

Using Mandatory NP Data to Understand the Process for Collecting Workforce Data and Disseminating Findings

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The Center for Health Workforce Studies at the University at Albany, SUNY

- Established in 1996
- A center of the UAlbany School of Public Health
- Committed to collecting and analyzing data to understand workforce dynamics and trends
- Goal to inform public policies, the health and education sectors and the public
- Broad array of funders in support of health workforce research

Survey Background

- Effective January 1, 2015, all Nurse Practitioners (NPs) in New York were required by law to provide information on themselves and practice characteristics at the time of recertification (every 3 years)
- A short survey was developed based on federal minimum data set for NPs
- Additional questions were added about relationships with collaborating physicians
- The survey was embedded in the online NP recertification materials
- The survey was modified in October 2017

Data Collection

- Data collection began on September 1, 2015
- Starting in January 2016, survey data were downloaded every 3 months
- Initial data set created for data collected between September 1, 2015 and December 31, 2016
- Second data set created for data collected between September 1, 2015 through December 31, 2017
- NPs who were not actively practicing were excluded from analysis

Problems Encountered

- Identifying unique NPs
- Identifying active NPs
- Identifying primary care
 - Practice setting
 - Practice specialty
- License number vs. certification number
- Combining data from two versions of the surveys

Counting Unique NPs

- Used a combination of variables to identify unique NPs
 - RN license number
 - NP New York State certification number
 - NPI number
 - E-mail address
- Multiple certifications
 - NPs in New York State certified in 1 or more of 16 specialties. Need separate certification for each
- Duplicate submissions for the same certification
- Bad/missing data

What is an “Active NP”?

Problems with Defining “Active NP”

- Inconsistency among variables/missing data
 - Only indicated “retired” but reported NP hours
 - Only indicated “working in a position requiring NP certification” but reported no hours
 - Only Indicate “working in position requiring RN license” (and not NP certification) but reported NP hours

What is an “Active” NP?

Defined “active” using a combination of variables

- NP Status (mark all that apply)
 - Working in a position requiring an NP certification
 - Working in a position requiring RN licensure
 - Working but neither as RN nor NP
 - Volunteering in a position requiring an NP certification
 - Not currently working
 - Retired

What is an “Active” NP?

- Average hours worked by activity
 - Primary care
 - Other patient care
- Patient care hours by practice location
- Primary practice setting may be non-clinical and/or out of New York State but secondary practice setting may be clinical and in New York State

Data Collection

Define Active NPs in New York State

Category	Count
Surveys Received	14,172
Duplicate Submissions	- 1,495
Out of State NPs	- 982
Inactive NPs	- 1,708
Active NPs practicing in New York	9,987

28 months of data. September 1, 2015 through December 31, 2017

How Many NPs are Providing Primary Care?

- Use HRSA shortage area designation definitions
 - Ambulatory care settings
 - Primary care specialties of the practice
- NP Certification irrelevant
 - NPs in NYS can be certified in one or more of 16 specialties
 - Not clear which one is primary
- Can “mark all that apply” for specialty of physician or independent NP practice. Not clear which one is primary.
- Missing/inaccurate data on setting.

“Licensing” NPs in New York State

- NPs are licensed as RNs and certified as NPs
 - Use of terminology was confusing
 - Asked for certification number
 - NP may list national association certification number
- License number can be 6, 8, and 9 digits (asked for 6 digits)
 - Profession code = 2
 - License number = 6
 - Office code = 1

“Don’t Change Horses in Midstream”

- After 2 plus years of data collection, updated survey
 - Certification
 - Practice Setting
 - Format of license number
- Needed to reformat certain variables for data collected September 1, 2015 to September 30, 2017.
- Data conversion of the older data was necessary

Lessons Learned

- “Mark all that apply” can be problematic
- Definitions matter
 - License versus certification
 - What is “Active”
- Formatting variables can be problematic
- Identify problems before survey goes live

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Questions?

- For more information, please contact me at:

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