

# LICENSED VOCATIONAL NURSES in the SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION



Healthcare is one of the largest employers in California, providing a wide range of well-paying career opportunities for residents. In 2014, the Centers of Excellence partnered with the Health Workforce Initiative (HWI) and the California Hospital Association (CHA) on two healthcare surveys to **assess workforce needs** at both state and regional levels. The surveys targeted three healthcare sectors:

- **Hospitals** provide medical, diagnostic, and treatment services to inpatients and some outpatient services.
- **Ambulatory Healthcare Services** provide healthcare services to outpatients in settings such as offices of physicians, outpatient care centers, and laboratories.
- **Nursing and Residential Care Facilities** provide residential care combined with either nursing, supervisory, or other types of care as needed.

Statewide, 190 hospitals responded to the hospital survey and 1,600 clinics, labs and facilities responded to the ambulatory and residential care survey, providing an excellent sample to analyze healthcare workforce demand across the state and in several regions. The research focused on identifying: (1) labor market demand for key occupations in healthcare industries, (2) training supply supporting healthcare industries, and (3) key issues impacting supply and demand.

This report is one in a series of reports profiling healthcare occupations in the San Francisco Bay region.<sup>1</sup> There are ten occupational profiles in the series: registered nurses, certified nursing assistants, licensed vocational nurses, medical assistants, medical coders, physician’s assistants, healthcare social workers, medical laboratory technicians, occupational therapy assistants and home health aides.

## Labor Market Demand

In the San Francisco Bay region, there are approximately 8,635 Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) jobs in the ambulatory and residential care subsectors. Over a 12 month period (Apr 2014 to Mar 2015), employers in these subsectors will need to fill over 4,065 openings created by new job growth and replacement needs. California Hospital Association members that responded to the survey employ approximately 383 LVNs. This sample does not include an estimate of total hospital employment because less than half (41%) of CHA regional member hospitals participated in the survey.

### Projected Employment for Licensed Vocational Nurses<sup>2</sup>

Ambulatory & Residential Care Industries (n=74)	Current Employment (2014)	12 Month Growth	Replacement Jobs	Total Openings (Growth + Replacements)
	8,635	1,054	3,011	4,065

### Current Employment for Licensed Vocational Nurses

Hospitals (n=34)	Current Employment*	Full-time Positions	Part-time Positions	Per Diem Jobs
	383	255	128	19

\* Ending headcount for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2013.

### Labor Market Trends

#### Ambulatory & Residential Care

→ The number of LVNs in the region is expected to grow by over 12%.

#### Hospitals

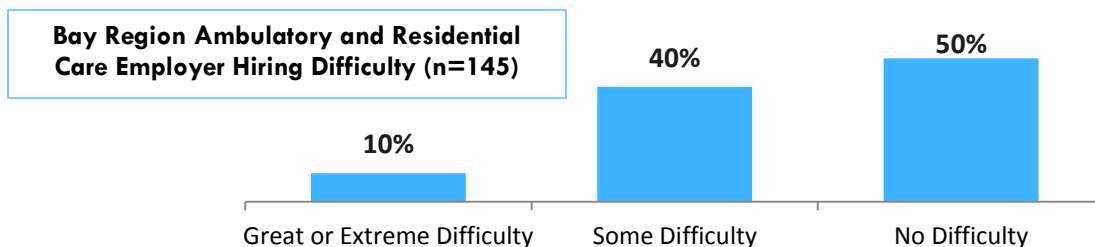
→ 33% of LVNs employed by regional hospitals work part-time.

<sup>1</sup>The Bay region includes the following 12 counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Benito, Santa Clara, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma counties.

<sup>2</sup> Ambulatory and residential care and hospital employment counts include full-time and part-time employment. Additional data on per diem employment for hospitals is totaled separately.

## Difficulty Hiring

Half of the employers in the **Bay region ambulatory and residential care** subsectors reported difficulty finding qualified applicants for entry-level LVN positions. However, **hospitals statewide** are reporting minimal difficulty in hiring entry-level LVNs. Minimum qualifications may include LVN license, clinical experience in a specific division (i.e. surgery, emergency services); more than one language, and/or knowledge of specific records software.



## Training Supply

There are 26 licensed vocational nursing programs in the Bay region according to Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians.

