



Survey of Nurse Employers in California

Spring 2012

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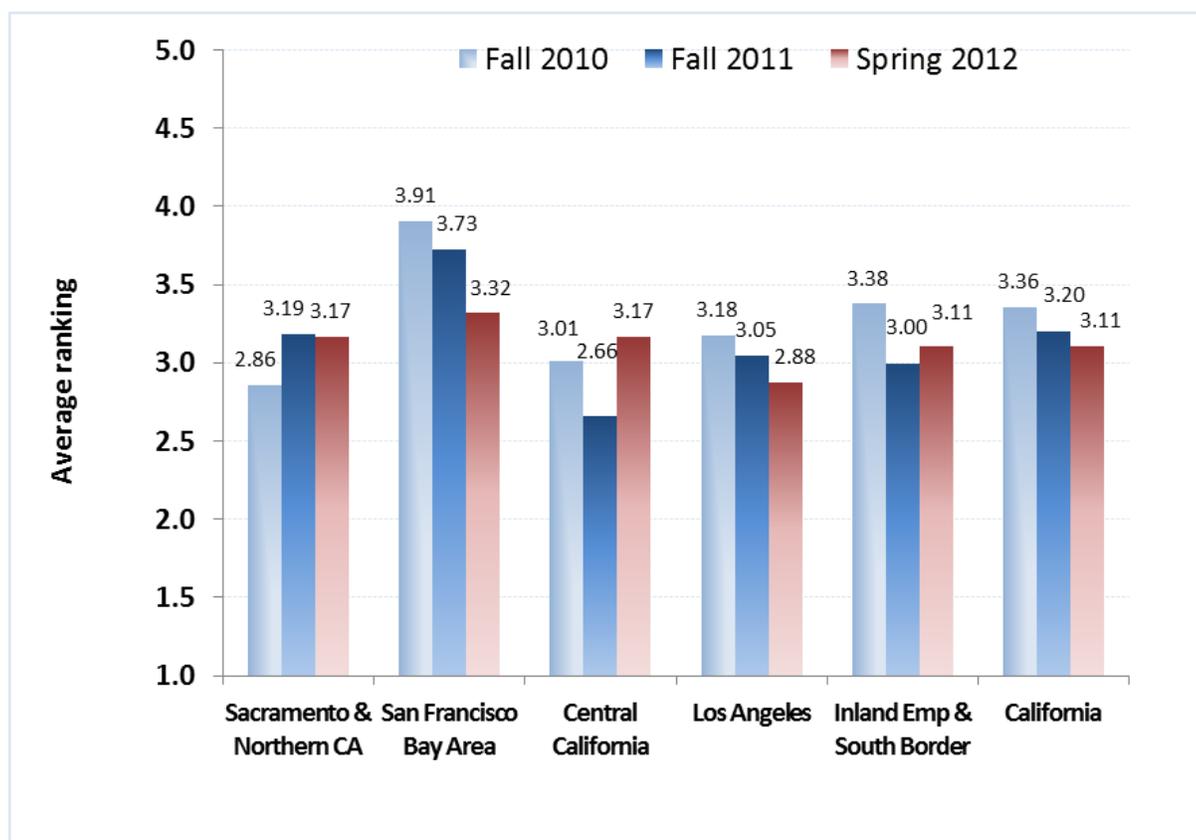
This report summarizes the findings of a survey conducted in spring 2012 of Chief Nursing Officers at general acute care hospitals in California, to evaluate the overall demand for RNs in the state. The survey reveals variation in the demand for RNs across California, the lack of positions available for newly graduated RNs, and hospitals' expectation that hiring will increase over the next two years.

FINDINGS

Perception of Labor Market Conditions

Hospitals were asked to describe the RN labor market in their area using a rank order scale of 1 to 5, where 1 indicated high demand for RNs and difficulty filling open positions, 3 indicated demand and supply were in balance, and 5 indicated the demand for RNs was much less than the available supply. Figure 1 shows the average ranking of labor market conditions for registered nurses by region. Figure 2 shows the differences in perception of labor market conditions based on whether the hospital is located in a rural or non-rural area.¹ Figure 3 compares the perception of labor market demand by hospital size (number of beds). In all figures, the current data are compared with data collected in fall 2011 and fall 2010.

