Trends in New York Registered Nurse Graduations, 2002-2018

Maaisa Cleaves, BS, Robert Martiniano, DrPH
Center for Health Workforce Studies, School of Public Health, University at Albany

ABSTRACT

Purpose Statement: The purpose of this study is to document trends in registered nursing (RN) graduations in New York and potential impacts on the supply of RNs in the state.

Key Findings: There were over 9,200 RN graduations from New York's nursing education programs in 2018, representing a slight rise in RN production compared to the previous year.

Between 2011 and 2018, graduations from associate degree (ADN) nursing programs declined by 12%, while graduations from BSN programs rose by nearly 36% over the same time period.

Nursing program deans and directors reported caps on admissions to their nursing education programs as the main reason for turning away qualified applicants.

Deans and directors reported that the job market for newly trained RNs has improved over the last few years, with some variation by degree type and region.

Conclusion: The production of New RNs in New York remains robust. However, it is unclear how this important educational pipeline may be impacted by changing educational requirements, program capacity constraints and pandemic-related disruptions. Given these issues, it is important to continue to monitor trends in the production of new RNs to assure a sufficient supply to meet the continuing demand for RN services in the state.

View the Report

CONTACT

Center for Health Workforce Studies
518-402-0250
info@chwsny.org
www.chwsny.org

INTRODUCTION

- Registered nursing is one of the largest licensed health professions in New York State and the nation

- The number of registered nurses (RNs) in the health workforce has grown substantially over the past decade and is projected to continue to grow

- It is widely recognized that New York's RN education programs are a key source of RNs for the state

- In 2017, New York passed a law known as 'BSN in 10,' requiring that newly trained RNs with an associate's degree in nursing (ADN) obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing (BSN) within 10 years of initial licensure

- These changing educational requirements suggest that in addition to monitoring the production of newly trained RNs, it is important to assess efforts by the state's licensed ADNs in obtaining BSN degrees (ie, BSN completers)

- The COVID-19 pandemic contributed to disruptions in the educational pipeline for RN students, particularly as it related to the timely completion of clinical rotations

METHODS

- The Center for Health Workforce Studies (CHWS) surveys the state's RN education program deans and directors annually to monitor the production of RNs in the state as well as assess the job market for newly trained RNs

- The most recent survey was conducted in the fall of 2018 through the spring of 2019

- The survey included questions about the number of RN graduations over the last 4 years, applications and acceptances to the nursing program, barriers to expanding program capacity, and perspectives on the local job market for new RN graduates

- Of the 123 nursing education programs in the state, 108 responded to the survey for an 88% response rate
  - This included 92% of ADN programs and 83% of BSN programs

- Data for non-respondents were imputed based on responses to previous surveys
  - As a result, the report presents estimated total graduations for all RN programs in the state

