Trends in New York Registered Nurse Graduations, 2015-2024

CHWS
Center for Health Workforce Studies

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March 2026

PREFACE

For 25 years, the Center for Health Workforce Studies (CHWS) has conducted an annual survey of the deans and directors of New York's registered nurse (RN) education programs. The survey asks about nursing program applications, admissions, faculty recruitment and retention issues, barriers to program expansion, and assessment of the local job market for new graduates. In addition to presenting results from the 2025 survey, this report documents trends in RN production at regional and state levels using graduation data provided by the New York State Education Department, with missing data supplemented by other sources.

This report was prepared by CHWS staff, Robert Martiniano and Jean Moore, and funded by the Evidence Based Clinical Research Collaboration Program of the State University of New York.

The Center for Health Workforce Studies, based at the University at Albany's College of Integrated Health Sciences, produces timely, accurate information and conducts policy-relevant research about the health workforce. Since 1996, the work of the Center has supported and informed health workforce planning and policymaking at local, regional, state, and national levels. Today, the Center is a trusted leader in the field of health workforce studies.

The views expressed in this report are those of CHWS and do not necessarily represent positions or policies of the College of Integrated Health Sciences or the University at Albany.

March 2026

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INTRODUCTION

Registered nursing is the largest licensed healthcare occupation in the United States and in New York State (NYS), and registered nurses (RNs) provide care across a variety of healthcare settings.[1,2] Healthcare providers report continued difficulties recruiting and retaining RNs, including providers in NYS.[3,4] There continues to be a maldistribution of RNs, with most active RNs working in urban areas of the State, while just under 12% percent work in rural areas,* compared to 16.2% of NYS' population[†].[5] Additionally, while there have been improvements in nursing workforce diversity in the recent past, Hispanic/Latinx RNs are underrepresented in the nursing workforce compared to their presence in the State's population (8.4% vs 19.8%*).[5] Expanding and better distributing a diverse nursing workforce can improve access to culturally competent care and contribute to better patient outcomes.[6]

RN production in NYS has remained relatively steady over the last 5 years, with a slight increase in the number of new RN graduations between 2020 and 2024. Despite that stability, the State's RN education programs face many challenges in their effort to maintain production. NYS nursing deans and directors (deans) report challenges in their efforts to maintain or expand capacity, including difficulty filling vacant faculty positions and continued difficulty securing clinical placement sites. Lack of resources for nursing programs restricts efforts to maintain or expand capacity, with more than 50% of deans reporting limits on the number of students they can admit.

The purpose of this study is to assess the State's RN education pipeline and to identify barriers and facilitators to the production of RNs. This annual survey of deans provides critical information that can help stakeholders better address issues and challenges that impact the production of new RNs.

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* Percentages compiled from the American Community Survey for RNs working in NYS, including those living in the surrounding states of CT, MA, NJ, PA, and VT.

† Using Ebert's Typology, active RNs from the NYS re-registration survey were distributed to rural and urban counties and compared to the county populations taken from the US Census Bureau on 3/2/2026 at https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-counties-total.html.

METHODS

The Center for Health Workforce Studies (CHWS)—with assistance from RN program deans and Deborah Elliott from the Center for Nursing—developed and conducted the annual survey of RN education programs across NYS in the spring and fall of 2025. The survey asked questions on:

- Changes in applications and acceptances between academic years 2023-2024 (2024) and 2024-2025 (2025)
- Whether qualified students were turned away and the reasons why
- Strategies for meeting clinical training requirements, including use of simulation
- Current faculty vacancies and reasons for those vacancies
- Strategies for recruiting and retaining faculty
- Perceptions of the regional job market for new graduates

RN graduation data was provided by the New York State Education Department (NYSED), with missing data supplemented by the National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), and the City University of New York (CUNY) 2024 Nursing Degree Programs Report. Additionally, Excelsior University provided information on the individuals living in NYS who graduated from their program. Findings from the survey on graduations are reported by degree and by sponsor. Graduations are also reported statewide and by NYS Department of Labor (DOL) region. There was a 57% total response rate to the survey including 50% from Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) programs and 63% from Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs. The response rate by sponsor included 63% from CUNY programs, 58% from State University of New York (SUNY) programs, and 54% from programs in private schools.

