

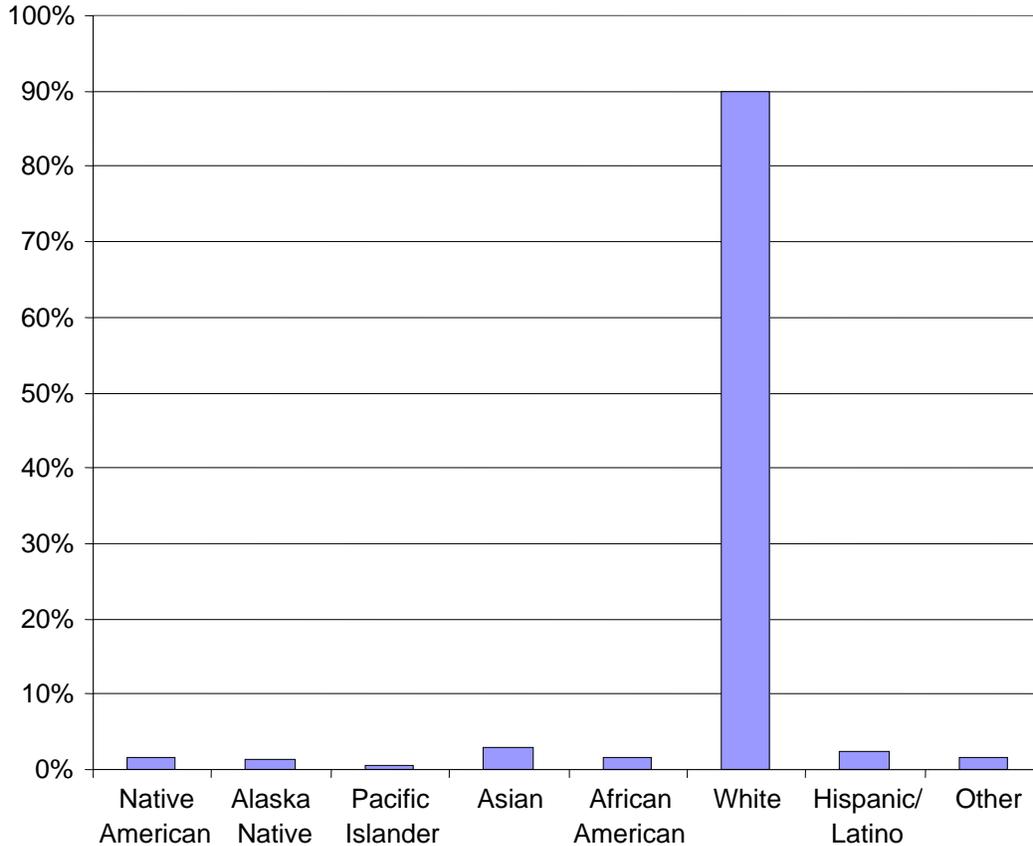
Survey of RNs Renewing Their Nursing License 2008

Results

Gender, Ethnicity, and Age

In all, 4,134 usable surveys were collected from renewing RNs, 87.6% of the total sample. Of these, 91.8% reported that they were female. The percentage of females has decreased slightly from the 2006 survey where 92.3% of the respondents were female. The vast majority of respondents (89.9%) indicated they were white, as seen in Figure 1, while less than 2% indicated they were Native American or Alaska Native. (Respondents could report more than one ethnicity.)

Figure 1: Reported ethnicity, RN sample.



The ages of the renewing RNs ranged from 22 to 87 years, with a mean age 48.4 years. Table 1 displays the mean age of respondents for the 2008 and four (4) past re-licensure surveys. The results demonstrate that the nursing workforce in Alaska is aging which is consistent with the trend in the US as a whole.

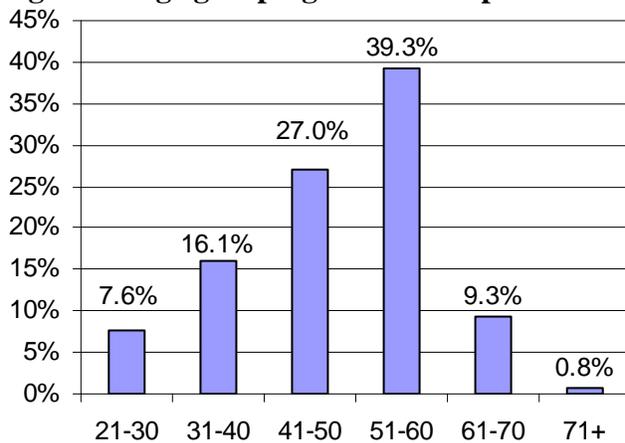
Table 1: Mean age of Alaska RN Respondents by Survey Year

1996	1998	2000	2002	2006	2008	US - 2004
44.0 years	44.5 years	45.1 years	46.2 years	50.1 years	48.4 years	46.8 years*

*US DHHS, HRSA, Bureau of Health Professions, Division of Nursing, 2007. [2004 National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses](#) .

