



The Long Term Care Nurse Staffing Study (LTCNSS) assesses nurse staffing and related issues in the long term care setting. In 2018, approximately 27% of licensed vocational nurses (LVNs) and 3% of registered nurses (RNs) in Texas worked in the nursing home/extended care setting. Long term care facilities may also employ certified nurse aides (CNAs), certified medication aides (CMAs), and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs). During the summer of 2019, the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) administered the LTCNSS to directors of nursing (DONs) or facility administrators of 1,205 Texas nursing facilities. A total of 314 facilities participated for a final response rate of 26.1%.

Institute of Medicine's The Future of Nursing ¹

In 2011, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) published *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*. This report recommended a series of concrete policy and administrative changes that would allow the American healthcare professions to deal with our country's healthcare workforce needs. As a means of partially addressing the country's shortage of highly-qualified practicing nurses, the IOM report notes exceptionally high turnover rates among first-year nurses. It recommends that employers of newly licensed RNs seek to ease the transition by

implementing transition to practice (residency) programs. Such programs have thus far proven economically prudent with returns on investment as high as 884%, while also leading to increased first-year nurse satisfaction and improved quality of patient care.

¹Institute of Medicine, Committee on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Initiative on the Future of Nursing. (2011). *The future of nursing: Leading change, advancing health*. Retrieved from The National Academies Press website: http://books.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=12956.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=12956

Transition to Practice Programs in Texas

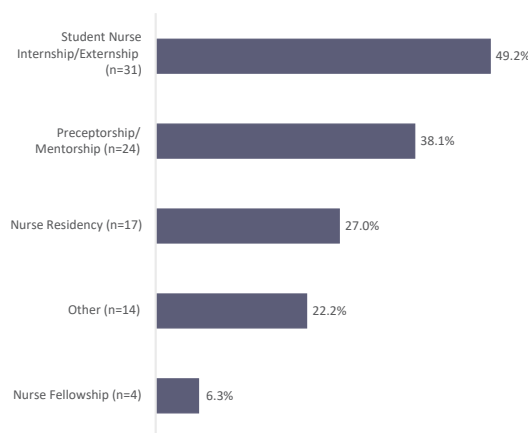
63 of 314 (20.1%) survey respondents reported using at least one type of transition to practice program for all nursing staff.

Description of Transition to Practice Programs

The 63 facilities that had a transition to practice program in place were asked what kind of programs they utilized out of 5 options: nurse residency, nurse fellowship, student nurse internship/externship, mentorship/preceptorship, and other. Facilities could select multiple transition to practice program types. The results are shown in Figure 1.

- The most commonly used transition to practice program type was student nurse internship/externship. 31 of the 63 (49.2%) facilities reported using this type of program.
- 24 of 63 (38.1%) of facilities used mentorship/preceptorship programs. As a point of comparison, 187 out of 275 (68.0%) hospitals in Texas utilized mentorship/preceptorship programs.
- Other transition to practice program types included clinical rotations and trainings (n=4), orientation (n=1), and a "buddy program" (n=1).

Figure 1. Percentage of facilities with transition to practice programs by program type (n=63)



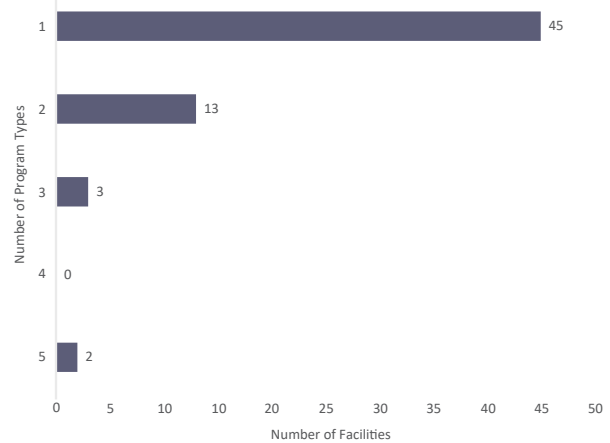
Note: Facilities could select more than 1 type of transition to practice program; n=number of respondents.



