



**National League
for Nursing** **The Voice for Nursing Education**

COLORADO NURSE WORKFORCE INFORMATION

Colorado is the third fastest growing state in the nation and predictions are for a gain of 1.5 million people by 2020. Overall, the percent of Colorado residents over 65 will increase from 9% (419,000) in 2000 to 18% (1.2 million) in 2030. These residents will be leaving the workforce and requiring more health care.

- The nursing shortage in Colorado is twice the national average or approximately 11%. This rate is projected to grow to 31% by 2020 if Colorado does not address nurse workforce issues.
- Even without factoring in any impact of health care reform, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment projects a need for 18,990 additional registered nurses from 2008 to 2018.
- These nurses will be needed to replace retiring nurses (6,750) as well as to respond to increased health care demand due to population growth (12,240).
- In 2009, there were 61,000 licensed nurses in Colorado and 59% were employed by hospitals. This reflected a gain of 2,029 licensed RNs.
- On top of increased demand for nurses and health care providers due to population growth and demographic changes, retirement is also an issue. Historically, nurses start retiring at age 58. The age profile of Colorado's 61,000 licensed registered nurses indicates that 4,500 are over the age of 65; 6,600 are 60-65; and 10,100 are 55-59.
- Conservative assumptions indicate that Colorado will be short 6,300 registered nurses by 2018. Less conservative retirement assumptions and the impact of health reform could easily double this shortage number.
- Although the pipeline for nursing education has significantly expanded since 2000, very serious challenges remain in developing, recruiting and paying for school of nursing faculty and meeting the annual demand for over 2 million hours of student nurse clinical experiences.
- Based on a recent Colorado Health Institute survey, 42% of the state's school of nursing faculty are over 55 years old; 23% of current faculty indicate they will retire within 5 years; 48% indicate they will retire within ten years.

<http://www.coloradonursingcenter.org>

<http://www.coloradohealthinstitute.org>