Percent of Respondents Reporting
Turning Away Qualified Applicants by Program Type

	2003	2004	2005
All Programs	49%	57%	67%
ADN	68%	73%	80%
BSN	26%	39%	50%

6. **It is estimated that an increasing number of qualified applicants were turned away in 2005 compared to 2003 and 2004.**

Both ADN and BSN programs reported turning away more qualified applicants in 2005 than in 2003 and 2004. The percent of nursing education programs that reported turning away 81 or more qualified applicants in 2005 nearly doubled compared to 2003. However, the percent of BSN programs that reported turning away qualified applicants remained relatively stable between 2003 and 2005, while the percent of ADN programs that reported turning away qualified applicants nearly tripled during the same period (Table 3). Based on survey responses, it is estimated that nearly 3,000 qualified applicants were turned away from New York nursing education programs in 2005. Since applicants may apply to more than one nursing education program, this number may not represent an unduplicated count of qualified applicants denied admission to nursing education programs in the state.

**Table 3
Number of Qualified Applicants Turned Away
by Program Type**

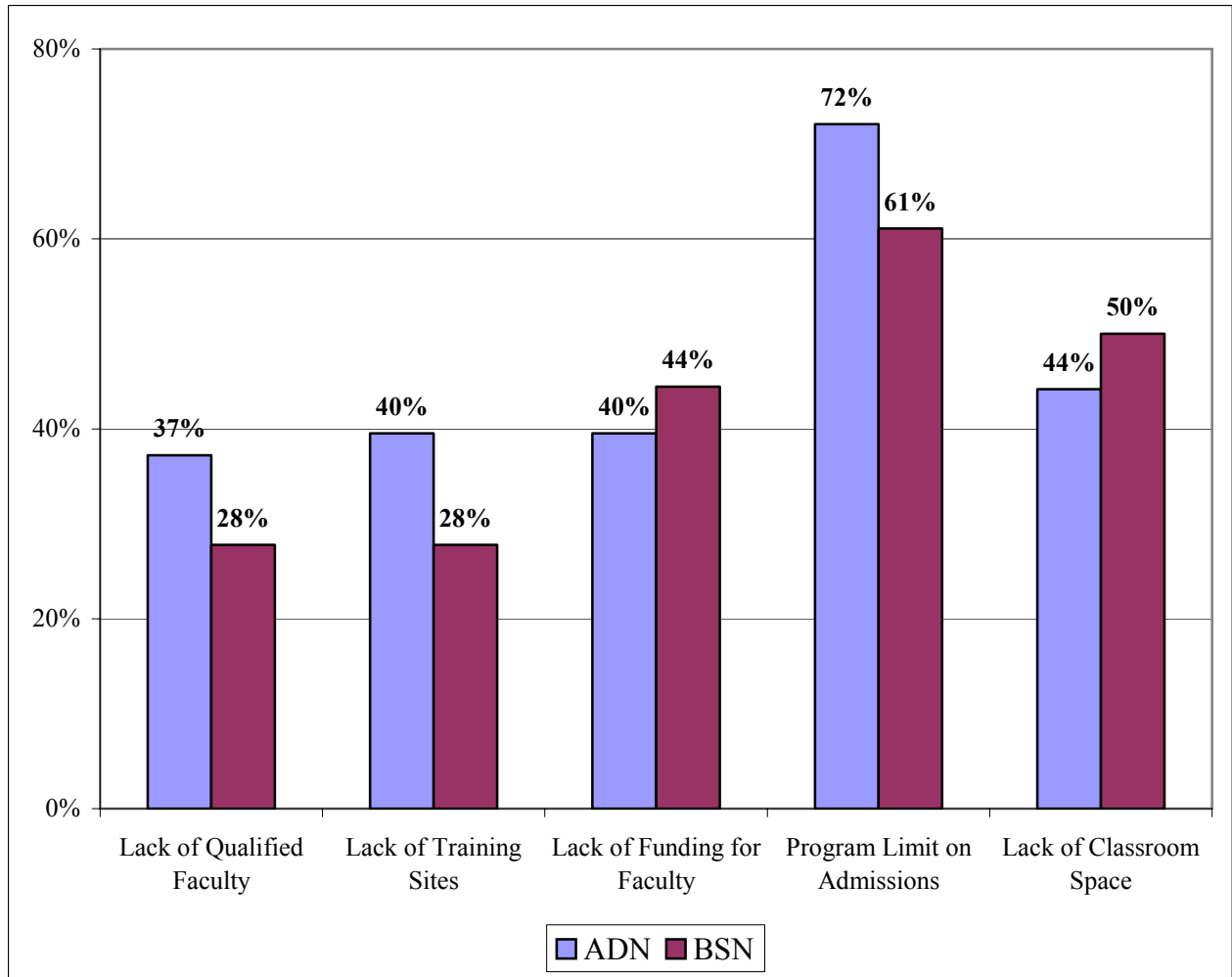
Number of Qualified Applicants Turned Away	Type of Program								
	All Nursing Programs			Associate Degree			Bachelor's Degree		
	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005
1 – 20	24%	26%	29%	35%	32%	34 %	6%	18%	23%
21 – 40	17%	10%	6%	21%	16%	7%	11%	0%	5%
41 – 60	0%	5%	8%	0%	4%	7%	0%	8%	3%
61 – 80	3%	5%	4%	5%	5%	4%	0%	5%	5%
81 or More	8%	13%	16%	7%	16%	20%	9%	8%	10%