The DOL regions used in this report are broken out by county as listed below:

- **Capital District:** Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren, and Washington
- **Central New York:** Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, and Oswego
- **Finger Lakes:** Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates
- **Hudson Valley:** Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester
- **Long Island:** Nassau and Suffolk
- **Mohawk Valley:** Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego, and Schoharie
- **New York City:** Bronx, Kings (Brooklyn), New York (Manhattan), Queens, and Richmond (Staten Island)
- **North Country:** Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence
- **Southern Tier:** Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, and Tompkins
- **Western New York:** Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, and Niagara

FINDINGS

Registered Nurse Graduations

RN graduations remain steady.

RN Graduations by Region

Between 2020 and 2024, new RN graduations[‡] (RN graduations) in New York State remained steady, with some variation by geographic region **(Table 1)**. The Hudson Valley, Mohawk Valley, and Western New York regions experienced increases in RN graduations between 2020 and 2024, while the remaining regions experienced declines over the same time period. Online programs also saw an increase in RN graduations.

TABLE 1. RN Graduations in New York State, Total and by Region, 2020-2024

Region	School Year					% of NYS RN Graduations	2020-2024	
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024		Number	Percent
Capital District	515	505	520	508	486	4.7%	-29	-5.7%
Central NY	505	530	449	402	424	4.1%	-81	-20.1%
Finger Lakes	901	783	884	895	822	8.0%	-79	-8.8%
Hudson Valley	919	1,144	1,305	1,222	1,107	10.8%	188	15.4%
Long Island	1,513	1,512	1,585	1,346	1,363	13.3%	-150	-11.1%
Mohawk Valley	374	339	318	343	443	4.3%	69	20.1%
New York City	3,863	3,907	3,945	3,752	3,840	37.3%	-23	-0.6%
North Country	355	345	299	300	321	3.1%	-34	-11.3%
Southern Tier	414	420	346	376	368	3.6%	-46	-12.2%
Western NY	756	983	950	932	841	8.2%	85	9.1%
Online Only	138	235	145	189	271	2.6%	133	70.4%
Grand Total	**10,253**	**10,703**	**10,746**	**10,265**	**10,286**	**100.0%**	**33**	**0.3%**

Sources: New York State Education Department; National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS); the City University of New York 2025 Nursing Degree Programs Report; Excelsior University.

[‡] RN graduations that qualify the individuals for licensure, including RN diplomas, ADNs, BSNs, and master's degrees.

RN Graduations by Degree

Both ADN[§] and BSN[ǁ] graduations grew between 2014 and 2024 **(Figure 1)**. Overall since 2014, RN graduations have increased by 14%. Between 2014 and 2024, ADN graduations grew by only 2%, while BSN graduations increased by 31%.

FIGURE 1. RN Graduations in New York State, Total and by Degree Type, 2014-2024
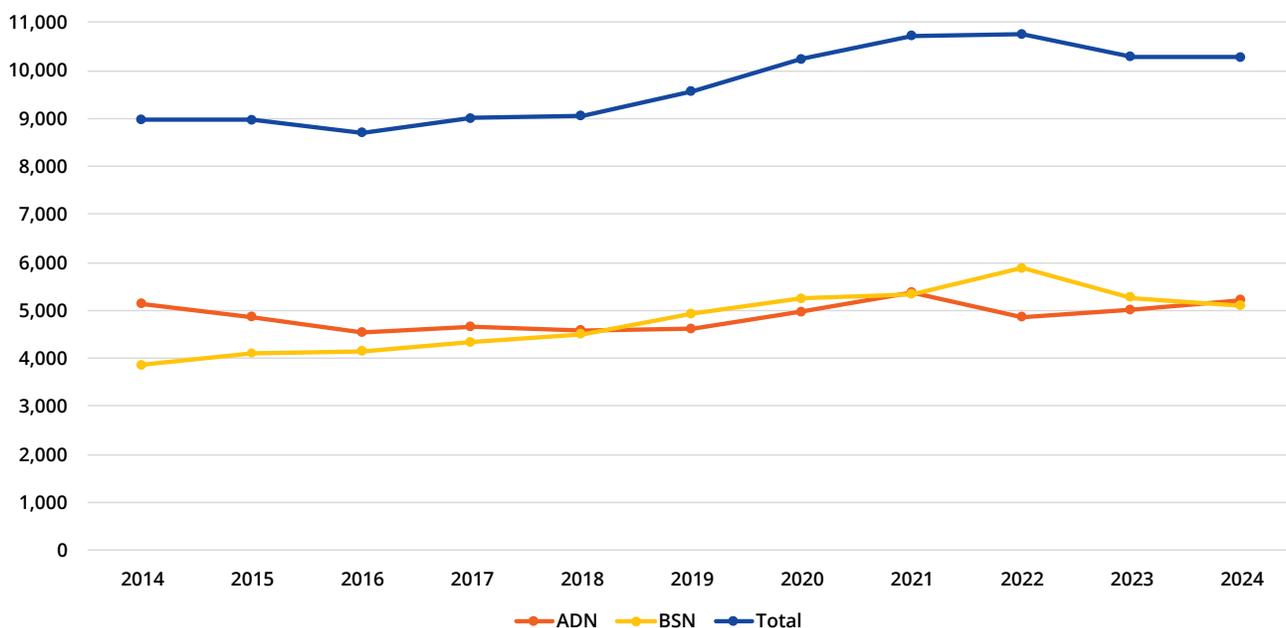

