

*Twenty-six hospitals in six counties – Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Lake, Lorain, Medina and Summit – participated in a survey by the Northeast Ohio Nursing Initiative (NEONI) on nurse staffing. Survey responses are based on 2004 data.*

### **How large are our region’s hospitals?**

The size of hospitals can be described in a number of ways, including in terms of number of staffed beds and average daily census. Staffed beds are the number of beds available to inpatients and the average daily census is a measure of how many inpatients a hospital has on a given day. Both of these factors influence the number of nurses a hospital needs on staff.

The number of staffed beds reported by Northeast Ohio hospitals ranged from 25 to 1,072, with more than half of hospitals having 199 or fewer staffed beds. The distribution of bed sizes in Northeast Ohio hospitals looks similar to statewide numbers with some exceptions; in Northeast Ohio there is a higher percentage of hospitals that have 500 or more beds, but fewer hospitals in the 300 to 499-bed range.

<b>Bed Size Category</b>	<b>NEO</b>	<b>Ohio*</b>
<100	35%	34%
100-199	25%	28%
200-299	15%	14%
300-399	5%	10%
400-499	5%	6%
500+	15%	7%

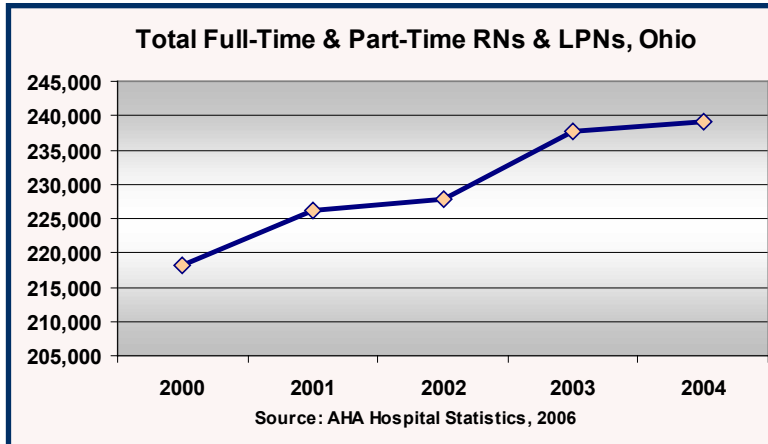
*\*Source of Ohio Bed Size Category: AHA Hospital Statistics, 2006*

Northeast Ohio hospitals’ average daily census ranged from 13 to 807, with a median of 160. About one-third of hospitals reported an average daily census of less than 100 and about one-quarter reported a census of 300 or greater. The remaining 40 percent of hospitals reported a census of between 100 and 299 patients.

Comparing the average daily census to the number of staffed beds provides a means for analyzing how close hospitals are to their capacity on an average day. One in four of the hospitals surveyed reported that at least 80 percent of staffed beds were filled. Nearly one-third of hospitals said between 40 and 60 percent of their staffed beds are filled on average, and 45 percent of hospitals reported between 60 and 79 percent of beds filled. It is important to remember that hospitals purposely maintain more beds than they use on a typical day in order to ensure they can accommodate surges in admissions resulting from factors such as seasonal illnesses or emergency events.

## How many nurses are on staff at hospitals?

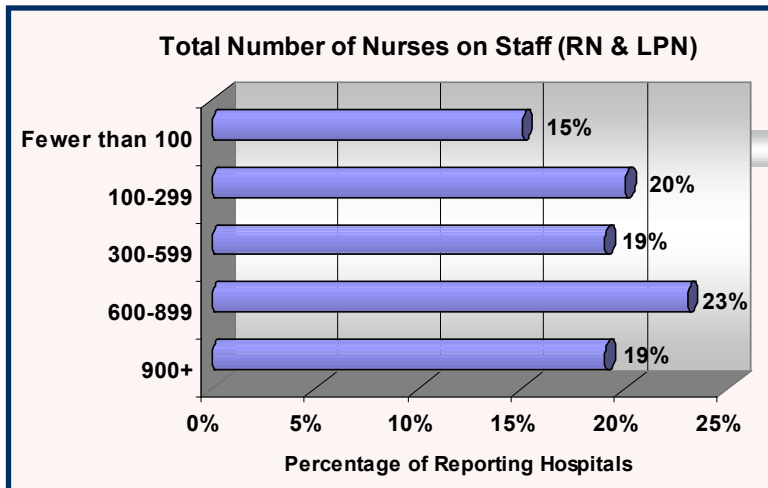
Demand for nurses in Ohio continues to increase. From 2000 to 2004, the total number of nurses employed in Ohio hospitals rose from 218,151 to 239,043, and still, hospitals reported a shortage throughout this time period.



