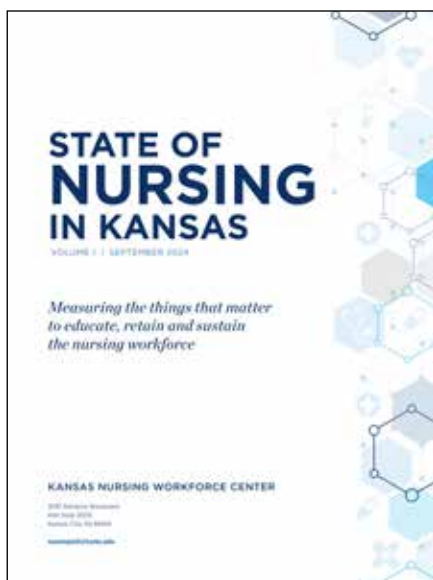


The following is an invited article and is not peer reviewed by the Kansas Nurse Editor.

New Report Available on the State of Nursing in Kansas

Written by: Amy Garcia DNP, RN, FAAN; Barbara MacArthur RN, MSN, FAAN; Teresa Stenner



Kansas has suffered chronic shortages and occasional surpluses of nurses for many years. Severe shortages of nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic impacted how care was provided in hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities, home health, public health and in schools. Employers turned to contract nurses, mandatory over-time, hiring bonuses and raises to fill the gaps. Work was redesigned, with non-licensed personnel taking on more tasks while the responsibility for patient care remained with the nurse. Recovery has been uneven.

Long hours and difficult work environments have impacted nurses' mental health and careers. Kansas nurses report working more overtime hours in a typical week than a comparative national sample. The resulting burnout further impacts the availability of nurses.

For the past year, the Kansas Nursing Workforce Center (KNWC) has collaborated with health care professionals statewide to identify the contributing factors to nursing sustainability issues. The team has consolidated data from reputable sources into clear tables, graphs, and col-

or-coded maps so that stakeholders can make better decisions about the nursing workforce.

This information is now available in the State of Nursing in Kansas report which was designed to be a "one-stop-shop" for information about nurses and nursing. The report is organized into five main sections: introductory information, Registered Nurses (RNs), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), original research and analysis, and additional details such as wage information by region and county.

The report is free and available to the public on the [KNWC website](#).

Some key findings in this report should concern us and be useful to decision makers.

Diverse Populations

The population of Kansas is growing more diverse, yet Kansas RNs remain primarily white and female. Of note is that LPNs and younger-aged RNs are more racially, ethnically and gender diverse than older RNs. The report shows Kansas and national demographic numbers for both RNs and LPNs.

Active Employment

Kansas RNs are less likely to be actively employed in nursing than the national sample. The good news is that 85% of RNs and LPNs who hold Kansas licenses are actively employed in nursing. The report includes four color-coded maps that clearly show numbers of licensed RNs, LPNs, and APRNs by county. In this example map, population was divided by the number of licensed nurses per county. The counties in red have the lowest number of nurses (fewer than 17 nurses per 1000), while the counties in green have the highest numbers (between 24.3 and 34 nurses per 1000). (see Figure 1)

Nursing Shortages

We anticipate increased shortages of nurses in the future, as 29% of Kansas RNs and 23% of LPNs are planning to retire within the next five years. Even more concerning, enrollments in nursing education programs are down 39% over the last 10 years. (see Figure 2)

Figure 1.