RESULTS

- The number of new RN graduates continues to rise slowly, driven by graduations from BSN nursing education programs (Figure 1)
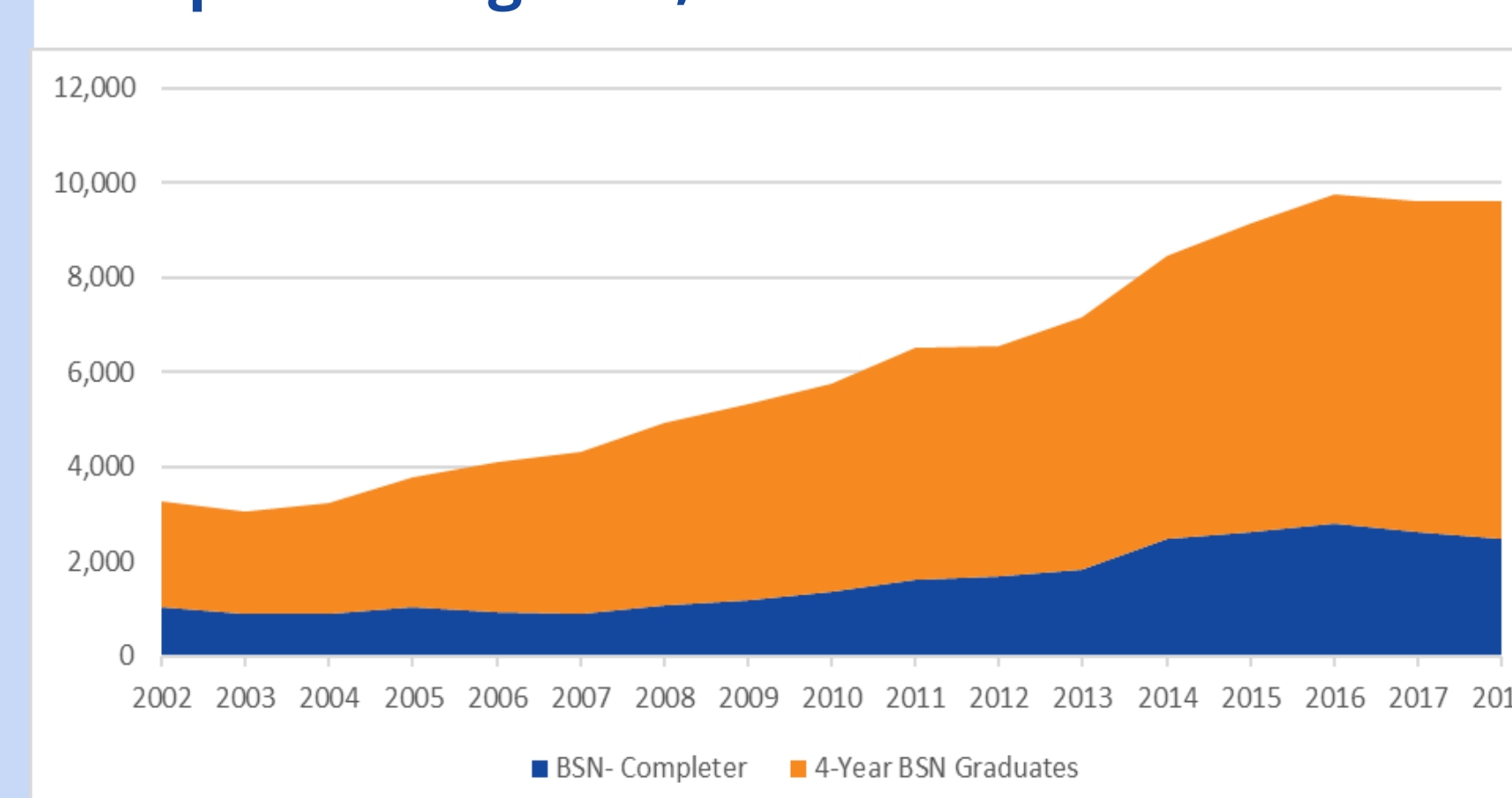
RESULTS (cont.)

