



October 6, 2008

Dear Colleagues,

In collaboration with the North Carolina Health Professions Data System, The North Carolina Hospital Association (NCHA), has released a report entitled, "North Carolina Hospital Workforce Trend Analysis, 2004-2006." The report is available on NCHA's website at <http://www.ncha.org>. Questions about the report should be addressed to [andi\\_workforce@ncha.org](mailto:andi_workforce@ncha.org).

The report summarizes workforce trends in North Carolina hospitals. Highlights of the report include:

- In 2006, North Carolina hospitals had more than 8,000 vacant positions. About one in every three (31%) vacant positions was for a clinical nurse (including RNs, APRNs and CRNAs).
- One in eight allied health positions was vacant in 2006 and the demand for allied health professionals – particularly physical therapists, occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, sonographers, medical technologists and medical records coders – is on the rise.
- Vacancy rates for specific health professions varied significantly by region but in general, hospital vacancy rates were highest in eastern North Carolina and in the North Central hospital district 4 (Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill and the surrounding area). These findings highlight two distinct challenges facing hospital employers: in eastern counties excess demand is likely due to the consistent difficulty this rural part of the state has attracting health professionals to practice. By contrast, high vacancy rates in District 4 are likely due to rapid population growth which is driving up the demand for health care services and increasing the demand for health professionals.
- Between 2000-2007, hospital employment in the State increased by 22%, from about 147,500 workers in 2000 to 180,000 workers in 2007. About one of every two (47%) employees gained in hospitals were nurses but allied health professionals, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians also experienced rapid employment growth.
- While health care is a rapidly growing industry, it is also a dynamic one driven by many complicated sets of factors at the individual hospital- and community-level. Policy makers, educational leaders and other stakeholders will want to use the data in this report to guide decisions about where to best invest resources to ensure an optimal mix of health care workers to meet the rising demand for health care services in North Carolina.

Sincerely,

Erin Fraher  
Director, NC Health Professions Data System

Suggested citation:

Fraher EP, McKethan A, Broome SJ, Haygood MK, Heilig KE. "North Carolina Hospital Workforce Trend Analysis, 2004-2006." North Carolina Hospital Association. July 2008.