7. **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 turned away qualified applicants cited limits on program admissions as the primary reason for doing so. A higher percent of ADN programs reported lack of clinical training sites and difficulty recruiting qualified faculty as additional

reasons for turning away qualified applicants, while a higher percent of BSN programs reported lack of classroom space and lack of funding to hire new faculty as additional reasons for turning away qualified applicants (Figure 3).

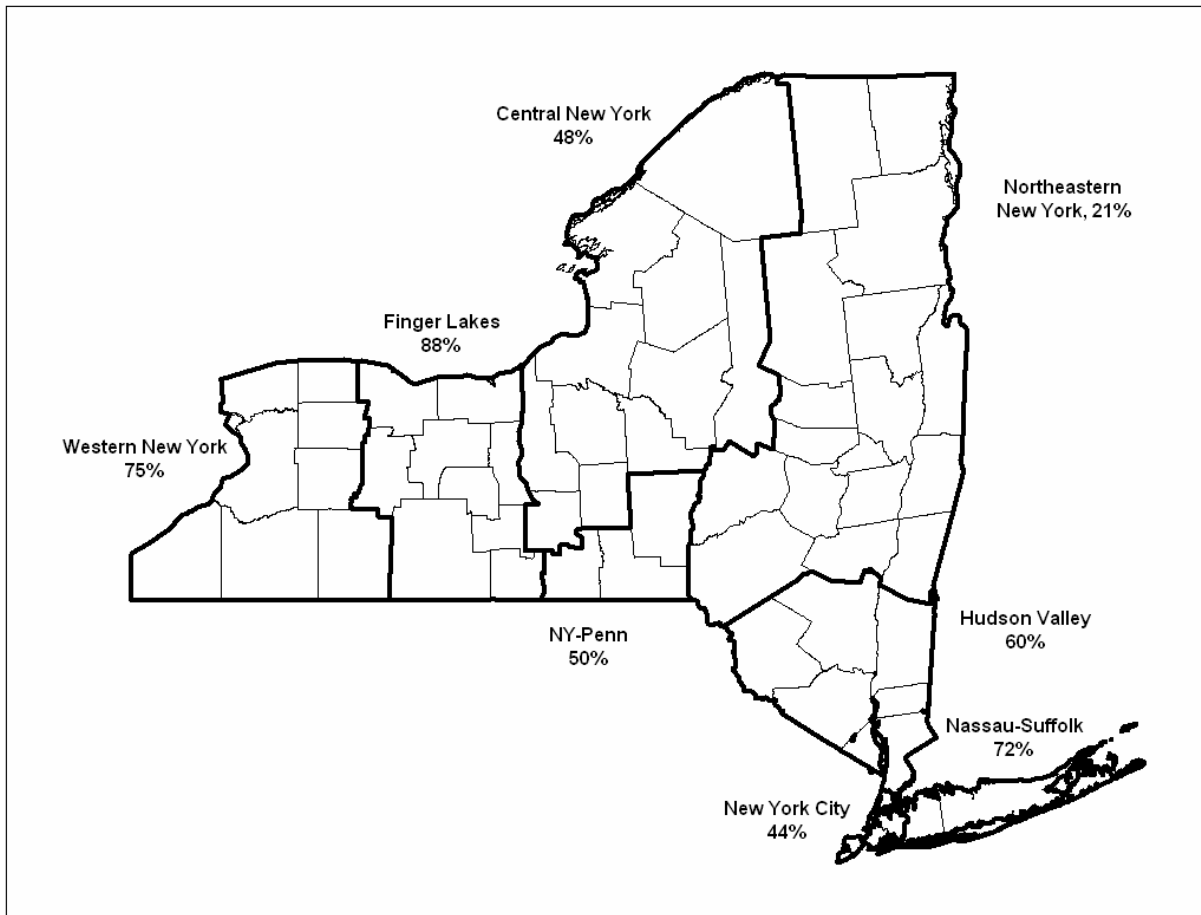
Figure 3
Reasons for Turning Away Qualified Applicants by Sponsorship and by Degree Type



8. Between 2003 and 2007, RN graduations are projected to increase in all regions of New York

All regions are projected to experience significant increases in RN graduations between 2003 and 2007, ranging from 21% in the Northeastern New York Region to 88% in the Finger Lakes Region. RN graduations in 2007 are projected to surpass 1996 RN graduations in six of the eight regions of the state (Figure 4 and Table 4).

