

Eli's Hospice Insider

Hospice News: RN Workforce Larger Than Experts Predicted

If your nurse hiring isn't as squeezed as you expected lately, it may be because RNs are putting off retirement. A study by **Rand Corp.** published in Health Affairs found that "the size of the registered nurse (RN) workforce has surpassed forecasts from a decade ago, growing to 2.7 million in 2012 instead of peaking at 2.2 million," according to the study's abstract.

Stats: From 1969-90, "for a given number of RNs working at age fifty, 47 percent were still working at age sixty-two and 9 percent were working at age 69," the authors say. "In contrast, in the period 1991-2012 the proportions were 74 percent at age 62 and 24 percent at age 69. This trend, which largely predates the recent recession, extended nursing careers by 2.5 years after age fifty and increased the 2012 RN workforce by 136,000 people."

The older RNs tend to leave the hospital setting and take jobs in less physically demanding settings in post-acute care, the study adds.

A surge in new nursing graduates coupled with retirement-age nurses staying in their jobs should keep the supply of nurses healthy overall, but specific locations will have their own unique supply-and-demand issues, the researchers note.

The abstract is at <http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/early/2014/07/10/hlthaff.2014.0128>.