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Subject: National sources of data to describe state-level characteristics of the nursing workforce

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Current Workforce

American Community Survey

- Benefits:
 - Available on an annual basis (release date is typically late October)
 - Approximately 30,000 registered nurses in the dataset
 - Can describe a wide range of social and demographic characteristics of RNs
- Drawbacks:
 - Occupation is self-reported so some reporting error is introduced—no way to identify RNs working in another field or retired
 - Smaller states may not have adequate sample size to generate accurate estimates on annual basis (would need to combine multiple years of data)

National Council of State Boards of Nursing/National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers – National Nursing Workforce Survey

- Benefits:
 - Scheduled to be conducted every two years (first survey conducted in 2013)
 - Approximately 42,000 nurses in the 2013 survey dataset
 - Targeted to licensed RNs – includes RNs working outside of nursing and unemployed RNs
 - Focused specifically on characteristics of nursing workforce
 - Meant to provide adequate sample size for state-level analysis
- Drawbacks:
 - No public-use data file released; we would have to negotiate their sharing of the data
 - Comparisons of the California sample with other California data indicates that the NCSBN survey under-represents younger RNs (who are more likely to have a bachelor's degree) and over-represents the oldest RNs. Thus, the statistics produced have more errors than other data sources that have weights to adjust for response differences.

Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics

- Benefits:
 - Available on an annual basis – estimates benchmarked to May of each year
 - Provides estimates of employment and wages for RNs in each state
- Drawbacks:
 - Counts number of nursing jobs, not number of RNs
 - Smaller states' estimates may be less accurate due to smaller sample size
 - No information describing social or demographic characteristics, so cannot look at education or race/ethnicity

National Council of State Boards of Nursing NurSys Data

- Benefits:
 - Licensing data submitted by states; complete population available
 - NCSBN does some de-duplication for nurses who have licenses in multiple states
 - Has demographic data for most nurses – definitely has age for all, and probably has education at licensure
- Drawbacks:
 - Education data will not be updated if the state does not continuously track these data. Since less than half of states do surveys when nurses renew licenses, many states will only have education at the time of licensure.
 - States that have re-licensure surveys that are not mandatory may have a low response rate. For example, Hawaii's response rate is about 30%. Thus, for these states the data will not be accurate regarding highest education.

Education (supply on new entrants to workforce)

National Council of State Boards of Nursing NCLEX Exam Statistics

- Benefits:
 - Available on annual basis
 - Exam candidates by type of degree earned: ADN vs BSN
- Drawbacks:
 - No information describing social or demographic characteristics

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

- Benefits:
 - Available on annual basis
 - Most comprehensive database available to describe postsecondary education
 - Covers nursing programs of all degree levels
 - Has some demographic data, including gender and race/ethnicity
- Drawbacks:
 - Can only be used to describe graduates; no nursing enrollment data
 - Entry-level BSN graduates can't be separated from RN-to-BSN graduates
 - Some misreporting exists that makes it hard to separate AD from diploma graduates

American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)

- Benefits:
 - Available on annual basis
 - Includes data describing both graduates and enrollments
 - Has some demographic data, including race/ethnicity and gender
- Drawbacks:
 - Limited to nursing programs at baccalaureate level or higher

National League for Nursing

- Benefits:
 - Available on annual basis
 - Includes data describing applications, admissions, enrollments and graduates
 - Covers nursing programs of all levels
 - Demographic characteristics include race/ethnicity, gender and age
- Drawbacks:
 - Data limited to pre-licensure nursing programs
 - Data lags behind other sources of student data (2011-2012 academic year is most recent available)