

THE NATIONAL FORUM OF STATE NURSING WORKFORCE CENTERS

The Fundamental Role of Nursing Workforce Centers in State Workforce Policy Development August 1, 2017

State Nursing Workforce Centers are key to workforce development at the state and local levels. Examples of local entities include counties, cities, parishes, towns, and other political subdivisions of a state.

Collection of nursing workforce data by an individual state using The Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers' Minimum Data Sets for Nurse Supply, Demand, and Education is crucial to advocates for workforce planning, disaster preparedness, access to care, meeting regional needs of healthcare professionals and more. For example, funding for nursing programs and health policy such as Medicaid benefits are determined by each state legislature.

Collecting, analyzing, and reporting of state level data by Workforce Centers helps to drive policy at the state level. Examples include:

- providing expertise on quality data collection and analysis based on the different methods and resources available. For example, a center may recommend a census or sampling method depending on resources available, and clearly explain the pros and cons of each method.
- providing information on the unique demographics of the state such as trends in age and ethnicity.
- developing working relationships with local persons and organizations who influence state policy. For example, labor market agencies, labor unions, major employers, state agencies, and others.
- shaping workforce development programs such as diversity in nursing and academic progression.
- reporting on trends in the nursing workforce that result from state policy. For example, the impact of additional dollars to scholarship funds for nursing education enrollment.
- utilizing nursing workforce forecasting models to predict nurse supply and demand at the state and regional levels.

In addition, nursing workforce centers contribute to national efforts to build a robust nursing workforce to address the health needs of our communities. However, there are differences in state and national workforce data collection and analysis:

- Sample sizes collected across states in national efforts may not be representative of individual states. National data, because it is a compilation of small samples from individual states, cannot provide an accurate reflection of the nursing population of an individual state. State workforce centers strive to use larger sample sizes to ensure accurate representation of LPN, RN, and APRN populations. Workforce centers can provide the expertise to determine the level of sampling needed to accurately capture workforce trends at the local level (e.g. within counties of a state). State level data is often collected in collaboration with the state board of nursing or state agency responsible for collecting licensure renewal information. This form of collaboration is both cost effective and results in larger sample sizes.
- National data provides “big picture” context but does not seek to explain regional or local workforce trends. It can contribute to national workforce efforts, such as providing support for federal funding initiatives. Informing state policy requires analysis appropriate to the data collection provided by the state in conjunction with the state’s socioeconomic and political trends.

For more information on state nursing workforce centers, please visit the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers website at www.nursingworkforcecenters.org

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