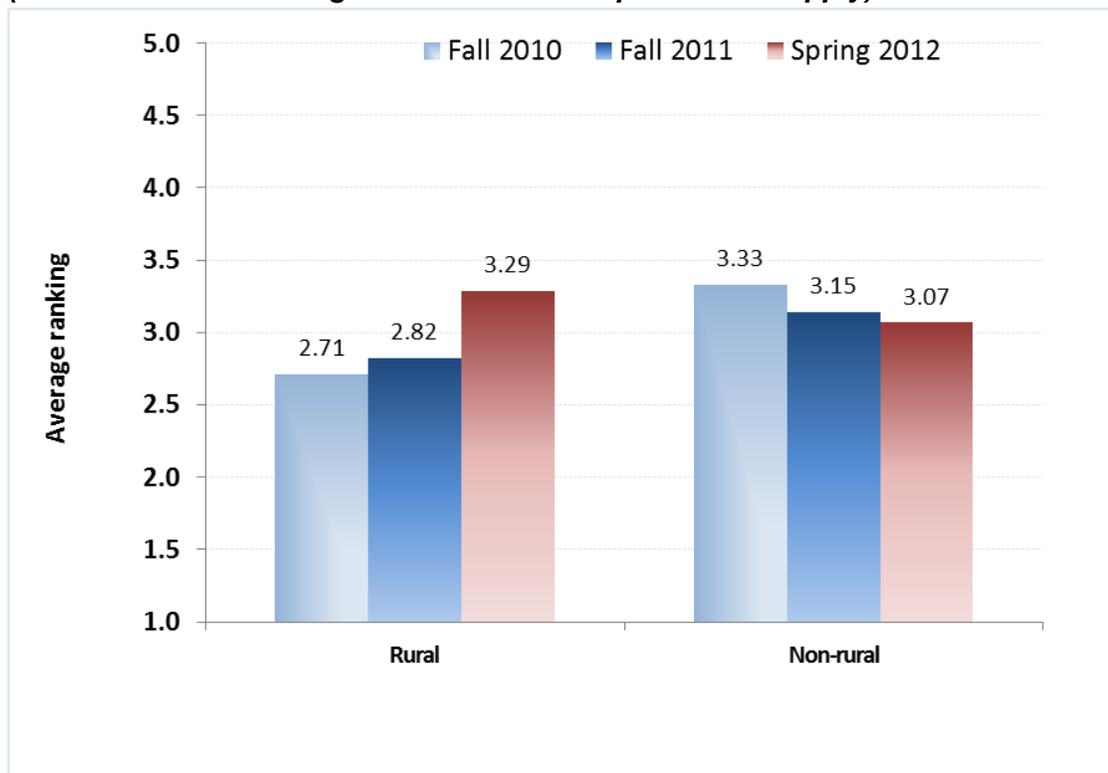
**Figure 1. Average ranking of labor market demand by geographic region
(Lower values indicate greater demand compared with supply)**



¹ The regional and rural/non-rural definitions used in this analysis are provided in the Survey Methods section at the end of the report.

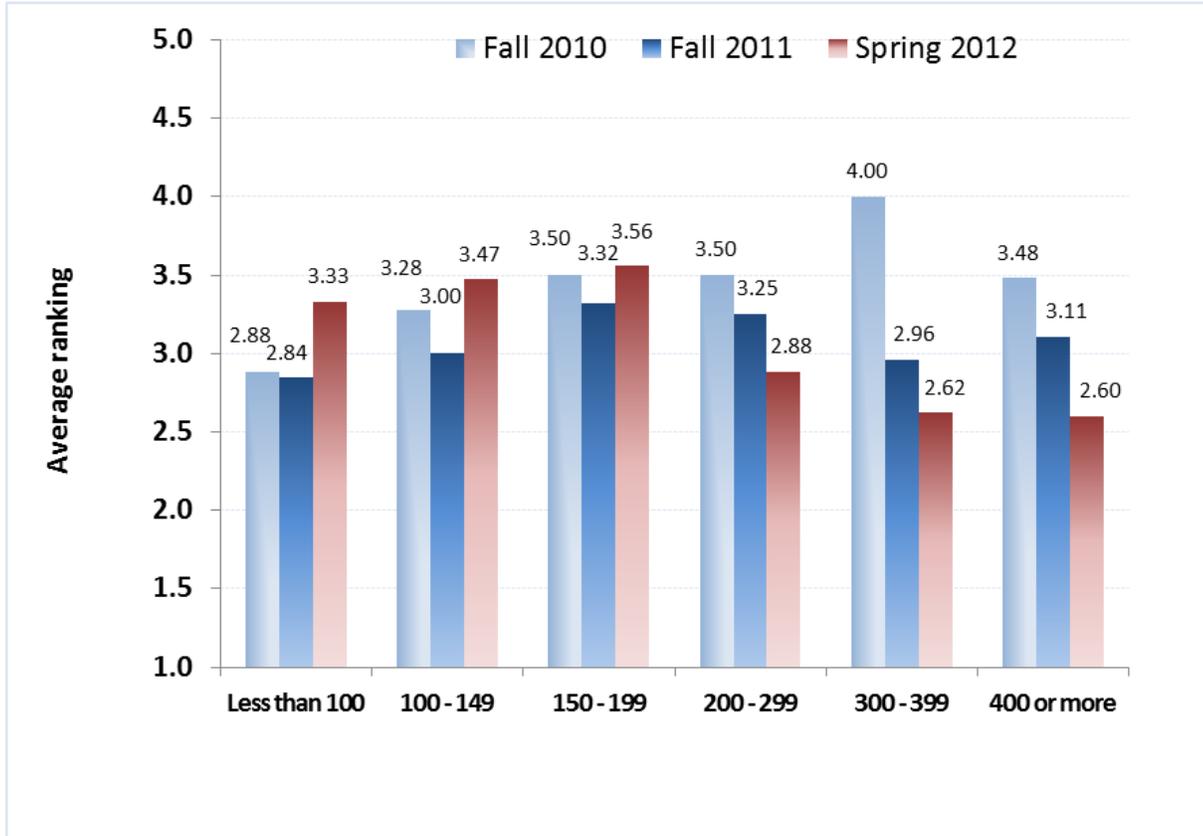
- Comparative data show that, on average, demand for RNs in California increased relative to their supply. However, the data also show this is not uniformly true across all regions.
- Current demand for RNs is strongest at hospitals located in the Los Angeles region, and weakest among hospitals in the San Francisco Bay Area region.
- The current data indicate a perception that demand for RNs is mainly in balance with the local supply, with some difficulty filling open positions.

