



**Nursing Education Program of
Saskatchewan (NEPS) Employment Survey:**
*Graduates of the NEPS Program in the 2003-2004 Academic
Year – 5 Year Follow-up*

Prepared for

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Canada*

Executive Summary

Class of 2003-04

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Executive Summary

In this report, we summarize the results of the 2008 Five-year Follow-Up survey of graduates of the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan (NEPS), class of 2004. The survey examines the employment outcomes, further education, goals, and satisfaction of graduates who have been out of the program for five years.

Response Rates

Data was collected from July 9 to August 18, 2009. A total of 212 of the graduates who completed the NEPS program in 2004 agreed to be contacted and their contact information was provided to Insightrix. Of these potential respondents, 152 completed the entire survey (109 online and 43 by phone), representing a 71.7% response rate. With this response rate, the error at 95% confidence is ± 4.2 percentage points.

Demographics

More than one in four (28.3%) respondents grew up in rural communities and/or 18.4% in a small town in Saskatchewan. One in six (15.1%) grew up in Regina, 12.5% in Saskatoon (12.5%), and 17.8% in a small city in Saskatchewan.

Nine in ten (92.8%) respondents are female, and 67.8% are currently married. A further 15.8% are single, and 9.2% are common law. The remaining 7.3% are divorced, separated, or widowed.

One half (50.0%) of respondents have at least one dependent child or adult, with the average age being 5 years old. One in seven (68.8%) dependents are under the age of 5, indicating they were born after the respondent completed the NEPS program. One in ten (10.4%) dependents are between the ages of 5 and 9, indicated that they were likely born during the respondents' time in the NEPS program. The remaining dependents (20.8%) are over the age of 10, which indicates they were born prior to the respondent entering the NEPS program.

Five respondents (4.6%) have self-identified as being aboriginal. Four indicated that they are Métis, and one self-identified as Status/Treaty.

Current Employment

In total, 98.7% of respondents are currently working as a nurse, with 65.1% employed on a regular full-time basis. A further 12.5% of respondents are casual part-time and 12.5% are on paid leave. One in ten (11.8%) work regular part-time, and 4.6% work casual full-time.

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Nine in ten (92.1%) respondents are working as per their preferred employment status.

Two respondents have indicated that they are not currently working in the nursing profession, and both of these have been employed in nursing in the past 5 years. One respondent intends to return to nursing, while the other does not.

Job Profile

A majority (85.5%) of respondents are currently working in Saskatchewan, 6.7% are currently working in Alberta. Seven in ten (71.3%) are working in an urban location.

A total of 22 respondents indicated that they are not currently working in Saskatchewan, and 45.5% of these respondents do not intend to return. In contrast, 22.7% are at least considering returning to Saskatchewan. The remaining 31.8% are uncertain.

Of the 128 graduates who are currently working in Saskatchewan, three quarters (75.8%) have no plans to leave the province. This is lower than the previous year (80.2%), but still higher than results from graduates who completed prior to 2003. A total of 5.4% of respondents plan to leave eventually, with 3.1% planning to leave within 5 years.

Three quarters (76.0%) of 2004 graduates are working at a single site, while 24.0% work at more than one site. The proportion working at more than one site has increased from 16.7% for the 2003 cohort, but is in line with previous years' results.

Overall, 56.0% of 2004 graduates are working at a general hospital with more than 100 beds at one or more sites. Another 13.3% work at a general hospital with less than 100 beds, 9.3% work in a community health centre, and 4.0% are working at a nursing home in at least one of their sites.

Nine in ten (90.7%) respondents work as a staff nurse at one of their sites. A further 5.3% work in education, and 2.7% work in management.

Additionally, nine in ten (92.0%) of the 2004 graduates are providing direct care in at least one of their sites. A further 8.7% provide education, and 6.0% work in administration.