Sources: New York State Education Department; National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS); the City University of New York 2025 Nursing Degree Programs Report; Excelsior University.

[§] Includes RN Diploma graduations.

[ǁ] Includes MSN graduations that led to initial licensure.

RN Graduations by Sponsor

RN graduations from both CUNY and SUNY nursing programs declined between 2014 and 2024 **(Figure 2)**. In contrast, RN graduations from privately sponsored programs increased by 36% during the same time period.

FIGURE 2. RN Graduations in New York State, Total and by Sponsor, 2014-2024

Sources: New York State Education Department; National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS); the City University of New York 2025 Nursing Degree Programs Report; Excelsior University.
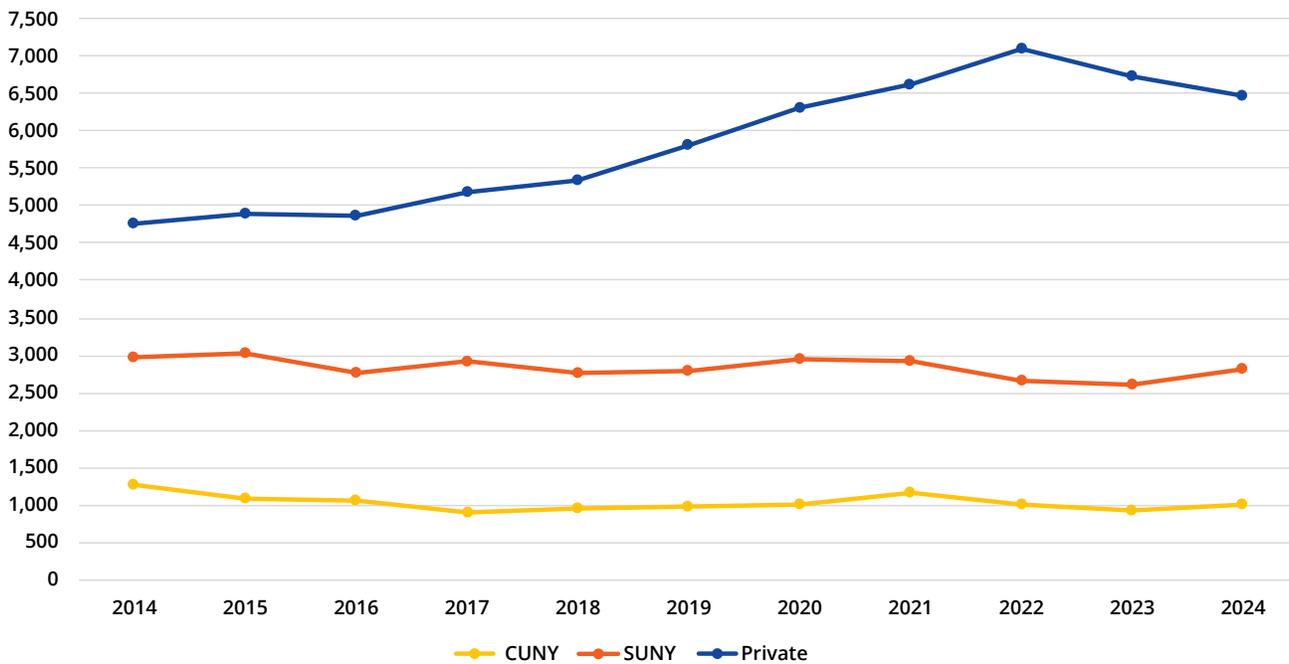
BSN Completer Graduations by Region

RN-to-BSN graduations (BSN completer) declined by 36% between 2014 and 2024 **(Table 2)**, led by large decreases in the Finger Lakes and New York City regions.

