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

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Building Bridges and Breaking Down Barriers: Diversity, Inclusion, and the Health Workforce

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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

www.chwsny.org
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

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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

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What is an “Active” NP?

Defined “active” using a combination of variables

• NP Status (mark all that apply)
  o Working in a position requiring an NP certification
  o Working in a position requiring RN licensure
  o Working but neither as RN nor NP
  o Volunteering in a position requiring an NP certification
  o Not currently working
  o Retired
What is an “Active” NP?

• Average hours worked by activity
  o Primary care
  o 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

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## Define Active NPs in New York State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surveys Received</td>
<td>14,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplicate Submissions</td>
<td>- 1,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of State NPs</td>
<td>- 982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inactive NPs</td>
<td>- 1,708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active NPs practicing in New York</td>
<td>9,987</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28 months of data. September 1, 2015 through December 31, 2017
How Many NPs are Providing Primary Care?

• Use HRSA shortage area designation definitions
  o Ambulatory care settings
  o Primary care specialties of the practice

• NP Certification irrelevant
  o NPs in NYS can be certified in one or more of 16 specialties
  o 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.

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“Licensing” NPs in New York State

• NPs are licensed as RNs and certified as NPs
  o Use of terminology was confusing
  o Asked for certification number
  o NP may list national association certification number

• License number can be 6, 8, and 9 digits
  (asked for 6 digits)
  o Profession code = 2
  o License number = 6
  o Office code = 1
“Don’t Change Horses in Midstream”

• After 2 plus years of data collection, updated survey
  o Certification
  o Practice Setting
  o 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
  o License versus certification
  o What is “Active”

• Formatting variables can be problematic

• Identify problems before survey goes live
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Questions?

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