Work Hours

Among the 2004 graduates, a total of 51.4% are working between 36 and 40 hours per week, while 23.3% are working more than forty hours per week. The average work week is 37.5 hours, similar to previous years.

Over one half of graduates (56.8%) do not work any paid overtime per week. Of those who receive paid overtime, 18.5% receive 1 to 4 hours, and 24.7% receive 5 or more

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hours. The average number of paid overtime hours worked per week, including those who do not receive paid overtime is 3.5 hours, in line with the previous year.

Factors Affecting Job Choice

Respondents were asked to rate the top three factors that influenced their choice of work location as a nurse. A family or community commitment was the most commonly chosen (58.0%) as one of the top three most important influencing factor among respondents when choosing a work location. The next most common factor was the clinical or client group (46.0%), and 45.3% said getting the position they wanted was one of the top three most important factors.

Eight in ten (80.7%) of the 2003-2004 graduates have changed their work setting or area since graduation.

Respondents were asked to indicate the top three reasons for leaving their previous position. The need for a change was the most commonly reported reason, with 44.7% reporting this as one of their top three reasons. Three in ten (29.7%) cited an unpleasant workgroup, and 21.5% mentioned shifts in their top three reasons.

Respondents were asked to indicate the top three reasons for staying in their current position. Nearly equal proportions of respondents cited an affinity for the client group (46.0%) or the work (45.4%) in their top three reasons for staying. Satisfaction with the hours (34.7%) was third most common reason.

Satisfaction with Current Job

In total, nearly nine in ten (88.7%) of the 2004 graduates are satisfied or very satisfied with their current primary job. The remaining one in ten (11.4%) are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage of respondents who are very satisfied has risen to 30.0% from 21.3% reported last year, halting a steady decline from 37.0% of 2000 grads.

Finances

In total, 94.6% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with their current gross annual salary for their primary job. The proportion of very satisfied respondents has increased to 33.3% from 21.3% reported by the 2002-2003 graduates.

The median annual earnings for nursing graduates five years out of their program is between \$65,000 and \$70,000 per year. This is an increase from the previous three years where the median annual earnings was between \$60,000 and \$65,000.

A little over four in then (44.1%) of respondents are still paying back student loans, in line with previous years. The proportion of respondents who report having paid back their

loans in full (34.9%) has been increasing since 2001, but is still well below the peak value of 47.6% reported in 2000. Two in ten (21.1%) did not have a student loan.

Work Missed Due to Health Problems

In total, 62 respondents (40.1%) have missed at least one week of work in the past year due to health problems. The proportion missing three weeks or more of work is down to 10.5%, from 17.2% in 2008.

Among those who have been absent from work due to health problems (61 respondents), a total of 43.9% reported that their work or work environment was the primary or a significant factor triggering their health problems. Nearly one quarter (23.9%) said that work or work environment had a minimal impact on their health problems.

Career Goals

One half (53.0%) of respondents would like to work in direct care or as a staff nurse in the future. Teaching goals are the next most common aspiration, with 46.1% of respondents reporting a desire to teach students, 35.5% desiring to teach clients, and 31.6% desiring to provide clinical instruction. Advanced practice – Nurse practitioner was also mentioned by 30.9% of respondents, and 18.4% identified management as a career goal.

Further Education

Professional certification at the national level has been completed by 11.8% of the 2003-2004 graduates, and 13.2% are currently enrolled in a program leading to a higher degree. A total of twenty respondents have reported enrolling in or having completed a program. Of these, eleven have completed a Master's in Nursing, and one is currently in progress. Five respondents are currently enrolled in a Master's program other than nursing, and two are working on a Doctorate in a field other than nursing. Four respondents say they have enrolled in a second undergraduate program, one currently in progress, and three completed.

Satisfaction with Nursing

A total of 65.1% of respondents reported that the NEPS prepared them well or very well for the program. This is a decrease from the past three cohorts. However, nine in ten (89.4%) of respondents say they are satisfied or very satisfied with nursing as a career.