Northeast Ohio hospitals employ more than 15,000 nurses, which fulfill a total of 11,122 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. The number of nurses employed in individual hospitals in Northeast Ohio varies considerably, with the smallest at 49 and the largest at 2,085. This is to be expected given the large range of bed sizes reported by hospitals. Only 15 percent had nursing staffs of fewer than 100, while 42 reported staffs of 600 or more.

## Do hospitals employ more RNs or LPNs?

There are three general categories of nurses: licensed practical nurses (LPN), registered nurses (RN) and advanced practice nurses (APN). The vast majority of nurses employed by hospitals are RNs. Only 10 percent of hospital staff nurses are LPNs and 5 percent are APNs, which are RNs who have completed advanced clinical education and have a minimum of a master's degree.



A variety of educational routes are available for becoming a registered nurse, including bachelor's degree programs, associate's degree programs and diploma programs. The most common education level for RNs employed by hospitals was the Bachelor of Science in nursing, or BSN, with 31 percent of staff nurses having earned this degree. Twenty-two percent of staff nurses are graduates of associate's degree programs and 18 percent are graduates of diploma programs.

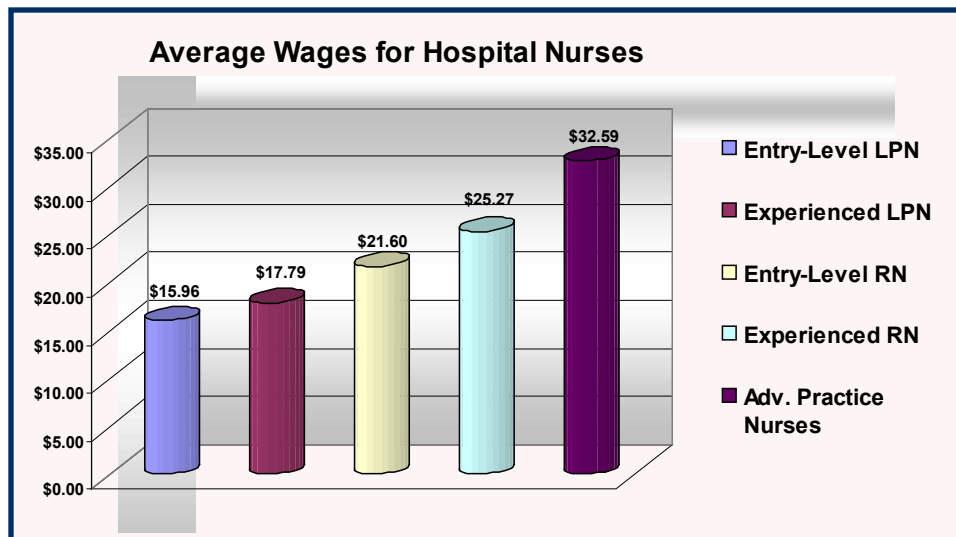
Degree	Number of Hospital Staff Nurses	Percent of Hospital Staff Nurses**
LPN	1272	10%
BSN	3990	31%
Other RN*	5166	40%
MSN	549	4%

\*Other RN includes graduates of associate's degree and diploma programs \*\*Remaining are Ph.D, Degree Unknown or No Degree.

The use of RNs and LPNs varies based on the unit within the hospital. Psychiatry, rehabilitation and medical/surgical units are the most likely to use LPNs. On medical/surgical units, 16.7 percent of nurses are LPNs; on rehab units, 17.0 percent are LPNs; and on psychiatry units, 20.9 percent are LPNs. By contrast, pediatric critical care, operating suites and neonatal critical care units have the highest percentages of RNs, as compared to LPNs. RNs make up 98.2 percent of nurses working on pediatric critical care units, 96.2 percent of nurses in operating suites and 95.9 percent of neonatal critical care nurses.

### How much do nurses earn?

As would be expected, hospital nurse salaries correspond with their levels of training, with APNs averaging the highest hourly rate, at \$32.59 per hour, and entry-level LPNs averaging the lowest, at \$15.96 per hour. Entry-level and experienced RNs are paid higher wages than corresponding LPNs. There is not a tremendous difference between the wages paid for entry-level and experienced nurses at either the RN or LPN level.



On average, nurses were paid 3 percent more in 2004 than they were during the previous year. Over the past three years, experienced RN salaries increased by 13 percent and LPN salaries increased by 15 percent. The current annual salary for experienced RNs is \$52,561, on average, and for experienced LPNs, it is \$37,003 on average.

### What is the average age of nurses?

The median age of nurses, both RNs and LPNs, is 43. Forty-six percent of hospitals reported the average age of their RNs was between 41 and 45, and 60 percent said their LPNs fell into the same category. Only 18 percent of hospitals reported that the average age of their RNs was in the 35 to 40 year category. This is similar to findings from the previous survey, published by NEONI in 2002, which found that 65 percent of hospitals reported the average age of their RN workforce was between 41 and 45 years of age.