18 of the 63 (28.6%) facilities with a transition to practice program reported using more than one program type. Figure 2 shows the number of program types the 63 facilities reported.

- 45 of the 63 (71.4%) facilities reported utilizing only one type of transition to practice program.
- 2 of the 63 (3.2%) facilities reported using all 5 of the transition to practice program types.
- 13 of the 63 (20.6%) facilities reported using 2 different transition to practice methods.

Figure 2. Number of program types used by facilities



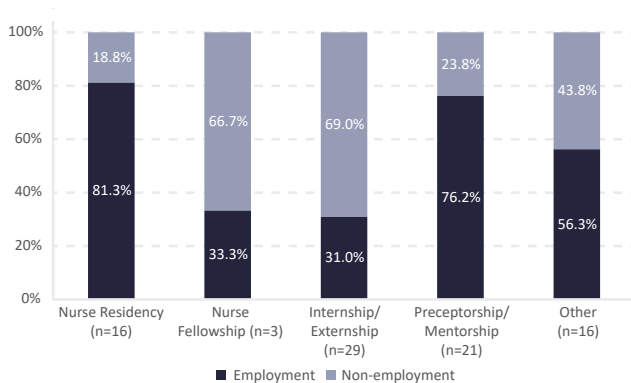
Traits of Transition to Practice Programs in Texas

Employment vs. Non-Employment Models

As part of understanding facilities' transition to practice programs, each was asked whether their program paid transitioning nurses (the employment model) or whether their program was unpaid (the non-employment model), perhaps through participation with a nursing school or as an individual internship (Figure 3).

- Student internships/externships and nurse fellowships were more likely to be non-employment models, whereas nurse residencies, preceptorships/mentorships, and other transition to practice types were more likely to be employment models.

Figure 3. Transition to practice program type by employment model type



Note: n=number of respondents

Type of Nurses Eligible for Transition to Practice

Tables 1 through 3 show the types of nurses who were eligible for transition to practice programs.

- Among most program types, VNs were the most common eligible nurse type. In 2019, RNs were the most common eligible nurse in hospital transition to practice programs.
- As seen in Tables 2 and 3, the most reported program type for both newly licensed and experienced nurses was mentorship/preceptorship.

Table 1. Student nurses eligible for transition to practice programs

Nurse Type		Transition to Practice Program Type	
		Internship/ Externship	Other
VN Students	n	26	3
	%	83.9%	21.4%
RN Students	n	11	1
	%	35.5%	7.1%

Note: n=number of respondents

Table 2. Newly licensed nurses eligible for transition to practice programs

Nurse Type		Transition to Practice Program Type		
		Nurse Residency	Mentorship/ Preceptorship	Other
Newly Licensed VNs	n	16	21	5
	%	94.1%	87.5%	35.7%
Newly Licensed RNs	n	12	20	5
	%	70.6%	83.3%	35.7%

Note: n=number of respondents

Table 3. Experienced nurses eligible for transition to practice programs

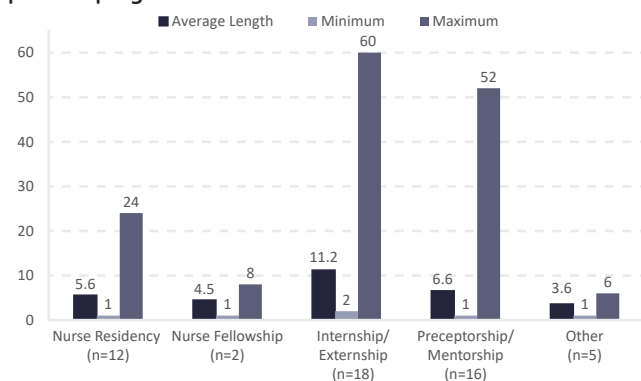
Nurse Type		Transition to Practice Program Type		
		Nurse Fellowship	Mentorship/Preceptorship	Other
Experienced VNs	n	3	11	3
	%	75.0%	45.8%	21.4%
Experienced RNs	n	2	13	2
	%	50.0%	54.2%	14.3%

Note: n=number of facilities responding that nurse types were eligible for the transition to practice program; %=the percent of facilities offering each transition to practice program type who responded that nurse types were eligible for the transition to practice program.