TABLE 2. BSN Completer Graduations in New York State, Total and by Region, 2020-2024

Region	School Year					2020-2024	
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Number	Percent
Capital District	32	66	56	82	70	38	118.8%
Central NY	108	105	136	114	112	4	3.7%
Finger Lakes	348	264	432	211	173	-175	-50.3%
Hudson Valley	33	34	28	20	14	-19	-57.6%
Long Island	118	112	95	71	50	-68	-57.6%
Mohawk Valley	139	103	96	55	50	-89	-64.0%
New York City	672	631	563	507	398	-274	-40.8%
North Country	97	82	83	51	55	-42	-43.3%
Southern Tier	232	283	252	239	183	-49	-21.1%
Western NY	283	297	230	216	211	-72	-25.4%
Online Only	194	192	156	135	120	-74	-38.1%
Grand Total	**2,256**	**2,169**	**2,127**	**1,701**	**1,436**	**-820**	**-36.3%**

Sources: New York State Education Department; the City University of New York 2025 Nursing Degree Programs Report; Excelsior University.

Applications and Acceptances

Deans reported increases in both applications and acceptances between 2023 and 2025.

A higher percentage of deans reported increases in both applications and acceptances in 2025, compared to 2023 **(Figures 3 and 4)**. More than half of ADN and BSN deans reported that acceptances were about the same between 2023 and 2025 **(Figure 4)**.

FIGURE 3. Changes in Number of Applications to New York State RN Education Programs, by Degree Type, 2018-2025
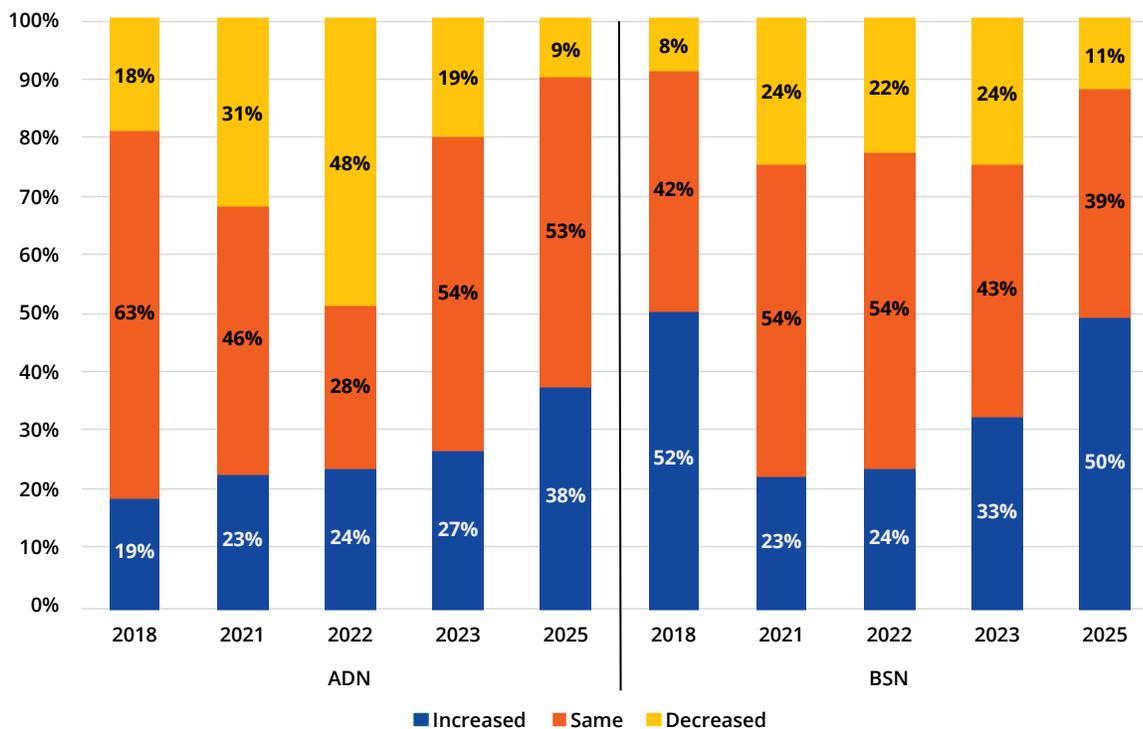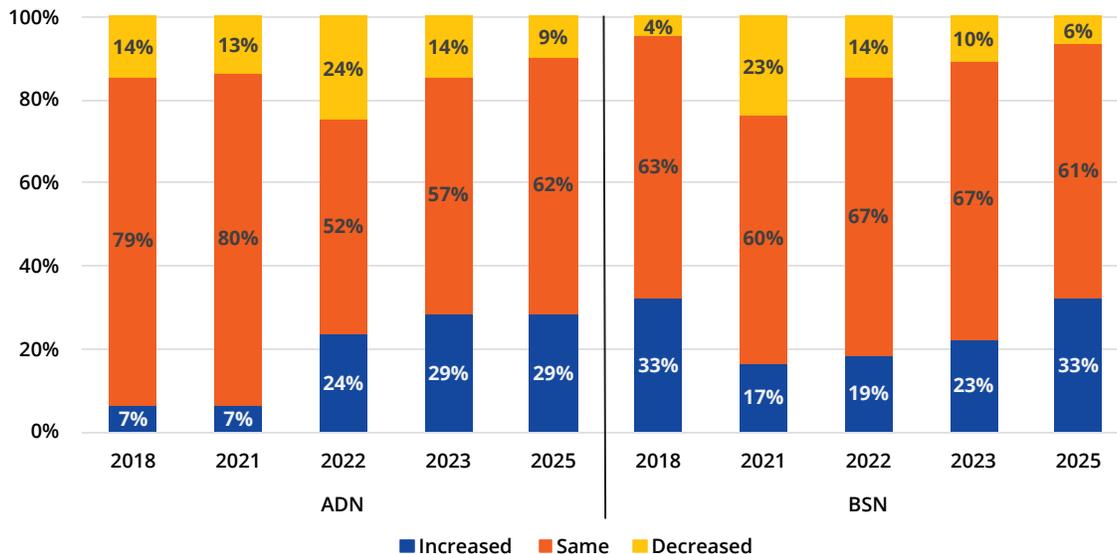

