

## *Demographic, Education, and Practice Characteristics of Licensed Practical Nurses in Washington State: Results of a 2007 Survey*

**Background:** In 2007, Washington State surveyed all of the licensed practical nurses (LPNs) in the state to obtain demographic, education, and practice information. The Washington Center for Nursing engaged the University of Washington Center for Health Workforce Studies to analyze Washington’s LPN data, and the results are presented in this report.

**Methods:** This report uses these survey data to describe LPNs in Washington. Of the 14,446 licensees, there were 2,968 responses to the survey, reflecting 21% of all LPNs and 43% of a one-third random sample who received multiple contacts. Because age and address were known for all licensees, the survey responses (higher rates among older than among younger LPNs) were weighted to reflect the overall population.

### **Major Findings:**

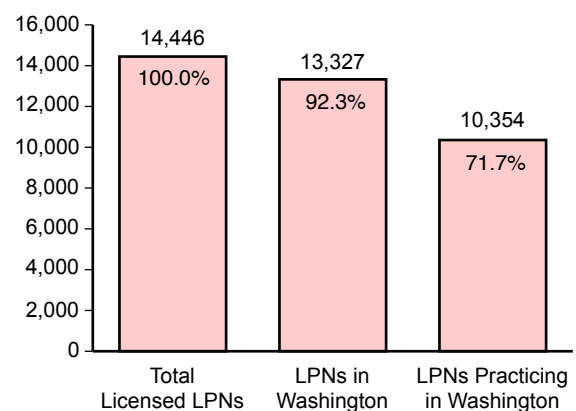
***Among all LPNs in Washington in 2007:***

- ✘ 92% lived in state.
- ✘ 72% practiced in state.

***Among LPNs living in Washington in 2007:***

- ✘ Long-term care was the work setting employing the largest percentage (37%).
- ✘ 65% reported working in primary care.
- ✘ Of the total average of 37 hours worked per week, an average of 25 hours were in direct patient care.
- ✘ The number of LPNs has grown by about 12% over the past nine years, despite much higher population growth rates.

LPNs with Washington Licenses, 2007

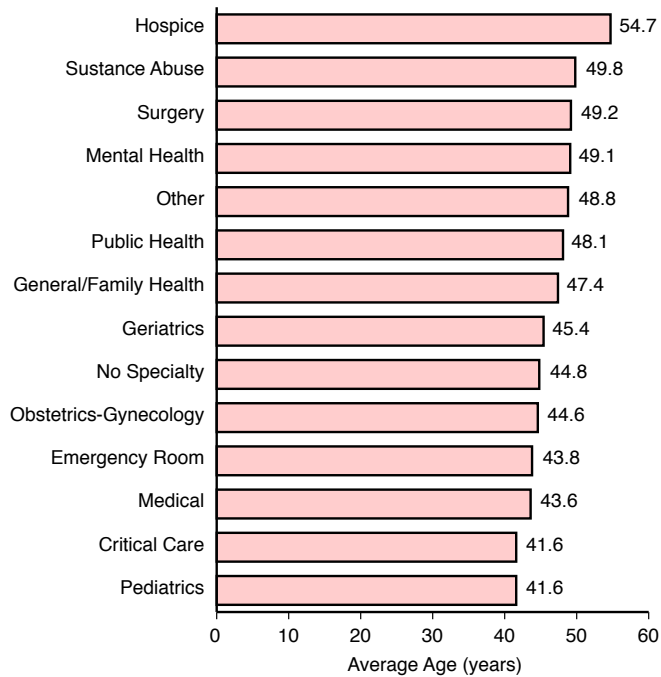


- ✘ Practicing LPNs’ average age was 46.
- ✘ The youngest worked in hospitals (44 years of age on average), and the oldest in hospice settings (53 years of age on average).
- ✘ 12% were male.
- ✘ 18% were non-white, and 4% were Hispanic.
- ✘ Nearly three-quarters received their LPN education in state.

*(See more figures on reverse.)*

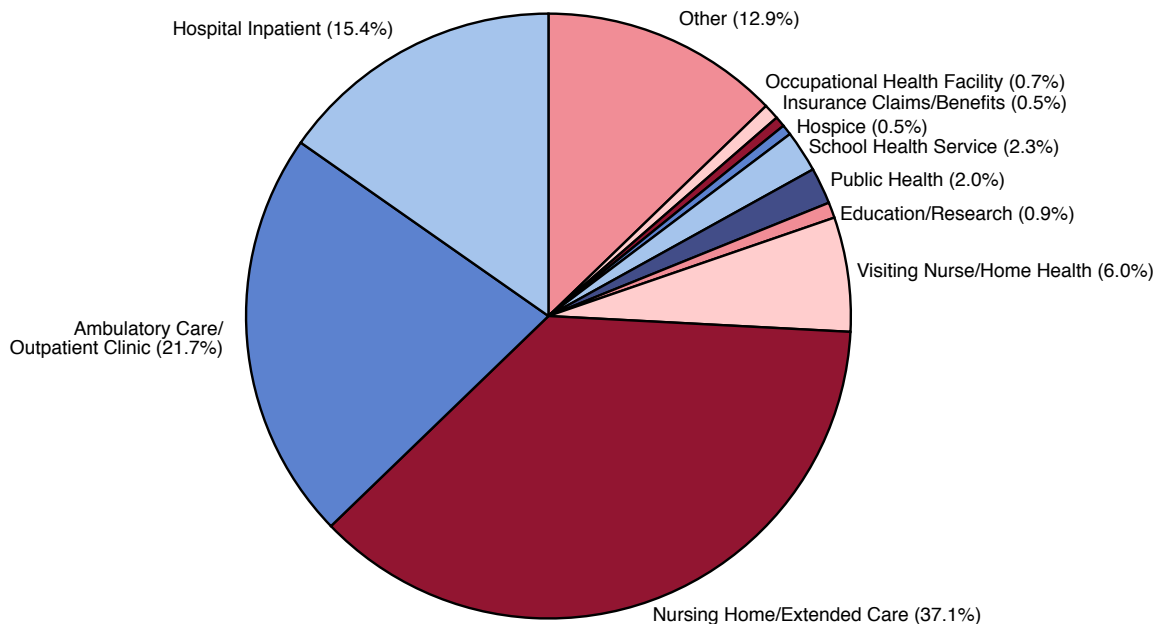


### Average Age of Practicing LPNs in Washington by Specialty/Area of Practice



**Policy Implications:** The need for LPNs in Washington is very likely to increase. The state's population is growing as well as aging, and LPNs provide much of the health care in long-term care and home care settings. The ratio of LPNs in Washington to state population currently is lower than comparable national numbers. There is also some concern that many new LPNs are obtaining education that allows them to move quickly into RN roles, making their contribution to the LPN workforce very short-lived. The relatively low LPN supply in Washington, the high average age of the state's LPNs, and the relatively slow rate at which the workforce is growing gives reason for concern about whether it will be possible to meet the state's future need for LPNs.

### Work Setting of LPNs Practicing in Washington



*Findings from this study are more fully described in WWAMI Center for Health Workforce Studies Final Report #123: Andrilla CHA, Skillman SM, Tieman L, Demographic, Education, and Practice Characteristics of Licensed Practical Nurses in Washington State: Results of a 2007 Survey, January 2009.*