



Trends in the Licensed Practical Nurse Workforce from 2008 to 2013

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Background

- In 2013, more than 600,000 people were employed as licensed practical nurses (LPNs) in the United States
- The number of LPN jobs is projected to grow by nearly 25% between 2012 and 2022.

Objective

To assess trends in the supply and employment patterns of LPNs in the USA from 2008 to 2013.

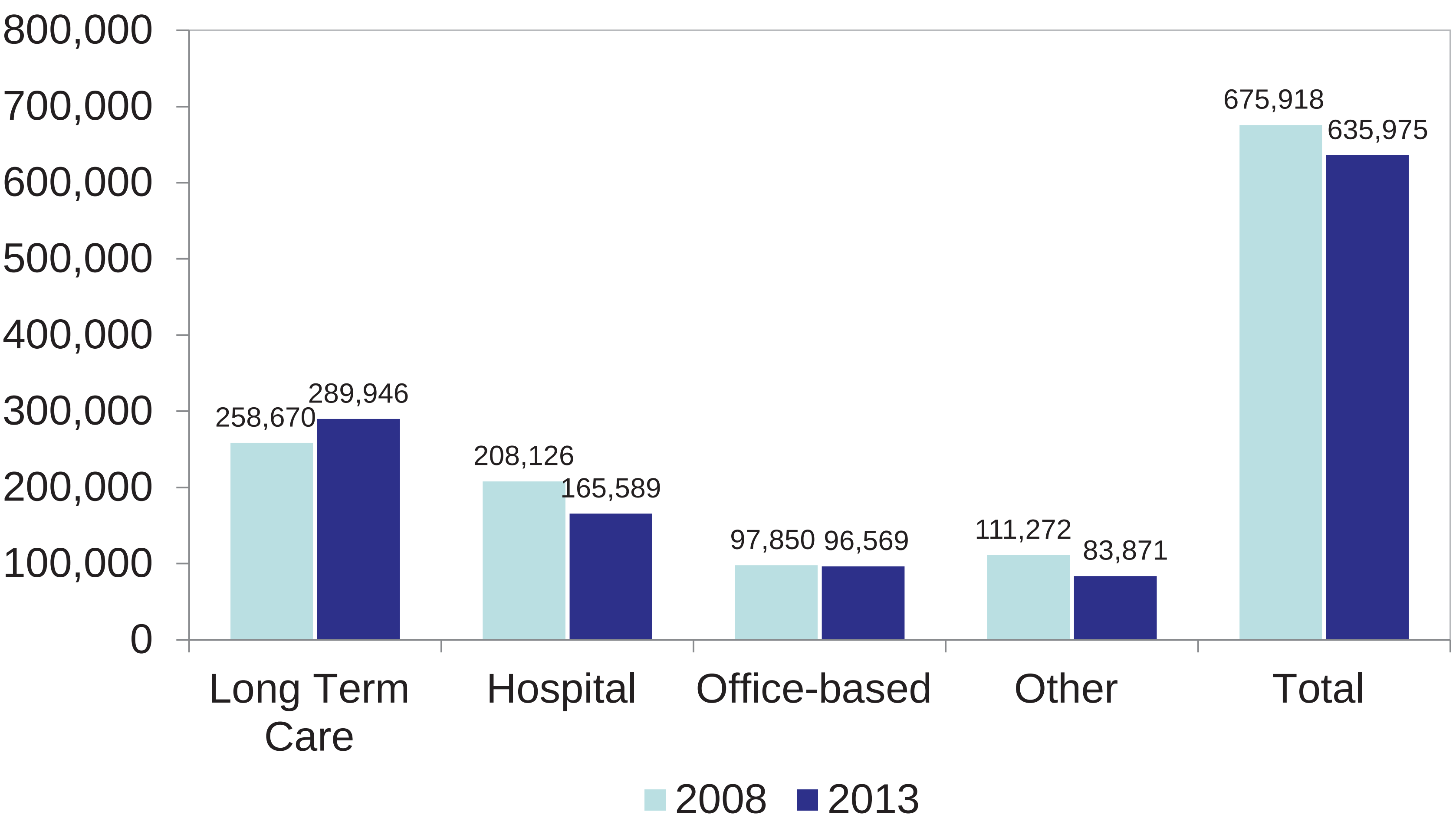
Methods

Data from the 2008 and 2013 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample were analyzed using ACS sampling weights. Chi-square tests were performed to identify statistically significant trends.