FIGURE 4. Changes in Number of Acceptances to New York State RN Education Programs, by Degree Type, 2018-2025

Turning Away Qualified Applicants

Slightly more than half of deans who responded to the survey indicated that they turned away qualified applicants in 2025, including 53% of BSN deans and 50% of ADN deans. The majority of deans from SUNY and CUNY programs reported turning away qualified applicants, 81% and 67% respectively, compared to 26% of deans from privately sponsored RN education programs.

Reasons for Turning Away Qualified Applicants by Degree Type

Faculty vacancies were a key reason that both ADN and BSN programs turned away qualified applicants.

More than 70% of BSN deans and half of ADN deans who reported turning away qualified applicants indicated that an insufficient number of qualified faculty were the primary reason for doing so **(Figure 5)**. Fifty-six percent of deans who turned away qualified applicants indicated that it was due to a shortage of clinical training sites and a program cap on admissions.

FIGURE 5. Reasons for Turning Away Qualified Applicants, by Degree Type, 2025
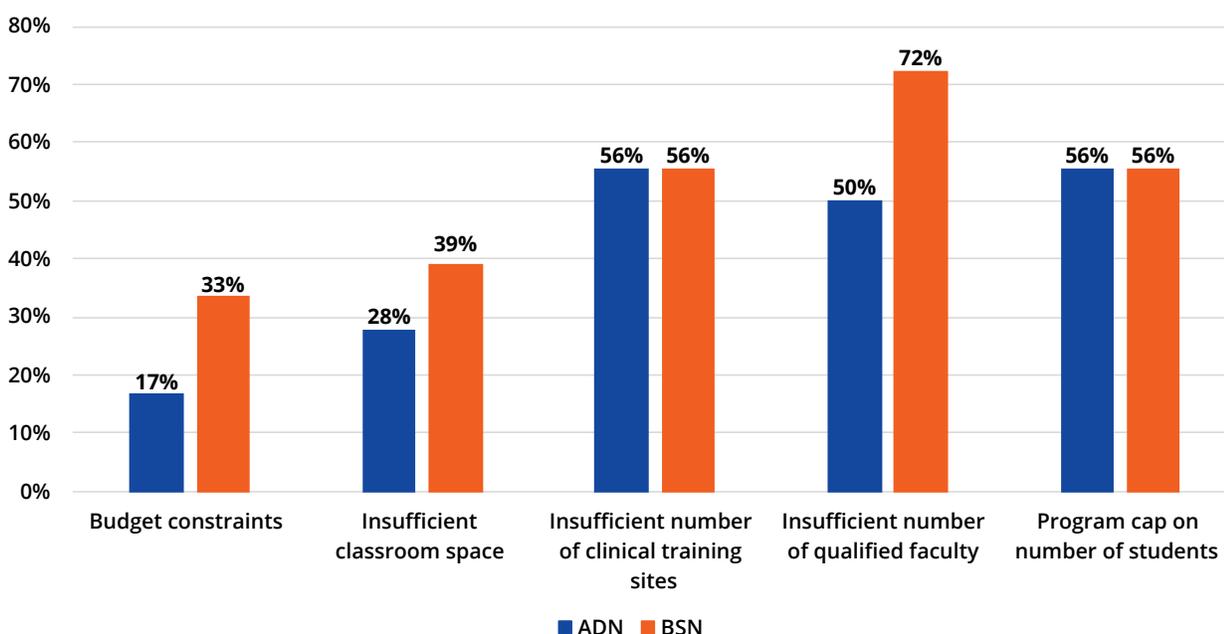
Clinical Training and Simulation

Two-thirds of deans reported using simulation to meet clinical training requirements, including 94% for SUNY programs and 89% for CUNY programs. Only 21% of deans reported using telehealth to meet clinical training requirements.

Nursing Faculty

Faculty Vacancy Rate

One of every 8 full-time nursing faculty positions was vacant in 2025.

Deans reported that 13% of full-time nursing faculty positions were vacant in 2025 **(Table 3)**, up from 11% in 2023.[7] They also indicated that 9% of part-time nursing faculty positions were vacant compared to just under 5% in 2023.[7] BSN programs reported a higher faculty rate for full-time faculty than ADN programs, and CUNY and SUNY programs had higher vacancy rates for full-time faculty compared to privately sponsored programs.

TABLE 3. Nursing Faculty Vacancy Rates, by Degree Type and Sponsor, 2025

|	% of Full-Time Vacancies	% of Part-Time Vacancies
Associates	11.7%	12.5%
Bachelor's	13.0%	7.6%
CUNY	14.1%	1.6%
SUNY	11.6%	28.1%
Private	10.5%	12.5%
Total	**12.6%**	**9.1%**

Strategies Addressing Vacant Faculty Positions

RN education programs addressed faculty vacancies by adding more adjunct faculty.

Nearly half of RN education program deans reported hiring more adjunct faculty to address full-time faculty vacancies **(Figure 6)**. More than one-third of deans also indicated that they assigned adjunct faculty to courses usually taught by full-time and part-time faculty to address vacancies.

