

## The Association of Race, Ethnicity, and Wages Among Registered Nurses in Long-term Care

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### Issue

RNs are a key component of the long-term care (LTC) workforce and are the largest licensed health profession in the United States. RNs who work in LTC settings earn less than those who work in hospitals and Black and Hispanic RNs employed in urban hospitals earn less than White and Asian nurses, even after controlling for differences in education and experience, yet it is unknown whether these differences exist in LTC. This study seeks to measure wage differences between registered nurses (RNs) working in LTC (eg, nursing homes, home health) and non-LTC settings (eg, hospitals, ambulatory care) and whether differences are associated with the characteristics of the RN workforce between and within settings.

### Data

We analyzed data from the 2018 National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses, which is conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Health Workforce, Health Resources and Services Administration.

### Methods

This was a cross-sectional design. Our study population included a sample of 15,373 RNs who were employed at least 1000 hours in nursing in the past year and active in patient care. Characteristics such as race/ethnicity, type of RN degree completed, census region, and union status were included. Multiple regression analyses examined the effect of these characteristics on wages. Logistic regression was used to predict RN employment in LTC settings.

### Results

RNs in LTC experienced lower wages compared with those in non-LTC settings, yet this difference was not associated with racial/ethnic or international educational differences. Among RNs working in LTC, lower wages were associated with part-time work, less experience, lack of union representation, and regional wage differences.

### Conclusions

Because RNs in LTC earn lower wages than RNs in other settings, policies to minimize pay inequities are needed to support the RN workforce caring for frail older adults.

**Key Words:** registered nurses, wages, long-term care, wage disparities

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