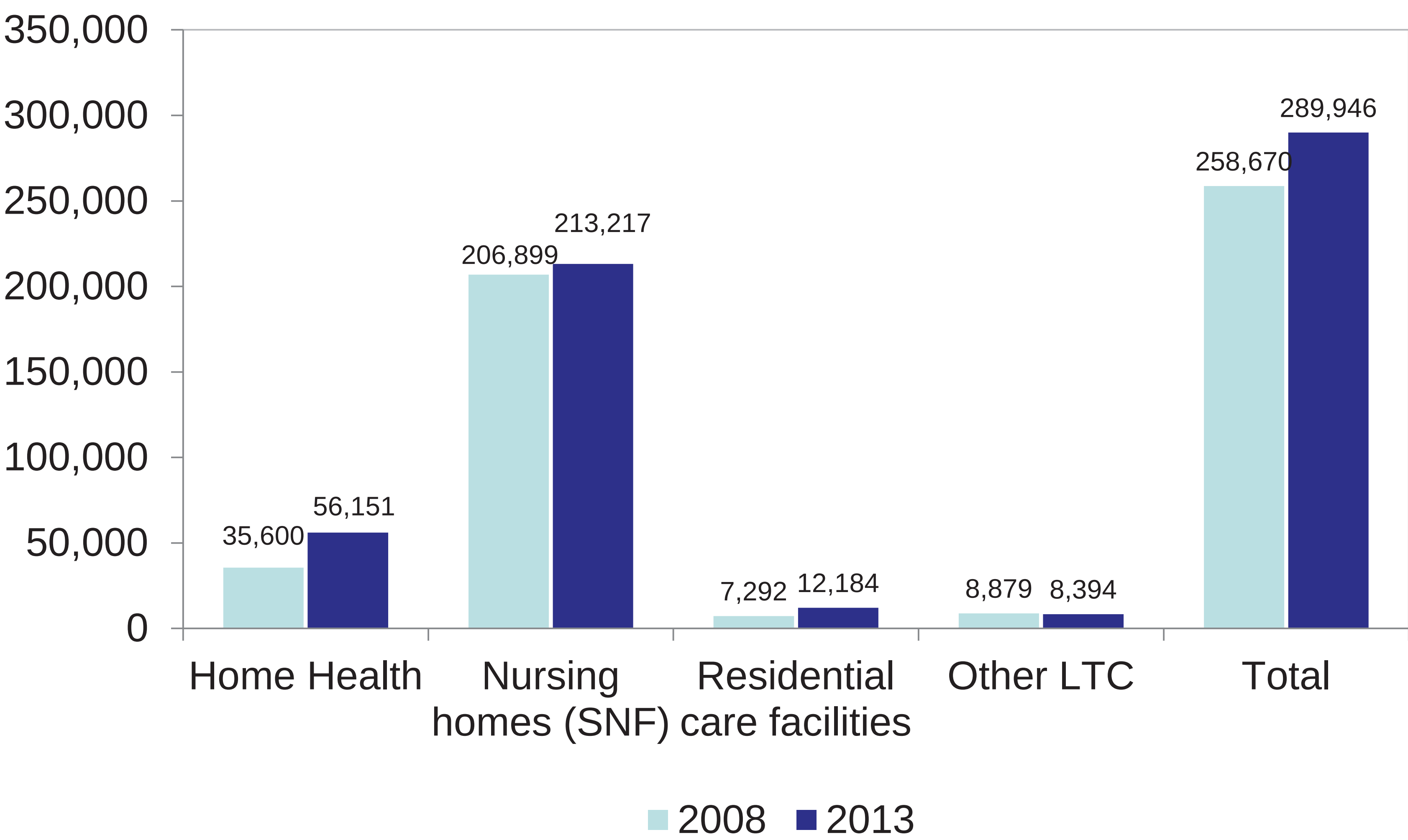
Results

- While the total number of employed LPNs has dropped by 5.9%, the number of LPNs working in long-term care has increased by 12.1%. ($p=0.00$).
- The increase in long-term care employment was largely due to a 57.7% increase of LPNs in home health ($p=0.00$).