Figure 2. Average ranking of labor market demand by rural location
(Lower values indicate greater demand compared with supply)



- Current demand for RNs is slightly stronger relative to supply among non-rural hospitals than among rural hospitals.
- Comparative data indicate that demand for RNs strengthened relative to supply at non-rural hospitals between fall 2010 and spring 2012, but weakened at rural hospitals.

Figure 3. Average ranking of labor market demand by number of hospital beds
(Lower values indicate greater demand compared with supply)

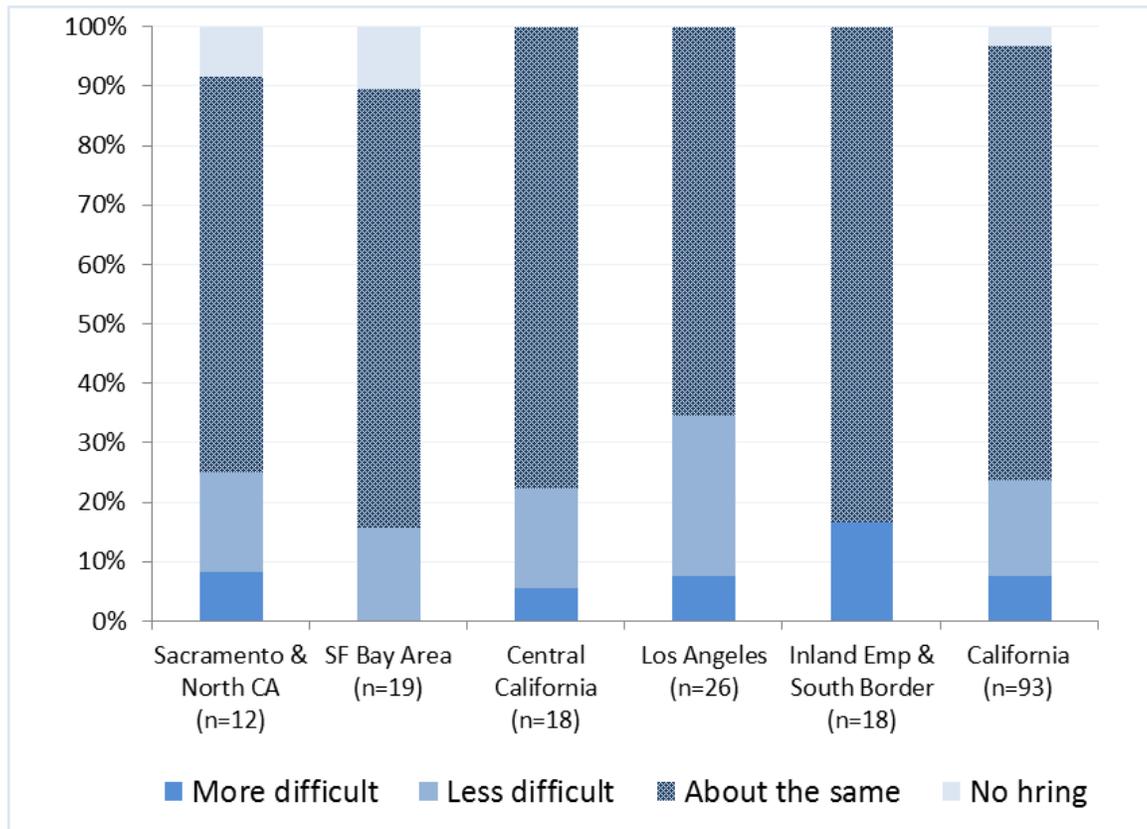


- Current demand for RNs is strongest among larger hospitals (those with at least 200 beds).
- Demand for RNs increased relative to their supply among larger hospitals between fall 2010 and spring 2012, but decreased among smaller hospitals.

Changes in the Difficulty of Recruiting

Hospitals were asked whether the recruiting of RNs was currently “more difficult”, “about the same”, or “less difficult” than it was last quarter, or whether they did not do any hiring in the current quarter. Figure 3 below shows the distribution of hospital responses, by region and for the state as a whole.

Figure 4. Difficulty recruiting RNs compared to last quarter



- Across all regions, the majority of hospitals reported that recruiting RNs is currently no more or less difficult than it was last quarter.
- A greater number of hospitals indicated that hiring was less difficult in the current quarter than indicated more difficulty recruiting.
- Approximately 16% of hospitals in the Inland Empire region reported that recruiting RNs has become more difficult by comparison with last quarter, and no hospitals indicated that recruiting became easier.

RN Vacancies and Active Recruitment

Table 1 reports the total number of current vacancies and number of vacancies being actively recruited for both full-time and part-time positions among hospitals that responded to the survey. Survey respondents represent approximately 21% of general acute care hospital beds in California, as described in more detail below.

Table 1. Active recruitment for currently vacant positions, by full-time/part-time status²

Staff RNs	Vacant	Actively recruited	Share of vacancies being actively recruited	# of responses
Full-time positions	873	800	91.6%	75
Part-time positions	358	332	92.7%	75
Total positions	1,442	1,305	90.5%	85

