Healthforce Center at UCSF

Demand for Registered Nurses in California: The California Chief Nursing Officer Survey, 2017

Summary of April 2019 report
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Background

This document summarizes the eighth annual survey of hospital registered nurse (RN) employers. The surveys collect data on demand for RNs, changes that have occurred over time, and information specific to the hiring of newly-graduated nurses.

Results

- The vast majority of hospital CNOs reported that there was greater demand for RNs than supply.

- The shortage was primarily for nurses with clinical experience, particularly for the clinical areas of peri-operative (OR) care, critical care, labor & delivery, and the emergency department.

  - Demand for experienced RNs was greatest in the Central California region and lowest in the San Francisco Bay Area.

- Hospitals indicated that there is a surplus of new RN graduates, although the demand for new RN graduates has slowly improved between 2013 and 2017.

  - Demand for new RN graduates was strongest in the Sacramento and Northern Counties region and the San Francisco Bay Area, and weakest in the Southern Border region.

Figure 1. Average ranking of labor market demand for experienced RNs by geographic region, 2013 – 2017 (1=surplus   3=balanced labor market   5=shortage)
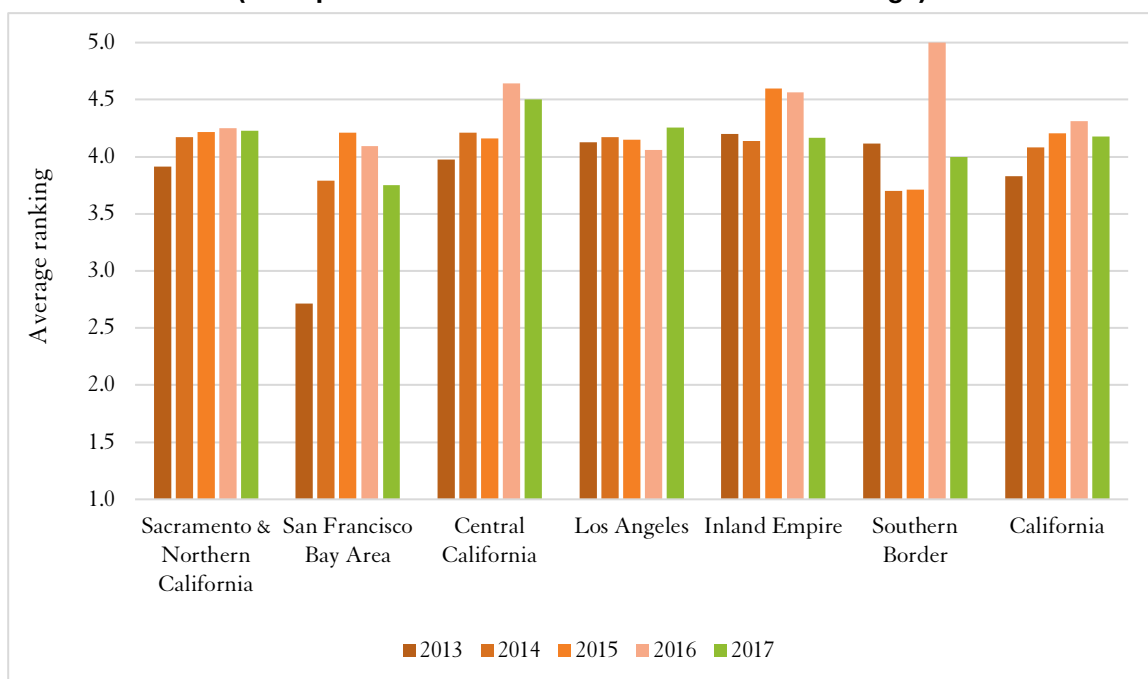
Hiring of newly-graduated nurses

- Over half of responding hospitals reported that their employment of new RN graduates increased between fall 2016 and fall 2017.

- Over 87% of hospitals reported hiring new RN graduates in 2017, and new graduates accounted for 37% of all new staff RN hires in 2017.

- Nearly one-third of hospitals reported that they expect to increase hiring of new graduates in 2018, which is a decline from 2015 and 2016 when nearly half expected increased hiring of new graduates.

- The most frequently reported reason for an expected increase in new graduate hiring was the lack of available experienced RNs.

### Hiring requirements for newly-graduated RNs

- 9% of hospitals reported they required newly-hired RNs to hold a bachelor's degree. 91% had no such requirement.

- 54.9% of hospitals reported a preference for hiring baccalaureate-trained RNs, and 45.1% had no such preference.

- Hospitals reported that BSN-prepared nurses represent a larger share of staff compared to prior years, with approximately 40% reporting that at least half their RN staff have a BSN or higher degree.

- Two-thirds of hospitals reported having goals or plans in place to increase the number of baccalaureate-educated RNs on staff. One-third did not have such plans.

Hiring expectations for the next year

- 43% of hospitals expected that their RN employment would increase in 2018. This is a decrease from the 2016 survey, when 60.2% reported an expectation of greater hiring in the coming year.

- Nearly 11% of responding hospitals reported expectations that RN employment would decrease in 2018.

- The most frequently reported reasons for the expected employment increase were patient census growth, increased hospital bed capacity, and increased patient acuity.

Figure 2. Average ranking of labor market demand for new RN graduates by geographic region, 2013 – 2017
(1=surplus   3=balanced labor market   5=shortage)
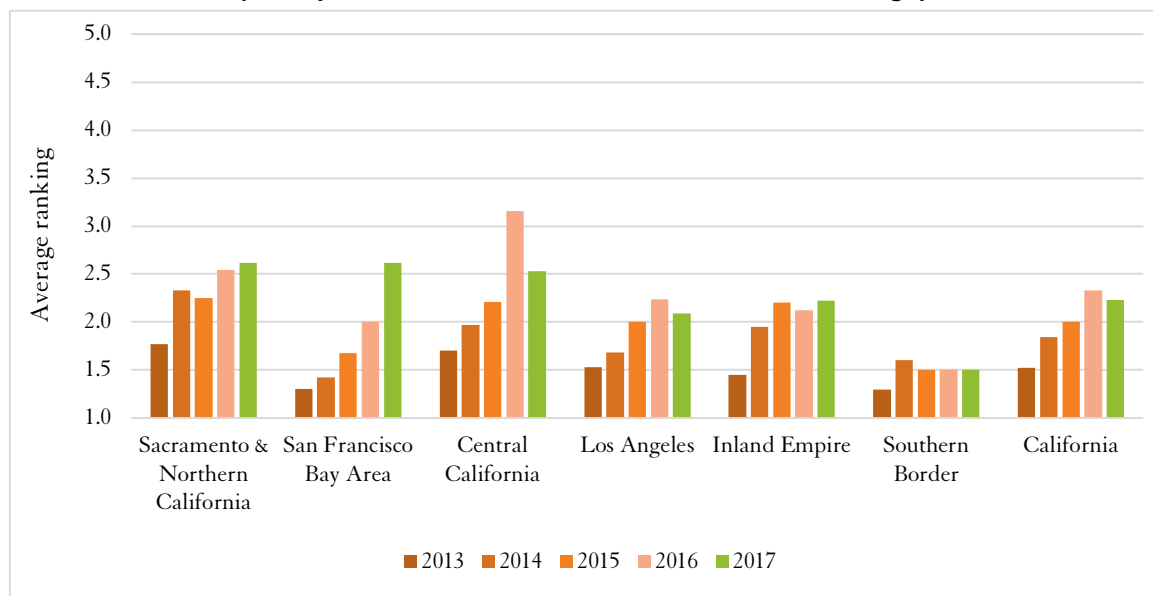
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