**FIGURE 6.** Top Strategies for Addressing Faculty Shortages, 2025
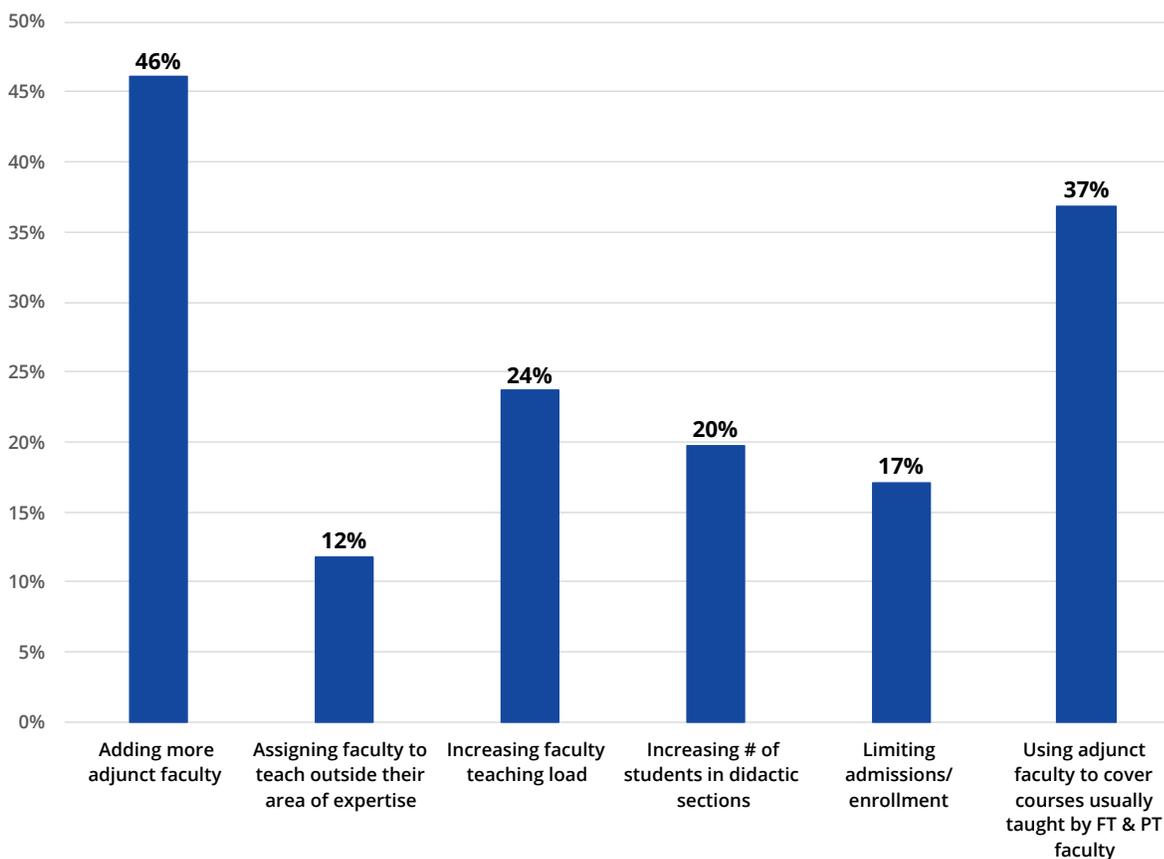
Deans reported the most difficulty recruiting faculty specializing in maternity/obstetrics and in behavioral health/psychiatry.

Nearly 70% of deans reported difficulty recruiting facility for maternity/obstetrics and two-thirds indicated difficulty recruiting faculty for behavioral health/psychiatry. Just over 50% reported difficulty recruiting faculty for pediatrics.

The majority of ADN programs reported hiring baccalaureate-prepared RNs who were completing master's degrees to fill full-time faculty positions.