**Figure 4
Projected Percentage Increase in RN Graduations, 2003 – 2007, by HSA Region**



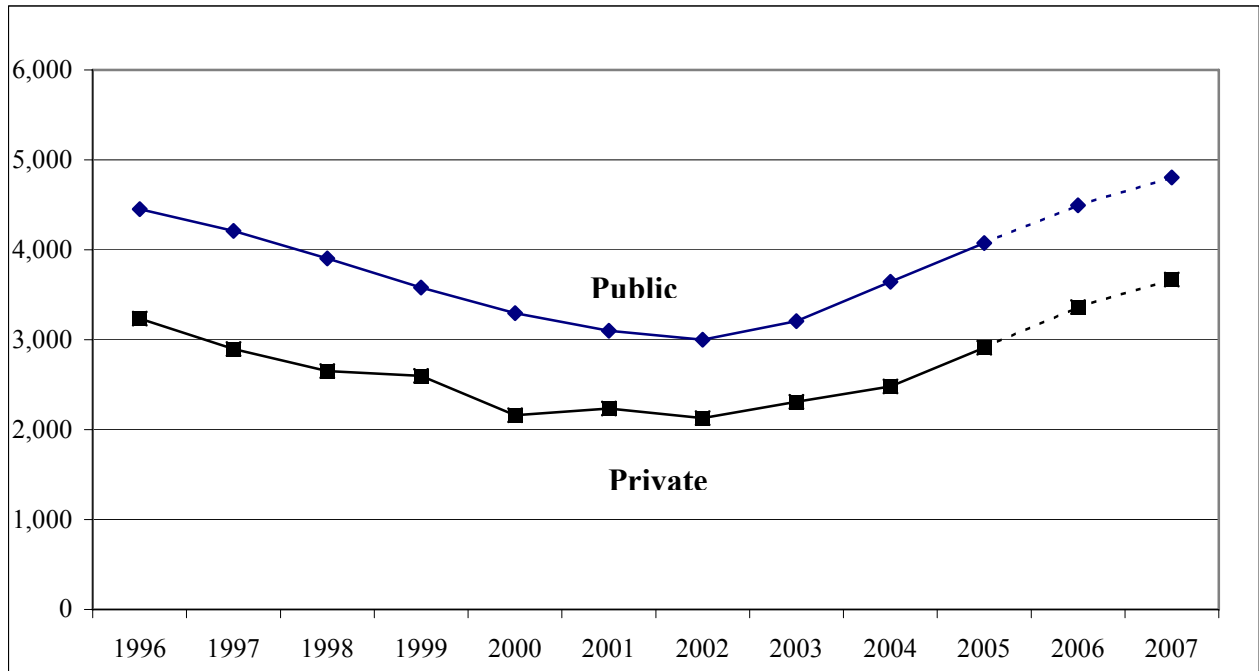
**Table 4
Percent Change in the Number of RN Graduations by Region**

Region	Graduations						Percent Change		
	1996	2003	2004	2005	Projected		96 to 03	03 to 07	96 to 07
					2006	2007			
Western New York	890	473	605	700	793	829	-46.9%	75.3%	-6.9%
Finger Lakes	654	482	536	682	751	906	-26.3%	88.0%	38.5%
Central NY	961	724	825	952	1,073	1,071	-24.7%	47.9%	11.4%
NY-Penn	92	50	50	70	60	75	-45.7%	50.0%	-18.5%
Northeastern NY	641	628	637	627	730	760	-2.0%	21.0%	18.6%
Hudson Valley	1,058	689	836	956	1,060	1,103	-34.9%	60.1%	4.3%
New York City	2,258	1,605	1,745	1,972	2,239	2,311	-28.9%	44.0%	2.3%
Long Island	937	795	837	953	1,102	1,368	-15.2%	72.1%	46.0%
Statewide Totals	7,685	5,513	6,125	6,984	7,858	8,473	-28.3%	53.7%	10.3%

9. In 2005, both publicly and privately sponsored RN education program graduations increased and are projected to continue increasing through 2007.

The number of RN graduations has been steadily growing since 2002, including an increase in 2005, in both publicly sponsored (State University of New York and City University of New York schools) and privately sponsored programs (including hospital based programs) and are projected to continue to grow through 2007. From 2002 through 2007, RN graduations from publicly sponsored programs are expected to increase 60%, while RN graduations from privately sponsored programs are expected to rise 72% (Figure 5).