	Community Colleges (Associate)	Community Colleges (2<4 years)	Community Colleges (1<2 years)	Community Colleges (<1 year)	Private Education (Associate)	Private Education (2<4 yrs)	Private Education (1<2 yrs)	Average Annual (All)
<b>Degrees/Certificates Conferred</b> <sup>3</sup> (3-yr annual average 2010-13)	59	16	142	17	1	121	785	1,141
<b>NCLEX/PN® Pass Rates (2012-13)*</b>	Community Colleges: 84%				Private Ed. Institutions: 73%			78%

\* Data Source for NCLEX/PN® pass rates: Board of Vocational Nursing & Psychiatric Technicians at <http://www.bvnpt.ca.gov/>. Through February 28, 2015 new proposals for programs are not being reviewed due to a moratorium imposed by BVNPT.

Requirements for vocational nurse licensure are specified in the Vocational Nursing Practice Act. There are four ways to qualify for the licensure examination. Each method is designed to provide an individual access into the job market as an entry-level practitioner:

1. Graduation from a CA "approved" Vocational Nursing Program
2. Graduation from an out-of-state "approved" Practical/Vocational Nursing Program
3. Completion of equivalent education and experience:
  - a) Pharmacology (54 hours)
  - b) Paid bedside nursing experience (51 months)
  - c) Verification of skill proficiency
4. Completion of ed/experience as a corpsman in the US military:
  - a) 12 months active duty rendering direct bedside patient care
  - b) completion of the basic course in nursing in a branch of the armed forces
  - c) general honorable discharge from the military

In 2010, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc., (NCSBN) voted to raise the passing standard for the NCLEX/PN examination. The analysis identified that entry-level licensed vocational nurses are required to provide care for clients with a greater level of acuity.

### LVN Programs: SF Bay Region

#### Community Colleges (8)

City College of San Francisco  
Gavilan College  
Hartnell College  
Los Medanos College  
Merritt College  
Mission College  
Napa Valley College  
Santa Rosa College

#### Private Education Institutions (18)

American College of Nursing  
Bay Area College of Nursing, Inc.  
Bay Area College of Nursing, Inc.-Daly City\*  
Blake Austin College  
Carrington College, San Jose  
Carrington College, Pleasant Hill  
Carrington College, San Leandro  
Gurnick Academy of Medical Arts—Concord\*  
Gurnick Academy of Medical Arts—San Mateo  
InterCoast Colleges  
Medical Career College\*  
NCP College—Hayward  
NCP College—South San Francisco  
Oikos University\*  
Prime Career College\*  
Unitek College—Fremont  
Unitek College—Santa Clara  
WestMed College—San Jose

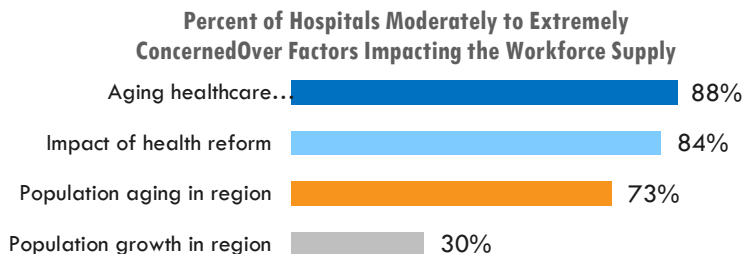
\*These 5 programs have only Provisional Approval.

<sup>3</sup> Estimates are based on data reported to the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) Data Mart and National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Higher education institutions are required to report completion data to NCES if they participate in any federal financial assistance program authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act. Completion data not reported to the NCES or CCCCCO Data Mart were not included in the estimates.

## Supply Challenges

The healthcare sector is facing a variety of factors that may have a direct impact on the workforce supply. Across California, the majority of hospitals are concerned that health reform, the aging hospital workforce, and the aging population will have a significant impact on the state's ability to keep up with healthcare workforce demand. Healthcare reform is expanding coverage to thousands of uninsured residents, which is increasing demand for healthcare services across the board. The aging population will expand demand for certain types of services, creating additional need for skilled workers.

