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News



**National League
for Nursing**

For Immediate Release

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**NLN DATA REVEAL SLOWDOWN IN NURSING SCHOOL ADMISSIONS GROWTH
Minority Enrollment Declines – Hispanics Still Underrepresented
ADN and BSN Programs Increase – ADN Programs Contribute Outsize Share of Students**

August 2006 – New York, NY– Though enrollments and graduations continued to rise in 2004-05 with basic RN programs contributing an estimated 84,878 additional prospective nurses to the RN labor supply, the growth rate of new admissions fell by more than 47 percent in 2004-05, dropping from 9.4 percent in 2003-04 to only 5 percent in the last academic year. “The significant dip in admissions growth, evident in the findings reported in the NLN’s *Nursing Data Review 2004-2005: Baccalaureate, Associate Degree, and Diploma Programs*, seems to mark a turning point in what has been an upward trend,” stated NLN CEO Dr. Ruth Corcoran.

Nursing school applications have surged in recent years, rising more than 59 percent over the past decade. This year almost 25,000 additional applications poured into nursing school admissions offices allowing nursing schools to be more selective; on average each accepted fewer than 38 percent of the applications they received. Other indicators also point to a significant shortage of spots in nursing schools. Despite an upward trend in the number of applications submitted by prospective students, the percentage of accepted applicants who actually accept admission to nursing programs – known as the “yield rate” – remains extraordinarily high. More than 90 percent of all accepted applicants enrolled in 2005 – the third straight year. The average rate among four-year colleges nationally is under 50 percent and Harvard University’s rate of 80 percent – the highest in the nation in 2006 – is still significantly lower than that typically seen by US nursing programs.

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Over the past 20 years, the number of associate degree and baccalaureate programs has climbed steadily. Associate degree programs outnumber their baccalaureate counterparts and contribute an outside share of students and graduates. ADN programs comprised 59 percent of all basic RN programs last year but produced an outsized 63 percent of RN graduates.

Nursing Data Review 2004-2005 yields significant demographic information as well. Between 1994 and 2002, the total percentage of minority nursing students grew to more than 20 percent. This period of growth appears to have ended. In 2004-05, the overall percentage of minority nursing students declined by almost 2 percent. The percentage of blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians all slipped downward each year since 2002.

While the distribution of black, Asian, and American Indian students enrolled in prelicensure nursing programs closely mirrors that of the student bodies of American colleges and universities, there is one glaring exception: Hispanic students represent only 5.3 percent of nursing students compared with more than 10 percent of the undergraduate population at large i.e., one in 10 US college students is of Hispanic origin, compared with one in 20 prelicensure nursing students.

“With complete charts and tables and detailed analyses,” said Dr. Corcoran, “the findings in this report have important implications for nursing education and the health care needs of this country.”

Editors and reporters: For a review copy of *Nursing Data Review 2004-2005* and/or interview opportunities, please contact Karen R. Klestzick at 212-812-0376, kklestzick@nlm.org.

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