



**Enumerating and Characterizing Maryland's Public Health Nurses Workforce: Impact on Population Health, Well-Being, and Health Equity**

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As the largest professional group of public health workers, public health nurses (PHN) have played a critical role in providing essential public health services to local communities for decades. PHNs are also uniquely positioned to lead and meet the evolving needs of the healthcare system. In order to effectively plan the delivery of health services and to promote health, it is critical to have reliable granular level workforce data and to understand the state of the existing PHN workforce. There have been several attempts to enumerate and characterize the national PHN workforce but little is known about the current employment of PHNs at the state and local level. Data on the state of the PHN workforce in Maryland are not available. As part of Carolyn Nganga-Good's PHN Leader Project, Maryland's Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's PHN Leader, PHN leaders were interviewed from local health departments (LHDs) and school health nurse (SHN) leaders from local public schools. PHN leaders provided information on workforce and programs trends, barriers and facilitators of PHN practice, culture of health initiatives, and awareness of the "Future of Nursing: Call for Action" Campaign initiatives. Individual PHNs and SHNs were invited to participate in an anonymous online survey to assess their demographics, level of education, licensure, job status and level of effort, salary, practice roles and work settings, barriers and facilitators of PHN practice, and awareness of the Future of Nursing Campaign initiatives. Nineteen LHDs and two school health coordinators were interviewed and 541 PHNs and SHNs participated in the survey. Summary data will be presented from the interviews and surveys including identification of barriers and strategies to get PHNs more engaged in efforts to promote building a culture of health in Maryland. While these data do not include all the PHNs and SHNs working in LHDs and public schools in Maryland, they provide a comprehensive look at Maryland's PHN workforce. The findings are critical for identifying the needs of PHNs, the barriers to PHN practice, and recommendations for how PHNs can move forward in efforts to build a healthier nation. The findings also provide workforce data that may be useful in planning delivery of health services. This project has been developed in collaboration with Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Maryland Action Coalition, the Maryland PHN Directors Council, the Maryland Department of School Education, and the Maryland School Health Nurses Association.