

Demographic, Education, and Practice Characteristics of Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners in Washington State: Results of a 2008 Survey

Background: In 2008, Washington State surveyed all of the licensed advanced registered nurse practitioners (ARNPs) in the state to obtain basic demographic, education, and practice information. This report presents findings from analyses of the survey that provide estimates of the number of ARNPs in active practice, their specialties, practice characteristics, educational background, and plans for retirement.

Methods: This report describes ARNPs in Washington using the 2008 survey responses and state licensing records. Most of the descriptive statistics reflect ARNPs who live and practice in-state, with some regional and rural-urban analyses provided.

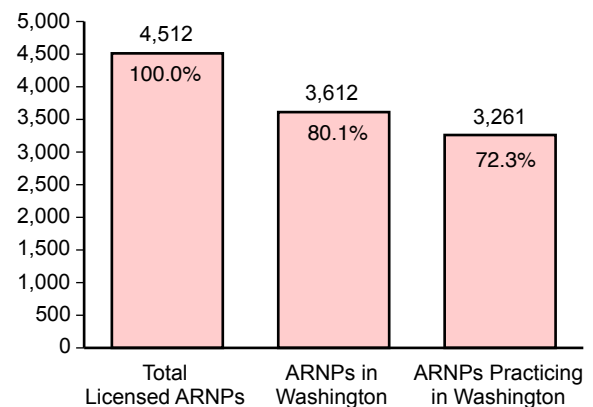
Major Findings:

✘ Of the 4,512 Washington ARNP licensees, 80% indicated they resided in-state and 92% practiced in-state.

Among practicing ARNPs in Washington:

- ✘ The average age was nearly 50 years.
- ✘ Fewer than 10% were non-white or Hispanic, and nearly 13% were male.
- ✘ Nurse anesthetists made up 9% and nurse midwives 7% of the workforce.
- ✘ More than half (55%) of the ARNPs were in primary care practice areas, with 29% in family practice, 14% in adult practice, 11% in psychiatry/mental health, 10% in women's health, and 6% in pediatrics.
- ✘ Two-thirds worked in ambulatory/outpatient settings and 65% worked full time.
- ✘ Nearly a quarter of Washington ARNPs worked in independent practice or in a group practice that did not include a physician.

ARNPs with Washington Licenses, 2008

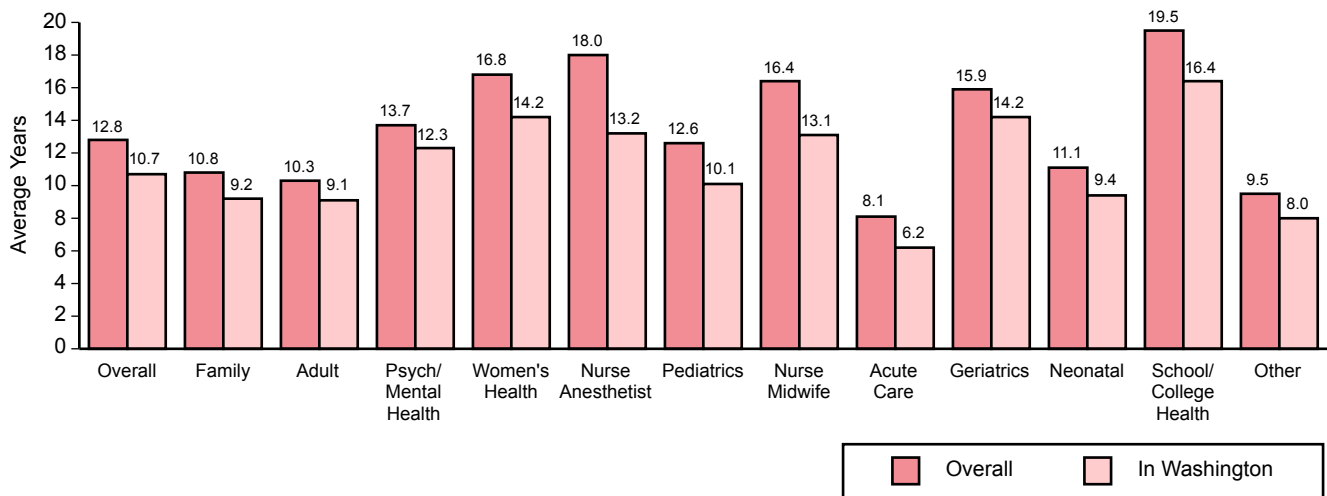


- ✘ For 87%, a master's degree was their highest degree in nursing, and among these ARNPs 63% obtained the degree in Washington.
- ✘ Three-quarters of Washington's ARNPs practiced in the state's more populated west side of the state.
- ✘ Among rural-practicing ARNPs (11% of all practicing ARNPs), nearly half were family practitioners.
- ✘ Practicing ARNPs in Washington have worked 13 years on average as an ARNP, with 11 of those years in-state.
- ✘ 14% of practicing ARNPs said they intended to retire within the next five years.

(See more figures on reverse.)

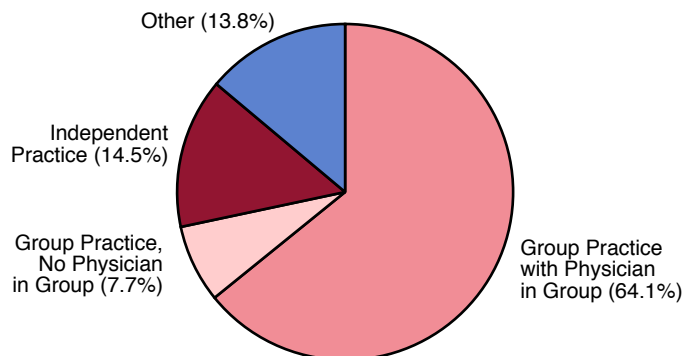


Average Years Practicing as an ARNP Overall and in Washington Among ARNPs Practicing in Washington, by Primary Area of Practice



Policy Implications: The number of licensed ARNPs and the number relative to the state population have grown over the past decade. To keep up with the high rate at which ARNPs will be retiring from the workforce in the next decade, attention should be paid to replacing and growing ARNP workforce supply. Encouraging RNs to become ARNPs at younger ages will help to stabilize the workforce by producing more ARNPs with the potential to practice for a long period of time. The relatively high percentage of ARNPs who practice independently or in groups with no physicians highlights how important Washington's autonomous practice laws are in expanding access to health care in the state. The state's overall population is growing and will need more health care services in the future. Because of the significant contribution that ARNPs supply to health care (especially primary care), the high likelihood that ARNP workforce shortages will continue into the future, and the finding that more than two-thirds of the state's ARNPs have spent their entire ARNP career in Washington, there is considerable incentive to support and expand the state's ARNP education programs.

Practice Arrangement of ARNPs Practicing in Washington



Findings from this study are more fully described in WWAMI Center for Health Workforce Studies Final Report #124: Skillman SM, Andrilla CHA, Kaplan L, Brown MA, Demographic, Education, and Practice Characteristics of Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners in Washington State: Results of a 2008 Survey, April 2009.