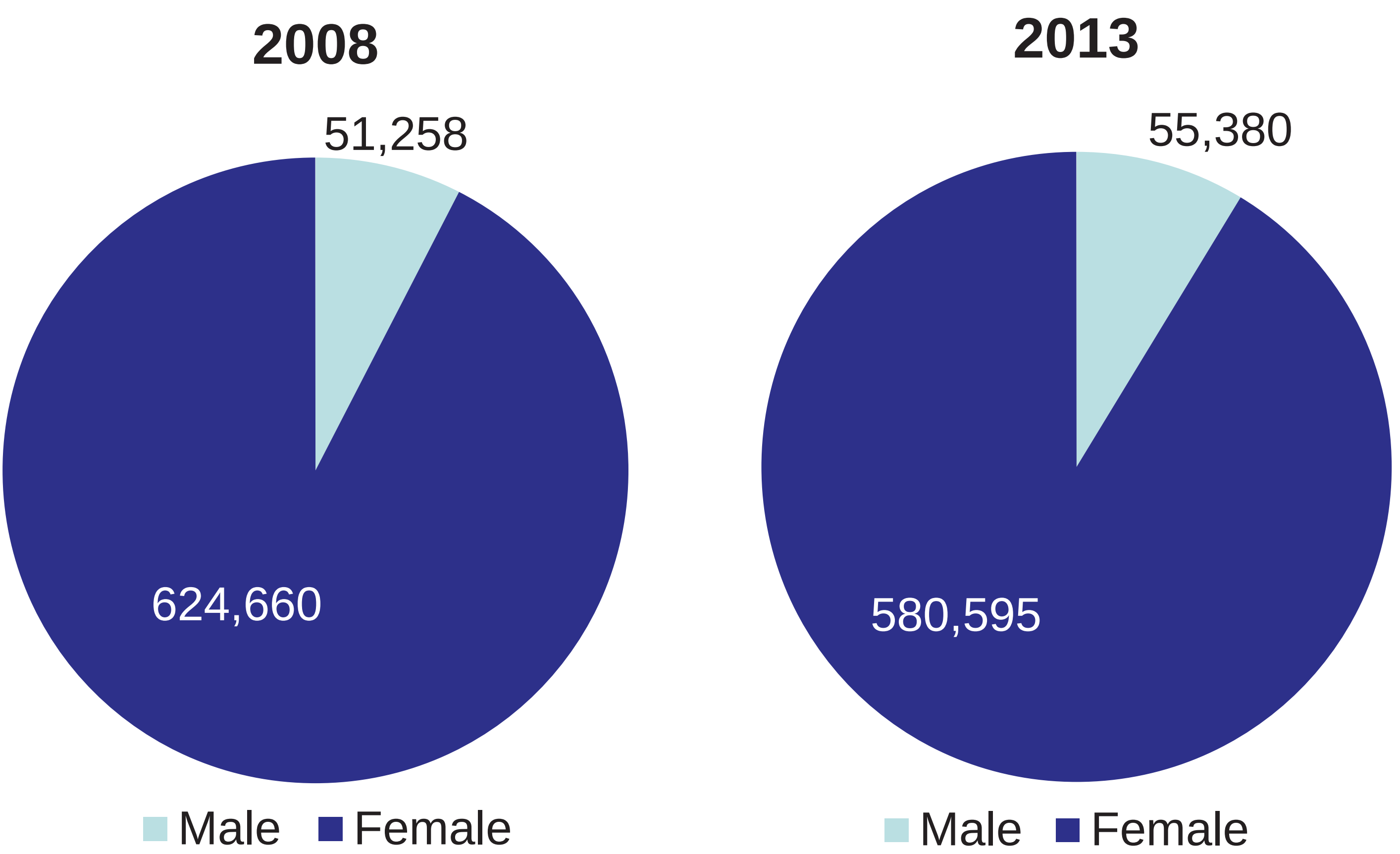
Distribution of Employed LPNs by Setting



