

# Title: Trends in Licensed Practical Nurse/Licensed Vocational Nurse Education and Licensure Examinations, 1998 to 2013

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**Issue:** Licensed practical nurses (LPNs), also referred to as licensed vocational nurses, are the second-largest health care occupation requiring postsecondary education. Demand for LPNs is expected to increase substantially in coming decades. One-third of LPNs are over age 50, prompting questions about whether the supply of newly licensed LPNs will adequately meet demand.

**Methods:** We analyzed data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) on trends in the number of graduates from LPN programs and compiled data from the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) on persons taking the LPN licensure exam.

**Findings:** NCSBN reports that 51,457 persons passed the LPN licensure exam in 2014. Persons completing LPN education programs grew substantially between 1998 and 2011, decreasing slightly by 2013. Much of the increase came from for-profit LPN education programs. Non-Whites represent an increasing proportion of persons completing LPN education programs; they are more likely than Whites to complete for-profit programs.

**Discussion:** LPN education outcomes should be monitored to assess whether supply is keeping pace with demand. Monitoring the for-profit sector is critical because it accounts for a large and growing percentage of completions, especially among non-Whites. Policymakers should explore why non-White students are more likely to enroll in for-profit LPN education programs than Whites.

**Key Words:** LPN, LVN, practical, vocational, licensure, education

**HWRC Website Link:** <http://healthworkforce.ucsf.edu/publication/trends-LPN-LVN-education-licensure-1998-2013>