

# Nursing

## A Career to Consider

Rhode Island, as well as the nation, is in the midst of a nursing shortage that is expected to intensify as baby boomers age and the need for health care continues to grow. Compounding the problem is the inability of colleges and universities to increase nursing program enrollments as demand grows and faculty retire. Nationally, 4.7 million workers are classified as registered nurses, licensed practical nurses or certified nursing assistants. Nearly 85 percent of these nurses work within the health care industry. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that nearly one-quarter of the four million job openings expected to occur during the 2006-2016 projection period will be in the nursing field.

Mirroring the national trend, the demand for nursing occupations in Rhode Island is also expected to be high as establishments in the state seek to fill nearly 800 job openings each year. It is expected that Rhode Island hospitals, nursing care facilities and home health care services will need to fill some 4,000 registered nurse, 850 licensed practical nurse and over 2,500 certified nursing assistant job openings during the ten-year projection period. These openings will result from the growing demand for workers as well as the need to replace those who leave the occupation.

The federal government responded to the current nursing shortage with the passage of the Nurse Reinvestment Act of 2002. The 2002 Act authorizes the following: loan repayment programs and scholarships for nursing students; public service announcements to encourage more people to enter the nursing profession; career ladder programs for those who wish to advance within the profession; best practice grants for nursing administration; long-term care training grants to develop and incorporate gerontology curriculum into nursing programs; and a fast-track faculty loan repayment program for nursing students who agree to teach at a school of nursing.



## Quality Career Opportunities for

Registered Nurses,  
Licensed Practical Nurses and  
Certified Nursing Assistants

	Employment		Annual Openings Due to		Total Annual
	2006	2016	Growth	Replacement	Openings
Nursing Totals	23,439	27,959	452	343	795
Registered Nurses	12,707	15,139	243	210	453
Licensed Prac. Nurses	2,001	2,303	30	55	85
Nursing Assistants	8,731	10,517	179	78	257



Today nearly ten percent of nurses are men.

## Registered Nurse (RN)

Registered nurses record patient information, prepare rooms and equipment, assist doctors with exams and treatments, monitor and report symptoms and patient conditions and supervise other less skilled employees. Nationally, 60 percent of registered nurses work in hospitals, others work in physician offices, nursing care facilities and other various settings. While nursing occupations were traditionally a career choice for women, today nearly ten percent of nurses are men. Opportunities for registered nurses will continue to grow in the state as well as nationally due to medical advances, new technologies and the demands of a growing and aging population. Rhode Island will look to fill 450 job openings yearly for registered nurses over the 2006-2016 projection period. A registered nurse can expect to earn as much as \$26.50 per hour upon graduation with many health facilities offering shift differentials for weekend and nighttime hours. Registered nurses in Rhode Island are required to have at least an associate of science degree. Rhode Island has five providers who offer the education and training needed to become a registered nurse (See chart below).

## Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)

Licensed practical nurses care for the sick, injured, convalescent and disabled under the direction of physicians and registered nurses. Most LPN's provide basic bedside care, taking vital signs such as temperature, blood pressure, pulse and respiration. They also prepare and give injections, prepare samples for testing, record food and fluid intake and output, and assist with bathing, dressing and personal hygiene. The growth trend for LPN's is projected to continue in response to the long-term care needs of an aging population. Rhode Island hospitals, nursing care facilities and home health care services will need to fill 850 job openings during the ten-year projection period. Entry level wages for LPN's average \$20.07 per hour. Licensed practical nurses are required to complete a one-year training course. Rhode Island's only LPN training provider is the Community College of Rhode Island.

## Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)

Nursing aides, orderlies and attendants perform a variety of duties for the injured, sick or disabled in hospitals, nursing homes, residential care facilities and in private homes. In general, they feed, dress and bathe patients; serve meals; and answer patients' bed calls. They may take blood pressure and temperature and observe and record patients' physical, mental and emotional conditions. Jobs for certified nursing assistants will continue to be in high demand as businesses that tend to individuals' long-term care needs try to keep up with a rapidly growing elderly population. Rhode Island's health care facilities will look to fill nearly 2,600 CNA job openings during the 2006-2016 projection period. CNA certification is offered through various health care facilities, adult education programs, vocational schools and various community agencies. CNA's earn a median wage of \$12.86 an hour and are required to complete 100 hours of education and training.

### College and University Nursing Programs in Rhode Island - 2006

	Applications Received	Students Enrolled	Students Graduated	Degree Received
<b>Community College of RI</b>	654	338	223	Associate
<b>Rhode Island College</b>	242	142	78	Bachelor's
<b>Salve Regina University</b>	246	57	31	Bachelor's
<b>St. Joseph's School of Nursing</b>	118	53	23	Diploma in Nursing
<b>University of RI</b>	800	337	61	Bachelor's