Nearly 60% of deans of ADN programs reported hiring RNs with BSNs who are in the process of completing their master's to fill full-time positions. Fifty-five percent of BSN deans reported master's prepared RNs completing their doctorates to fill full-time positions. Under 30% of deans reported increasing salaries as a strategy for recruiting full-time faculty.

FIGURE 7. Strategies for Recruiting Full-Time Faculty, by Degree Type, 2025
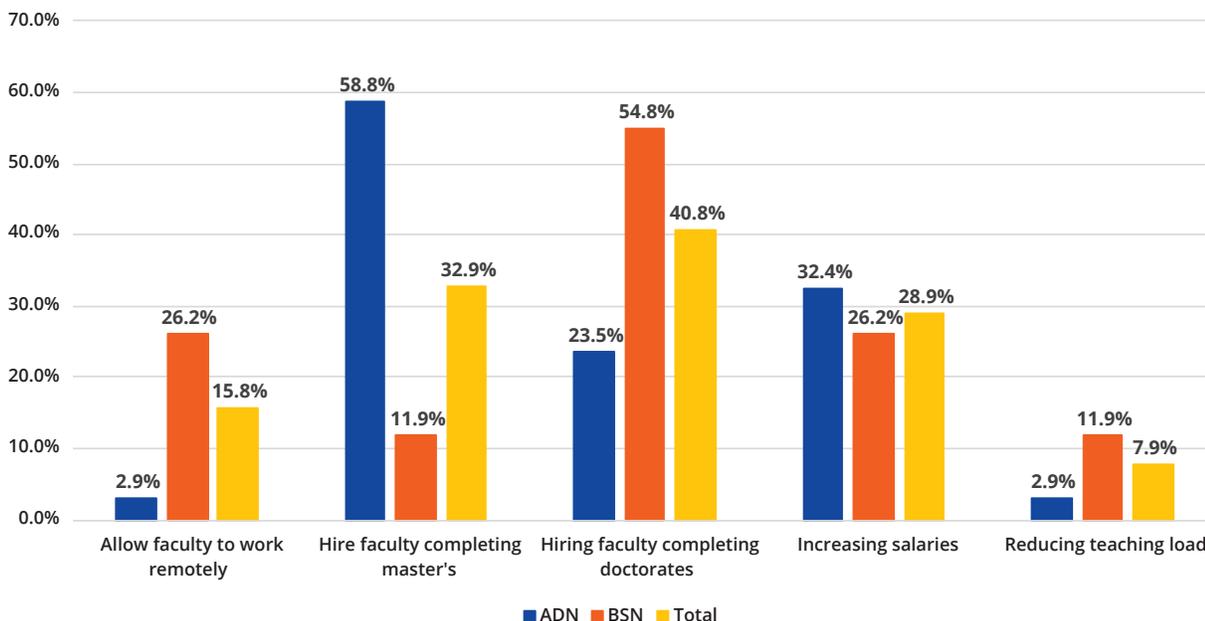
Job Market for New RN Graduates