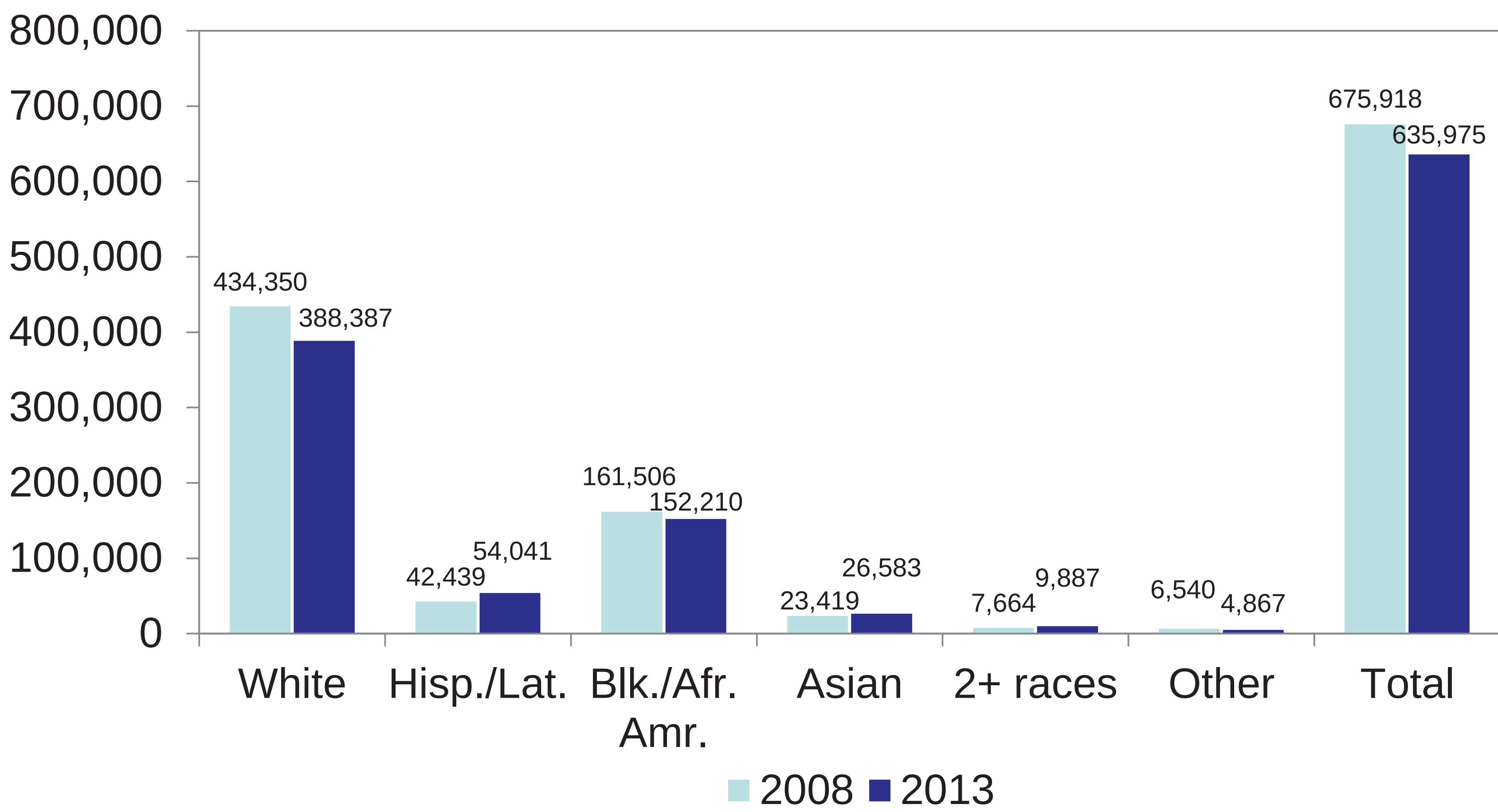
Distribution of Employed LPNs by Long-Term Care Setting



- The percentage of male LPNs increased from 7.6% to 8.6% ($p=0.07$).
- The number of Hispanic/Latino and Asian LPNs increased by 27.3% and 13.5%, respectively ($p=0.00$).



Distribution of Employed LPNs by Race/Ethnicity



Implications

- Shifts away from hospital employment may indicate lower demand for LPNs by hospitals, possibly because:
 1. Hospitals are striving to increase the education and skill level of their nursing workforce, and thus preferring to hire registered nurses (RNs).
 2. As the RN shortage abated, it may have become easier for hospitals to hire RNs instead of LPNs.
- Employment projections suggest an increased demand for LPNs in long-term care.
- There is a need to ensure that LPN education programs are preparing students for practice in long-term care settings.
- An increasingly diverse LPN workforce will improve the profession's ability to meet the needs of the U.S.'s increasingly diverse population.

Limitations

- No information about scope of practice
- Limited industry categories