- Responding hospitals indicated they are actively recruiting to fill 1,305 positions. If these hospitals are representative of all hospitals statewide, approximately 6,214 positions are being recruited statewide.
- Overall, hospitals reported that they are actively recruiting to fill approximately 91% of all vacant Staff RN positions.
- There was almost no difference between full-time and part-time Staff RN positions in terms of the share of vacant positions that were being actively recruited.

New RN Hiring

Hospitals were asked to report the total number of Staff RNs hired in the last quarter, including the number of foreign-educated RNs and the number of new RN graduates (U.S.-educated). 91 of the 93 hospitals responding to the survey reported hiring at least 1 new RN in the past quarter.

Table 2. New RN graduates and foreign-educated RNs as a share of total RN hires by region

Region	Total RNs hired	Foreign educated (%)	New graduates (%)
San Francisco Bay Area	249	0.0%	32.5%
Central California	149	0.0%	41.6%
Sacramento & Northern California	207	1.0%	31.4%
Los Angeles	563	0.0%	50.8%
Inland Empire & Southern Border	340	0.5%	17.4%
California	1,508	0.3%	36.7%

² Some hospitals reported only the total number of Staff RN vacancies. As a result, part-time and full-time vacancies do not sum to the total.

- Only 4 out the approximately 1,500 (0.7%) Staff RNs hired by responding hospitals last quarter were foreign-educated.
- The share of newly-hired Staff RNs in the last quarter who were new RN graduates (US-trained) ranged from 14% (Southern Border) to 51% (Los Angeles).

Expectations for New RN Hiring

Hospitals were asked to report the total number of Staff RNs they expected to hire in the upcoming quarter. 88 of the 93 hospitals responding to the survey reported an expectation of hiring at least 1 RN next quarter.

Table 3. Expected new Staff RN hiring by region

Region	Hired last quarter	Hire next quarter	Change in hiring (%)
San Francisco Bay Area	249	177	-28.9%
Central California	149	140	-6.0%
Sacramento & Northern California	207	173	-16.4%
Los Angeles	563	571	1.4%
Inland Empire & Southern Border	340	290	-14.7%
California	1,508	1,351	-10.4%

- Overall, hospitals anticipated that hiring would be approximately 10% lower in the upcoming quarter than it was in the prior quarter.
- Only the Los Angeles region reported an expectation that overall hiring would (slightly) increase next quarter.
- Hospitals in the San Francisco Bay Area region reported the largest expected regional decrease in overall hiring.

