



**National League
for Nursing**

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Heading into the August Recess – Title VIII Funding

As the Capitol heads into the dog days of August and a six-week congressional recess, the fate of FY 2005 funding for Title VIII – Nursing Workforce Development Programs is far from clear. The House Appropriations Committee marked up its Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill on July 14th. Nursing programs overall received a 3.5 percent increase. Advanced nursing education received a 9.3 percent cut, while

nurse education, practice, and retention, and the loan and scholarship programs saw increases.

The Labor-HHS appropriations did not make it to the House floor before the recess. No action has occurred on the Senate side either. The latest rumor is that this appropriation will not be finalized until after the November elections.

Nursing Workforce Development Programs	FY 2004	President's FY 2005 Request	House Committee Mark FY 2005
Total (Amounts in Millions)	\$141.890	\$146.887	\$146.887
Advanced Education Nursing	58.636	43.637	53.634
Comprehensive Geriatric Education	3.478	3.478	3.478
Loan Repayment & Scholarships	26.736	31.738	31.738
Nurse Education, Practice & Retention Grants	31.768	41.765	36.765
Nursing Faculty Loan Program	4.870	4.870	4.870
Nursing Workforce Diversity	16.402	21.399	16.402

Nursing Education Receives Boost in South Carolina

The Partnership for Education and Clinical Excellence, a coalition of hospitals in South Carolina, has agreed to give \$1 million over three years to boost nursing education at the University of South Carolina (USC) and Midlands Tech. The donation of money and services is designed to increase the number of nurses with bachelor's degrees. The donations will support adding two faculty members to the USC nursing school and will allow 16 extra nurses to graduate from the school annually, starting in two years.

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Study Examines LPN WorkForce

According to a new study conducted by researchers from the Center for California Health Workforce Studies at the University of California, San Francisco, LPNs may be one of the least studied segments of the health care workforce. Funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the study – Supply, Demand and Use of Licensed Practical Nurses – is the first comprehensive research on the LPN workforce in 20 years.

The researchers found that although LPNs began to organize into professional groups as early as 1941, very little academic literature about the practice, work, demand, or efficient use of LPNs exists. According to lead researcher Jean Ann Seago, PhD, RN, and professor of nursing at UCSF, “One of the overall reasons for the study was to determine if we could use LPNs to help with alleviating the nursing shortage. The short answer is ‘no.’”

The study also found that in many settings, especially hospitals, LPNs are not allowed to practice to the full extent of the scope of practice laws in their respective states. Limiting what LPNs can do in various settings has more to do with rules and traditions within facilities and geographic regions than with actual legal restrictions, Seago said. For example, in California, a combination of regulations and union rules limits what LPNs can and cannot do.

Even determining the population of LPNs was difficult for the researchers. The 2000 census showed that 596,355 people were employed as LPNs. This figure differed from Bureau of Labor Statistics data, which showed that there were 702,000 jobs held by LPNs in 2002. This information further differs from that of the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, which listed 889,027 active LPN licenses in 2000. The study noted that since LPNs can have licenses in multiple

states, the number of active licensed LPNs probably overstates the actual size of the LPN workforce.

The study found as many similarities between the LPN and RN workforces as there are differences. Similarities include such things as:

- RN and LPN employment trends.
- LPN and RN workforces are aging with LPNs being slightly older on average; the mean age for LPNs is 43.
- Males represent a small percent of either workforce, but the number of men working as LPNs is slowly increasing.
- The western United States has the fewest LPNs and RNs per capita.
- Between 1984 and 2001 the hourly pay for RNs and LPNs rose 19 percent.
- The share of RNs and LPNs working in offices and clinics of physicians doubled between 1984 and 2001.

Differences include:

- More LPNs live in the South and fewer in the Northeast as compared with RNs.
- An increasing number of RNs are immigrants, while fewer LPNs are foreign-born.
- The percent of LPNs working in nursing and personal care facilities increased between 1984 and 2001 while the percent of RNs did not.
- The share of LPNs working in hospitals declined more than that of RNs between 1984 and 2001.
- The percent of LPNs working in the private sector was greater than that of RNs working in the private sector in 2001.

Recommendations from the study include:

- Work toward standardization of LPN training at the basic education preparation level and beyond.

Study Examines LPN WorkForce (cont'd)

- Create standardized pathways and facilitate articulation between LPN and RN license requirements.
- Reduce restrictions on the LPN scope of practice in states where there are restrictive regulations unless there is substantial evidence of a negative impact on patient care.
- Create teams of RNs and LPNs to appropriately share the patient care workloads.
- Consider using LPNs predominately in long-term care settings.
- Educate the public about the LPN profession in order to give recognition to practicing LPNs and to encourage more people to enter the profession.

Health Information Web Site Expanded

NIH recently announced that its health information website has been expanded to provide links to a wider range of health information highlighting popular health topics, cutting-edge science, and interactive features. The expanded site now includes three colorful new sections: **Healthy Lifestyles** which displays links to popular topics such as seasonal health concerns, nutrition, and weight loss; **Research in Action** which links users to up-to-the-minute scientific information on topics such as stem cells and genetics, and introduces readers to scientists ranging from high school students to Nobel Laureates; and **Now Online** which emphasizes interactive features and web exhibits. To visit the site, go to www.nih.gov.

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