While these two factors will increase demand for new healthcare workers, the aging healthcare workforce within hospitals creates a need for replacement workers. In the **hospital setting, one out of five LVNs is in the age cohort of 56 or older.**<sup>4</sup> As healthcare workers retire at greater numbers, the training supply will also need to increase.



## Employer Perspective

72% of **ambulatory and residential care** facilities provide professional development (either in-house or sponsored training) for their LVNs. Some of the training topics include: continuing training on various health topics for CEUs, customer service, communication and interpersonal skills, policy and procedure training, and specialized training on various topics. Employers in these sectors discussed the topics that community colleges could offer or improve upon to support professional development for their existing staff. The following suggestions were offered:

### Sidebar Discussion

It appears that in the ambulatory and residential care sector, employers believe that entry-level LVNs will need to provide patient care with a greater level of acuity (also reflected in the 2010 National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc. analysis). In addition, one out of four employers reports that the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and other trends will expand the role of LVNs (see pie chart below).

For the 3 year average 2010-13:

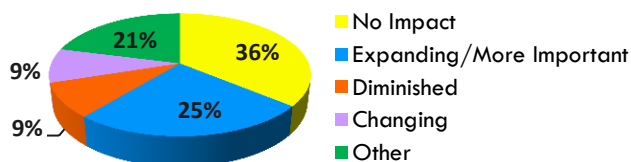
- 81% of all degrees/certificates awarded were 1<2 years
- 25% of community college awards were Associate degrees

Should community colleges be looking to increase graduates in their Associate degree programs? Should colleges engage local healthcare employers in a dialogue about adapting programs to better meet the expanding role and higher skill requirements for LVNs?

- Offer**
  - Courses in communication (written and spoken and customer service skills) with nursing team, patients and family members
  - More training on working with home healthcare and hospice patients
  - More training in mental health issues and dementia
  - Courses in leadership and interpersonal skills
- Improve**
  - Clinical training on a range of skills (IVs, administering medication, wound care, infection control procedures, chronic condition management)
  - Integrate time management strategies into existing curriculum
  - Emphasis on quality patient care

## Ambulatory and Residential Care: The Future of Licensed Vocational Nurses

**Impact of the ACA and Other Trends on the Role of LVNs in Ambulatory and Residential Care**



In the **ambulatory and residential care** survey, employers were asked about the impacts of the ACA, advancing technology and any other issues on the future of LVNs. Overall, the largest percentage of responses (36%), regarding the impact of the ACA on LVNs, was that there will be no impact. However 25% of employers indicated that the role of LVNs will likely be expanding and/or becoming more important in the future. Other responses are summarized at a high-level and reported in the pie chart.

<sup>4</sup> CHA Hospital Survey, statewide data.

## In Summary

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Key issues affecting supply and demand for LVNs include:

- 50% of **ambulatory and residential care** employers report difficulty finding qualified applicants for entry-level LVN positions.
- 1,141 students graduated per year (3 year average) from approved LVN programs in 2010-13. 80% of degrees or certificates conferred were from private institutions with the community colleges granting only 20%.
- The average pass rate for community college graduates taking the LVN licensing exam is 11% higher than private school graduates.
- One to two years is by far the most common length for all LVN programs, representing 81% of the average degrees and certificates awarded for 2010-13.
- In the hospital setting, one out of five licensed vocational nurses is approaching retirement age (56 or older).
- Hospitals are concerned that health reform, the aging hospital workforce, and the aging population will have a significant impact on the state's ability to keep up with healthcare workforce demand.

Community colleges can play a role in removing barriers in the training supply by working with healthcare employers to address key issues, such as an increasing demand for a higher level of skills for entry-level LVNs. Community colleges and other training institutions should continue to monitor the impact of the aging population, aging workforce and healthcare reform. By staying connected with local healthcare employers, community colleges can be responsive to their workforce needs.

## For More information

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This document and others are available to download at [www.coecc.net/health](http://www.coecc.net/health). For more information on this study, contact:

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Health Workforce Initiative

**More about the Health Workforce Initiative:** The HWI provides education and training programs to meet emerging demands for healthcare industry workers; to determine needs, facilitate development of innovative solutions and to locate resources to implement planned responses; to evaluate and initialize health-related educational programs. More information about the Health Workforce Initiative is available at [www.ca-hwi.org](http://www.ca-hwi.org).



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