Comments and observations from Chief Nursing Officers and Executives

Survey respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments regarding their perception of the current RN labor market. It is clear from their comments that employment opportunities favor RNs with specific experience in specialty areas including critical care, emergency department, operating room, and intensive care. Employment opportunities for new graduates continue to be limited, with applicants far outnumbering available positions.

However, respondents expressed concerns that the current lack of job openings for new graduates will force recently-graduated RNs to seek employment outside of nursing, which could negatively impact hospitals in the long run. Hospitals expect that experienced RNs will retire in greater numbers as the economic recession abates. Hospitals reported hiring new graduates into positions classified as intermittent (non-regular without benefits), allowing them to gain acute care experience needed to compete for regular hospital employment.

Many respondents also commented on the educational preparation of new graduates, noting the Institute of Medicine Committee on the Future of Nursing’s recommendation that 80% of RNs hold a baccalaureate or higher degree by 2020. The comments suggested that there is likely a difference in employment opportunities for new graduates depending on whether they hold a baccalaureate of science in nursing (BSN) or an associate degree (AD). A few respondents indicated they plan to implement a hiring policy that would require applicants to have a BSN.

SURVEY METHODS

The survey instrument was based on a questionnaire developed by CINHC for the 2009 *New RN Hospital Survey*, and was designed to match the survey conducted in fall 2010 by UCSF, CINHC and HASC. Chief Nursing Officers were invited by email to participate in this web-based survey. Respondents who requested an alternative to completing the survey online were emailed or faxed a hard copy version of the survey. Facilities were contacted with follow-up emails and telephone calls in an effort to encourage participation.

Survey Participation and Data Analysis

A total of 73 responses to the survey were received, and some of the survey respondents were reporting data for multiple facilities. In total, these survey data represent 93 different hospitals and 18,600 total beds. This is approximately 21% of the total number of beds at general acute care hospitals in California.

Figure 2 in the report focuses on the difference in perception of labor demand for RNs based on whether the hospital is located in a rural or non-rural setting. We used a hospital’s zip code to classify it as such using the taxonomy defined by the Rural-Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) classification scheme.³

Some tables/figures in the report focus on differences across hospitals based on geographic region. The geographic regions used to group survey responses are derived from those used to conduct the California Board of Registered Nursing, Survey of Registered Nurses. However, due to the small number of survey responses for certain parts of the state, regions were further combined. Table 4 lists the regions used in this report and the counties each represents.

Table 4. Geographic regions and the counties they represent

Region	Counties represented
Sacramento & Northern California	Butte, Colusa, Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Nevada, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sierra, Tehama, Trinity, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, Yuba
San Francisco Bay Area	Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma
Central California	Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Fresno, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Mono, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare, Tuolumne, Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara
Los Angeles	Los Angeles, Ventura
Inland Empire & Southern Border	Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, Imperial, San Diego

³ For more information on RUCA classification scheme see: <http://depts.washington.edu/uwruca/index.php>

Table 5 compares the geographic distribution of hospitals that responded to the survey with that of general acute hospitals in California. In general, survey respondents are representative of hospitals in the state in term of their geographic distribution. Exceptions are facilities in the Inland Empire/Southern Border, which are underrepresented, and facilities in the Central California region, which are overrepresented.

Table 5. Distribution of responding hospitals vs. general acute care hospitals in California, by region

Region	General acute care hospitals in California		Survey sample	
	#	%	#	%
San Francisco Bay Area	86	19.8	19	20.4
Central California	75	17.3	18	19.4
Sacramento & Northern California	59	13.6	12	12.9
Los Angeles	113	26.0	26	28.0
Inland Empire/Southern Border	101	23.3	18	19.4
Total	434	100.0	93	100.0

Table 6 compares the size distribution of hospitals that responded to the survey with that of general acute hospitals in California. In general, survey respondents are representative of hospitals in the state based on the number of facility beds. Exceptions are facilities ranging in size from 150 – 199 beds, which are underrepresented, and facilities ranging in size from 200 – 299 beds, which are overrepresented.

Table 6. Distribution of responding hospitals vs. general acute care hospitals in California, by bed size

Total # of beds	General acute care hospitals in California		Survey sample	
	#	%	#	%
Less than 100 beds	137	31.6	30	32.3
100 - 149 beds	73	16.8	15	16.1
150 - 199 beds	51	11.8	9	9.7
200 - 299 beds	67	15.4	16	17.2
300 - 399 beds	59	13.6	13	14.0
400 or more beds	47	10.8	10	10.8
Total	434	100.0	93	100.0