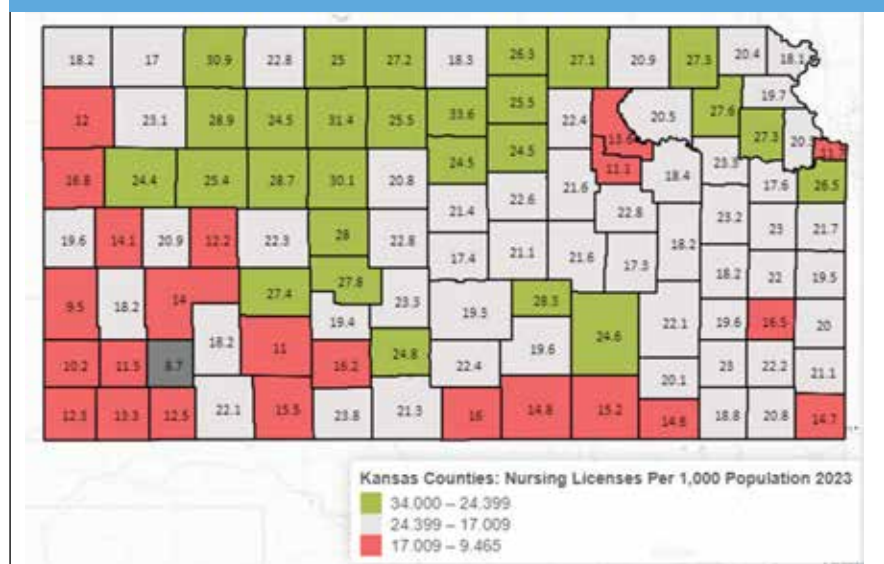
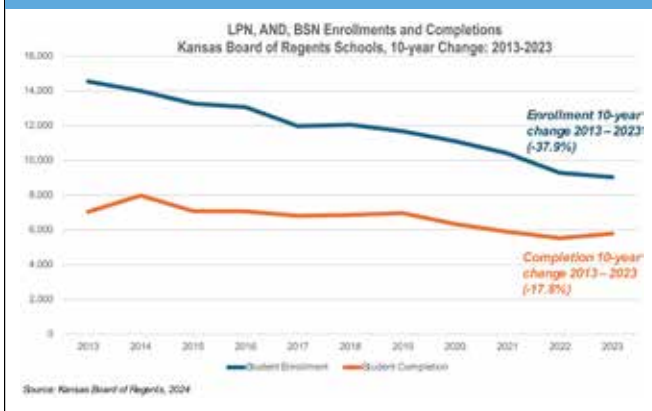


Figure 2. Declining Nursing Enrollments in Kansas



The State of Nursing in Kansas report will be updated every two years when the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) releases new data, which facilitates the comparison of Kansas with other states in the country.

The Center’s mission is to ensure that every Kansan has access to quality nursing care when and where it is needed, and to support the nurse as an individual and as a member of the health care team.

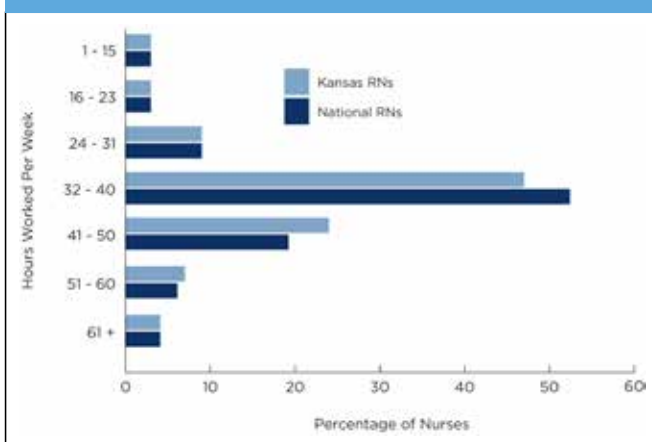
Scan this QR code for your copy of the report.



Reasons for Unemployment

Among unemployed Kansas RNs, 72% reported taking care of home and family as the primary reason for their unemployment, which is very different from the national sample at 47%. This

Figure 3.



difference has appeared in surveys since 2015 and should be studied further. Among unemployed Kansas LPNs, 33% reported disability as their reason for unemployment. Although the number of unemployed LPNs in this sample is small, the number is concerning.

Long Hours

Kansas RNs reported working more hours than the national sample, with 36% typically working more than 40 hours per week. Long hours are highest among nurse managers. (see Figure 3)

As the KNWC collected the information and produced this report, one thing became clear: The more information we have about the Kansas nursing workforce, the more questions it raises.

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