

Future Demand for Long-Term Care Workers Will Be Influenced By Demographic And Utilization Changes

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I. Introduction/Background

A looming question for policy makers is how growing diversity of the US elderly population and greater use of home and community-based services will affect demand for long-term care workers.

II. Methods

We used national surveys to analyze current use of long-term care and the current long-term care workforce; we projected demand for long-term care services and workers through 2030, and assessed how projections varied if we changed assumptions about utilization patterns.

III. Findings

If current trends continue, more than 2.5 million new workers will be needed to provide long-term care to older people in the United States between now and 2030. *Home health and personal care aides will account for the largest growth in the number of jobs.* The number of jobs for these workers is projected to increase by 1 million by 2030. The occupations anticipated to have the *highest rates of growth* over the period are counselors and social workers (94%), community and social services workers (93%), and home health and personal care aides (88%). Alternative projections were computed for scenarios that assumed growing use of home and community-based services, and changing racial and ethnic patterns of long-term care use. For instance, if Hispanics used services at the same rate as non-Hispanic blacks, the projected demand for long-term care workers would be 5% higher than if current trends continued. If 20% of nursing home care were shifted to home health services, total employment growth would be about 12% lower.

IV. Conclusion

More than 2.5 million new workers will be needed to provide long-term care between now and 2030. Growth in the use of home and community-based services and shifting demographics will have relatively little effect on overall demand growth, but could have notable effects on the distribution of job growth across various occupations.

V. Policy Implications

Conclusions and Policy Implications

- 1) More than 2.5 million new workers will be needed to meet long-term care needs by 2030.
- 2) Growth in home and community-based services and shifting patterns of long-term care use by racial/ethnic groups could have notable effects on the distribution of job growth across various occupations, but not on overall long-term care job growth.
- 3) Policy makers and educators should redouble efforts to create and sustainably fund programs to recruit, train, and retain long-term care workers.

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Charts/Tables

Figure 1. Projected Growth in Full-Time Equivalent Employment of Nursing Personnel in Long-Term Care, 2010-2030

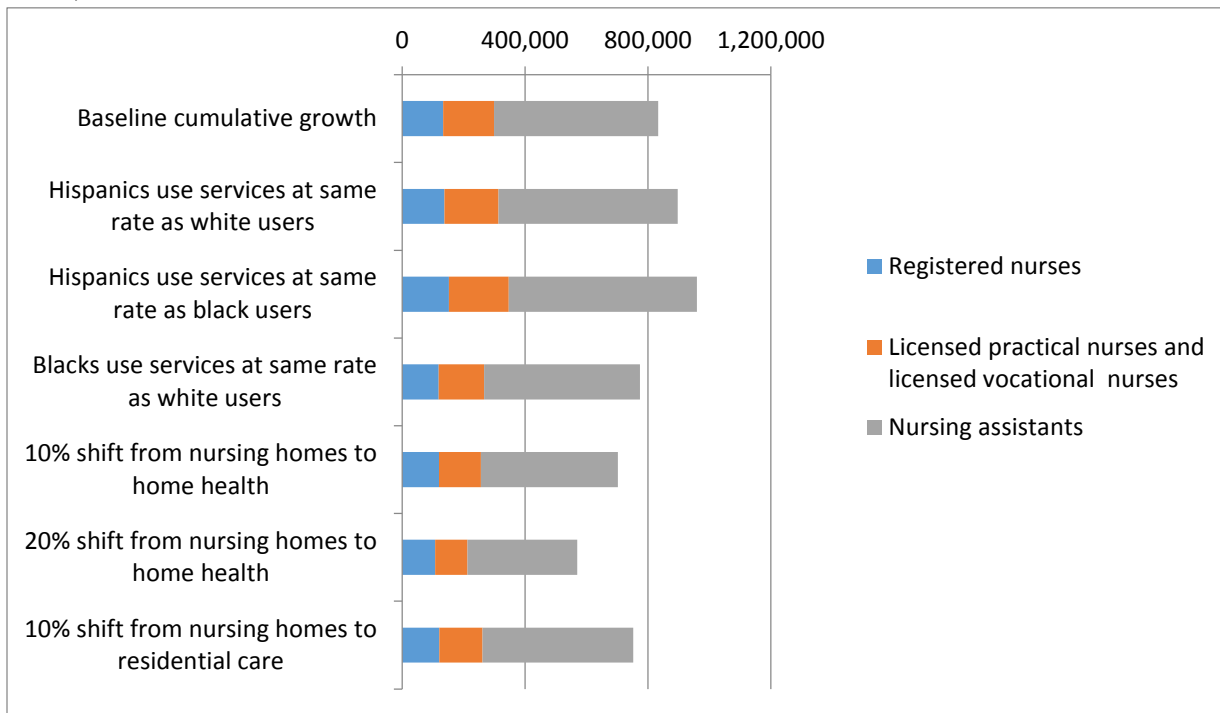


Figure 2. Projected Growth in Jobs in Long-Term Care, 2010-2030