Length of Transition to Practice (in weeks)

- Internship/externship had an average duration of 11.2 weeks, the longest of the program types (Figure 3).
- Preceptorship/mentorship had a range of 58 weeks and an average duration of 6.6 weeks.

Figure 3. Average length and range in weeks of transition to practice programs



Note: n=number of respondents

Number of Participants

Table 4 reports the number of students who participated in each transition to practice program type during the last fiscal year.

- Student nurse internship/externship programs had more participants than any other transition to practice program during the last fiscal year.

Coordinators of Transition to Practice Programs

The majority of respondents indicated that their transition to practice programs were coordinated by the chief nursing officer or director of nursing (18 programs, 35.3%), or a nurse manager (15 programs, 29.4%). Just one program (2.0%) reported a dedicated transition to practice program coordinator position.

Table 4. Number of participants in transition to practice programs

Transition to Practice Program Type	n	Number of Students
Nurse Residency	13	128
Nurse Fellowship	2	6
Internship/Externship	19	407
Preceptorship/Mentorship	16	107
Other	5	96

Note: n=number of respondents who reported participants for the respective program type.

Reported Outcomes of Transition to Practice Programs

Survey respondents could also select up to three outcomes resulting from transition to practice programs. Only 48 of the 63 (76.2%) programs who indicated having a transition to practice program answered this question. Table 5 summarizes those results.

- Improvements in clinical competence, clinical decision making, and an increased number of new graduates applying were the top 3 most reported outcomes of transition to practice programs.
- Other outcomes included CNAs and CMAs seeking careers in nursing and an increase in volunteers from high schools.

Table 5. Reported outcomes of transition to practice programs (n=48)

Reported Outcome	n	%
Increased number of new graduates applying	23	47.9%
Decreased turnover during first year of employment	15	31.3%
Improved clinical decision making abilities	22	45.8%
Improved clinical competence in resident/patient care	26	54.2%
Improved communication with physicians, other staff, and residents	13	27.1%
Improved organization and prioritizing skills in clinical practice	6	12.5%
Improved ability to incorporate research based evidence in clinical practice	4	8.3%
Other	5	10.4%

Note: n=number of respondents



Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The 2019 LTCNSS reported that 63 out of the 314 (20.1%) responding facilities used at least one transition to practice program. 31 respondents used an internship/externship type transition to practice program, and 69.0% of these programs used an unemployment model. 24 programs used a preceptorship/mentorship transition to practice model with 76.2% of these programs using an employment model. While some programs reported using more than one type of transition to practice model, most programs reported only using one type.

As far as traits of the transition to practice program in long term care facilities, most programs reported using an employment model in all types with the exception of facilities that reported using internship/externship or nurse fellowship transition to practice programs. The length in weeks varied from program to program with some programs requiring as many as 60 weeks to complete the program. Internship/externship programs had the longest average number of weeks (11.2 weeks).

VNs were the most common eligible nurses for long-term care transition to practice programs. Facilities reported 407 students who participated in an internship/externship, which was the most among transition to practice program types. The top benefits of transition to practice programs included improvements in clinical competence, clinical decision-making, and increased number of new graduates applying for nursing positions.

TCNWS Advisory Committee Recommendations

54.2% of facilities who reported having a transition to practice program for nursing staff stated that improved clinical competence in resident/patient care was an outcome of transition to practice programs.

- Only 20.1% of respondents reported using at least one type transition to practice program for nursing staff, with student nurse internship/externship being the most commonly used method. Facilities should develop and evaluate training and continuing education programs to ensure they are meeting facility goals of staff development, resident care, and quality outcomes.
- Facilities should encourage nurses to participate in the Transition to Practice Academy where they will gain valuable resources and takeaways that support their transition to and prepare nurses to offer the highest possible level of care to nursing facility residents.
- Vocational educators and DONs are encouraged to use the Vocational Nurse Educator Tool Kit² to help new LVNs transition into long term care facilities.

²Available at hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/long-term-care-providers/nursing-facilities/quality-monitoring-program/resources/vocational-nurse-educator-toolkit