Figure 1. The Annual Number of New Graduates from NY RN Education Programs by Degree Type, 2002-2018
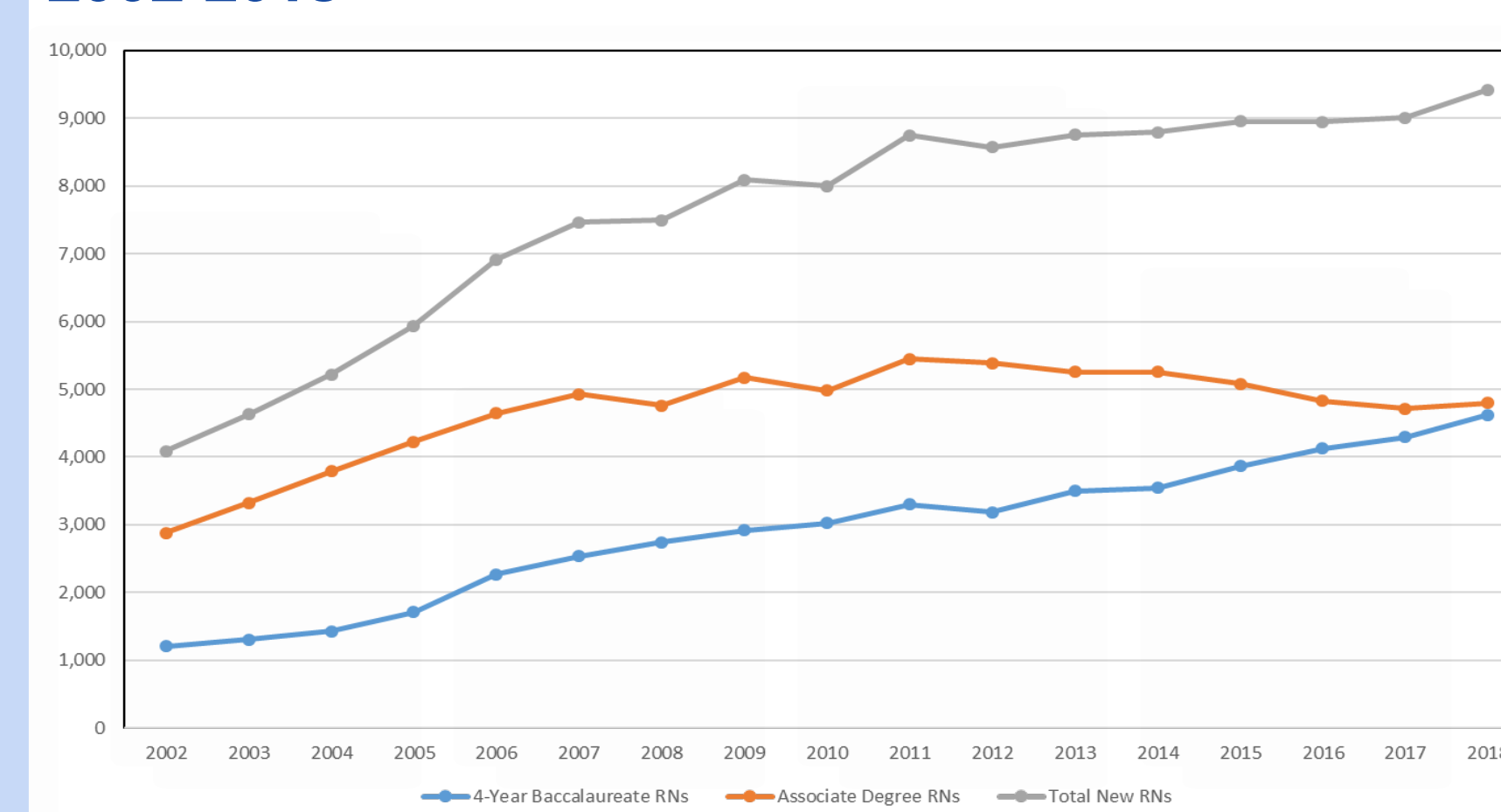

- BSN completers as a percentage of total BSN graduates declined by 6% between 2014 and 2018 (Figure 2)