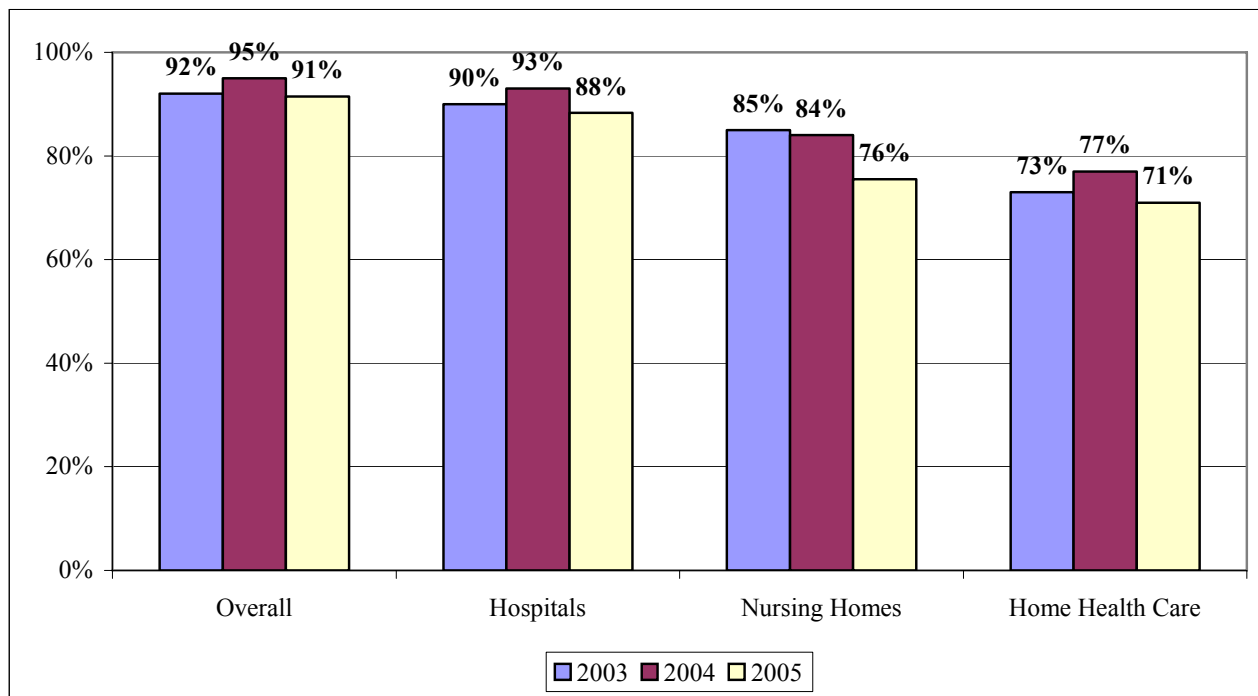
Figure 5
Change in RN Graduations in Public and Private Nursing Programs



10. The demand for newly trained RNs continues to remain strong.

The vast majority of New York nursing programs reported high demand for newly trained RNs in 2005. More than 90% of the respondents indicated that overall, many jobs were available for newly trained RNs. From 2003 to 2005, demand for newly trained RNs remained relatively constant in the hospital and home care sectors but declined slightly in the nursing home sector (Figure 6).

Figure 6
Demand for Newly Trained RNs between 2003 and 2005



DISCUSSION

While rising enrollments in RN education programs and renewed interest in nursing as a career have fueled an increase in RN graduations, the production of new RNs has barely offset exits from the profession, primary due to retirement. There were more than 34,500 RN graduations in the state between 2000 and 2005, but the number of licensed RNs grew by only 11,200. Capacity limits reported by the nursing education programs coupled with an aging RN workforce suggests that production will not keep pace with exits, and RN shortages in New York are likely to worsen.

The federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) forecasts that between 2004 and 2014, 1.2 million RN job openings will occur in the United States². New York currently employs approximately 7.3% of the active nursing workforce, and it will need to produce nearly 88,000 *new* RNs over

² Daniel E. Hecker, *Occupational Employment Projections to 2014*, Monthly Labor Review, U.S. Department of Labor, November 2005.

that same 10-year period, or 8,800 per year, to meet BLS projections. With an estimated 12% of RN graduates already holding an RN license, New York would actually have to graduate 10,000 RNs per year to produce 8,800 new RNs, significantly more than are currently being produced.

One factor affecting future production of RNs is the ability of nursing programs to expand program capacity. The 2005 survey found that more New York nursing programs were at capacity and more than 60% indicated they were not accepting additional qualified candidates because of admission limits. It will be critical to remove potential barriers to expanding program capacity in order for RN education programs to admit more students into their programs.