Deans reported many jobs for newly trained RNs.

While the majority of deans of ADN and BSN programs reported many jobs in all healthcare settings, 85% and 56%, respectively **(Table 4)**, those percentages dropped from the 2023 survey (94% and 90%, respectively).[7]

TABLE 4. Percentage of RN Education Programs Reporting Many Jobs, by Degree and Setting, 2025

Degree	All Health Settings	Hospital Inpatient/ED	Nursing Homes	Home Health Care	Ambulatory Care
Associate	85.3%	79.4%	73.5%	50.0%	44.1%
Bachelor's	55.6%	69.4%	80.6%	63.9%	47.2%

DISCUSSION

While the RN education pipeline has remained steady, there is uncertainty about whether the number of new RNs produced will be sufficient to meet future demand. The attrition of patient care RNs during and after the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to staffing shortages. Although these shortages have eased somewhat, retaining patient care RNs is crucial to assuring supply meets demand. Challenges such as faculty shortages and limited clinical training sites could continue to impact RN production. However, the recent law allowing up to one-third of clinical training to be completed through simulation may help nursing students gain essential clinical experience using an alternative approach.

Addressing the maldistribution of RNs and ensuring equity in the State's RN workforce is crucial. Hispanic/Latinx RNs are currently underrepresented compared to their presence in the New York State population. Service-obligated programs, such as the federal Nurse Corps Scholarship Program or New York State's "Nurses for Our Future Scholarship," can strategically target rural areas and underserved populations to help create a more balanced RN workforce. Additionally, initiatives like Nurse Corps, New York State's "Nurses Across New York," and the newly approved HELP (Healthcare Education and Life-Skills) grants can support both recruitment and retention efforts by paying off student debt or providing tuition assistance and wrap-around services in exchange for service commitments.

CONCLUSIONS

Continued monitoring of RN supply, demand, and production is essential to determine whether the RN pipeline is sufficient to meet demand for new RNs. Attrition of patient care RNs coupled with constraints on educational capacity could exacerbate recruitment and retention difficulties for the State's providers. More research is needed to better understand the most effective strategies to train, recruit, retain, and assure a better distribution of the State's RNs. Finally, best practices should be identified and shared among healthcare providers and educational programs to ensure that the most effective and efficient strategies are used to address RN workforce challenges.

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REFERENCES

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Dr. Martiniano has an extensive background in health workforce research and program management, including 11 years at the New York State Department of Health. He has decades of experience in registered nursing research, including investigating recruitment and retention issues and monitoring the education pipeline. He also has worked with a number of different communities, agencies, and membership organizations on developing community health needs assessments, identifying provider and workforce shortages based on the health care delivery system and the health of the population, and understanding the impact of new models of care on the health workforce—including the development of emerging workforce titles.

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As director, Dr. Moore is responsible for administrative aspects and participates in the preparation and review of all CHWS research projects and reports, ensuring their policy relevance. She also plays a key advisory role for CHWS, its activities, and the outcomes of its work. Dr. Moore has served as principal investigator for more than 35 health workforce research studies and authored over 70 publications, including peer-reviewed journal articles and reports.

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