Figure 2. Graduations from BSN 4-year and BSN Completer Programs, 2002-2018

- RN education program deans and directors reported caps on admissions as the main reason for turning away qualified applications (Figure 3)
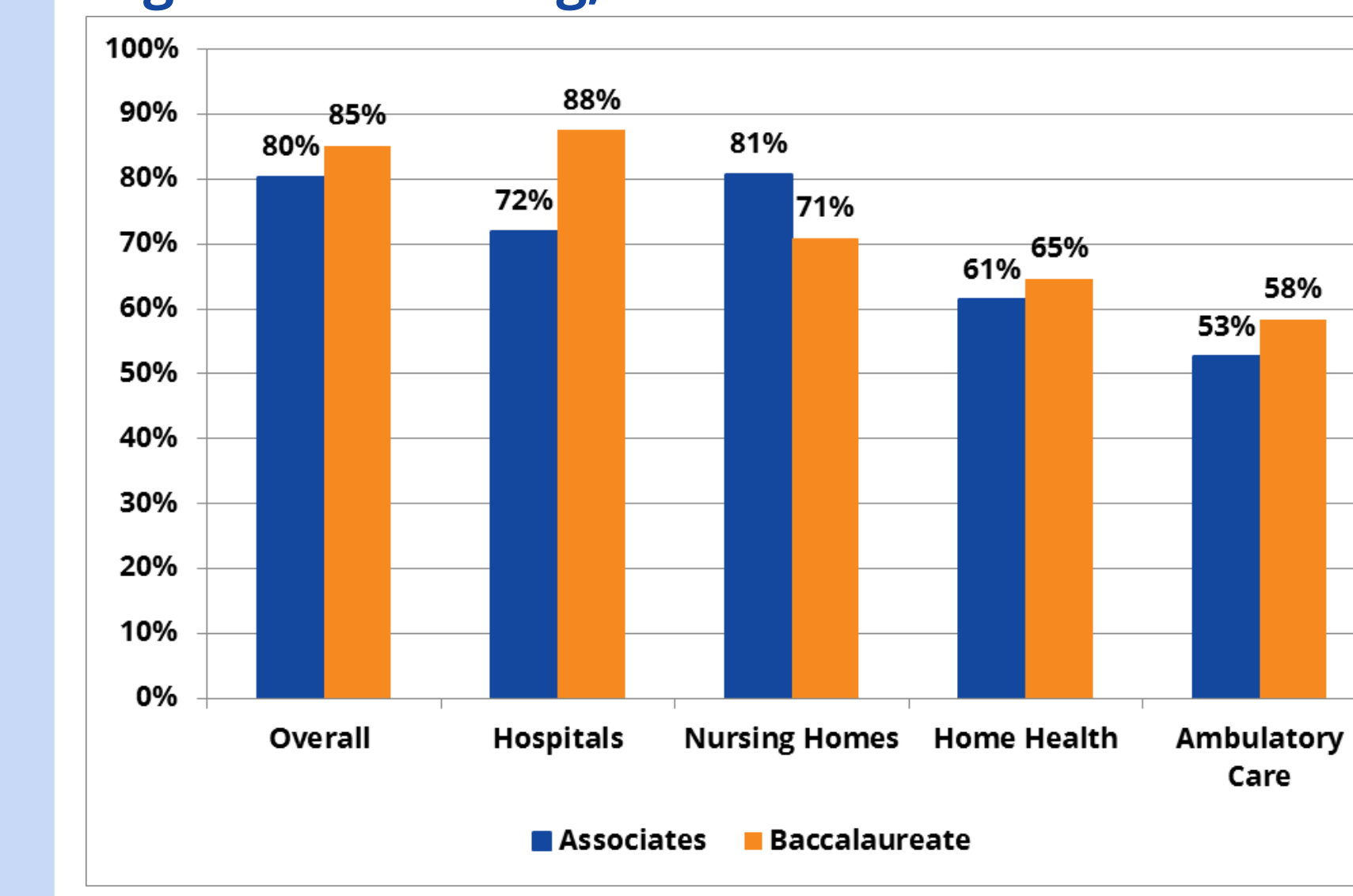
Figure 3. Reasons for Turned Away Qualified Applicants, by Degree, 2018
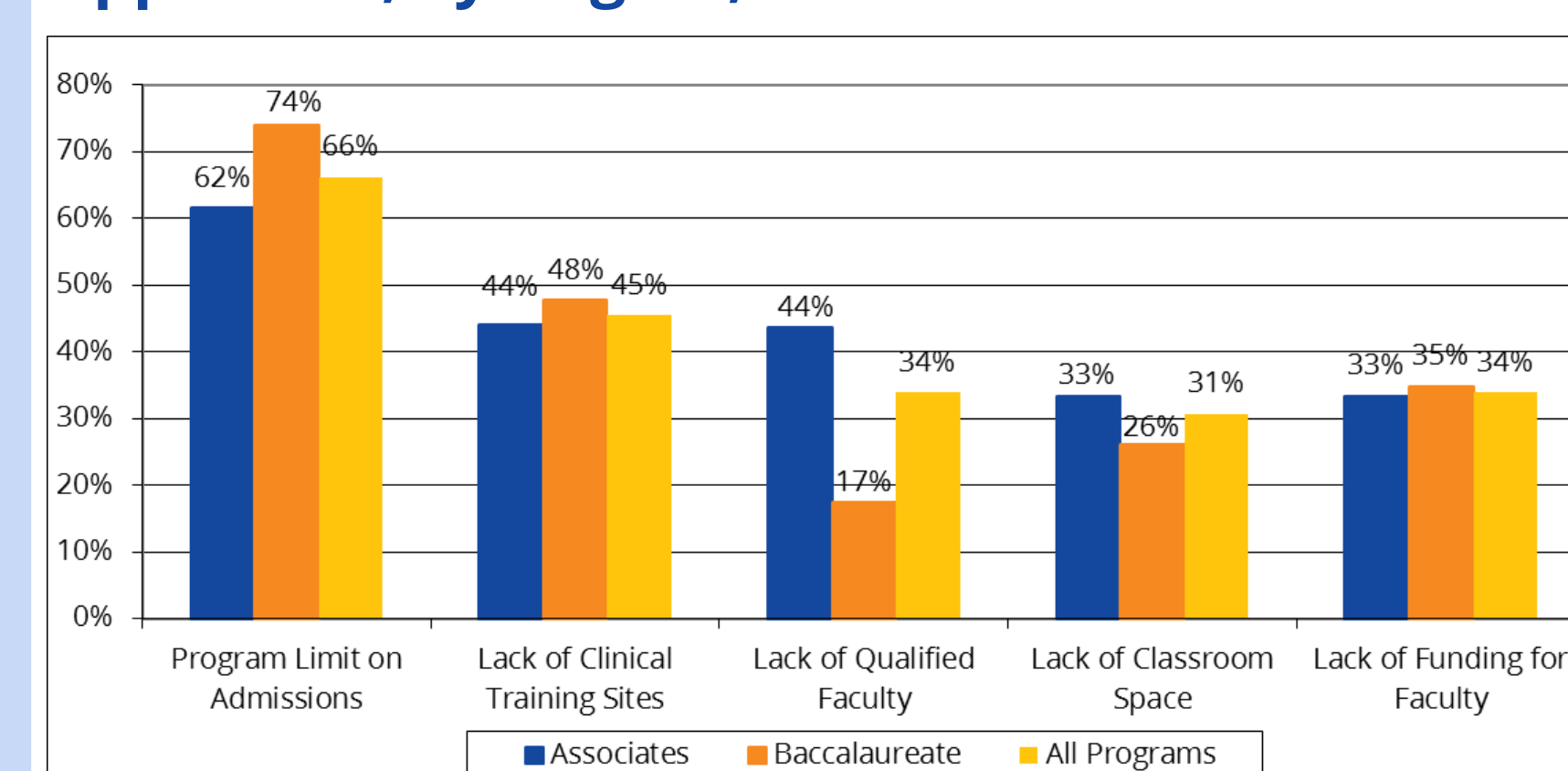
- The new RN job market appears somewhat stronger for BSN graduates compared to ADN graduates (Figure 4)

RESULTS (cont.)

Figure 4. Percentage of RN Deans and Directors Reporting "Many Jobs" for New Graduates, by Degree and Setting, 2018

DISCUSSION

- New York's nursing education programs continue to produce a relatively large number of new RNs, but growth is slowing

- Graduations from the state's BSN programs are outpacing ADN graduates for the first time in 2018

- In addition to admission caps, nursing deans and directors cited lack of clinical training sites as a barrier to expanding program capacity

- The RN job market appeared to be somewhat stronger for newly trained BSNs than ADNs
  - More deans and directors of BSN programs reported "many jobs" for their graduates in hospitals, while more deans and directors of ADN programs reported "many jobs" for their graduates in nursing homes

CONCLUSIONS

- The number of new RNs trained in NY has grown substantially over the past decade

- There has been modest growth in production of new RNs recently, driven by an increase in the number of BSN graduates

- Deans and directors of RN education programs report that the job market for newly trained RNs is relatively strong, particularly in upstate regions

- Continued monitoring of the state's RN education programs is critical to understanding impacts of changing RN licensure requirements and the COVID-19 pandemic, among others on the production of RNs in the state