The distribution of the renewing RNs by age groups is further represented in Figure 2, which demonstrates that there are more RNs rapidly approaching retirement (age 61 or above) than there are young RNs (30 and younger). By far the largest percentage of RNs renewing are in the age group 51-60 years of age.

Figure 2: Age groupings of RN sample.



A comparison of the percentage of RNs renewing their licenses by age group over time is displayed in Table 2. The percentage of RNs greater than 51 years has increased from 26.6 % in 2000 to 49.4% in 2008.

Table 2: Percentage of RN Respondents by age group for 4 survey years.

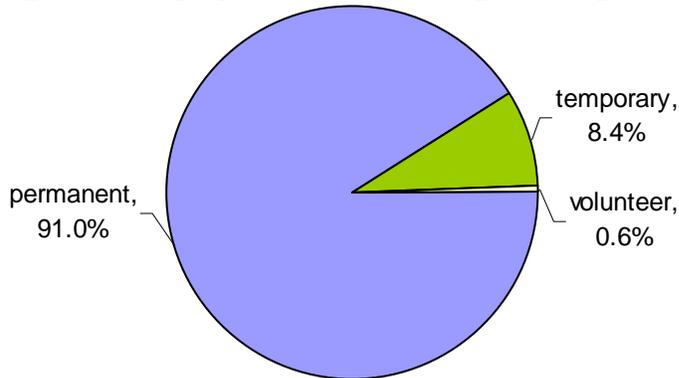
	21-30 years	31-40 years	41-50 years	51-60 years	61-70 years	71+ years
2008	7.6	16.1	27.0	39.3	9.3	0.8
2006	4.8	12.5	29.1	39.8	12.6	1.2
2002	6.3	18.5	43.1	27.2	4.6	0.2
2000	7.3	21.0	45.1	22.8	3.7	0.1

Employment

The employment status of 3,627 working RNs who completed the relevant item is presented in Figure 3, which shows that the vast majority (91.0%) were permanent employees. The average

number of hours (the modified version of this variable, as described) reported per week ranged from 1 to 80, with a mean of 37.4 hours. A small number (1.7%) reported they worked less than 10 hours, mostly as volunteers. A small proportion (0.6%) reported working 80 or more hours per week. The modal response was 40 hours, with 33.3% so reporting.

Figure 3: Employment status among working RNs.



Three-fourths of the RNs responding to the survey (75.3%) were working full time (35 hours or more). The percentage of RNs working full time in Alaska has remained fairly consistent over several renewal periods. (See Table 3). However, the percentage of RNs employed full time in Alaska is much less than the US as a whole

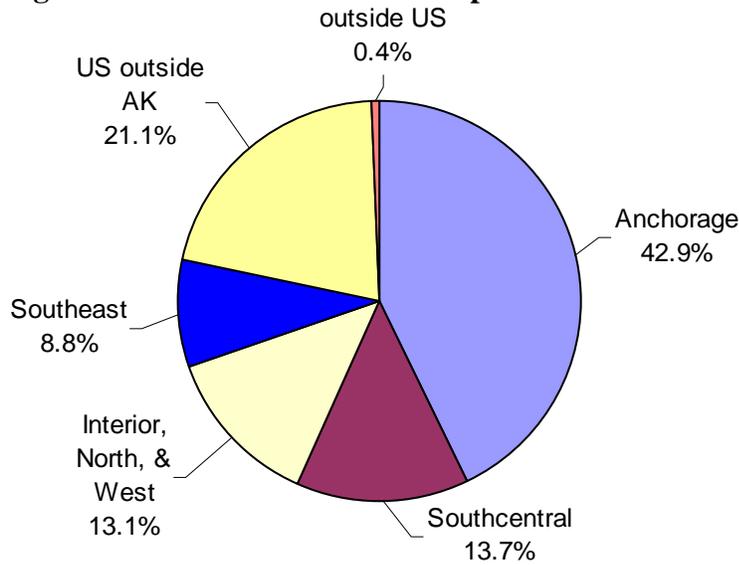
Table 3: Percentage of RNs working full time by year

1996	1998	2000	2002	2008	US – 2003*
73.3%	76.0%	70.0%	70.7%	75.3%	90.9%

*US DHHS, HRSA, Bureau of Health Professions, Division of Nursing, 2007. [2004 National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses](#) .

As seen in Figure 4, 42.9% of the RNs responding to the survey worked in the Anchorage area and another 13.7% in the Southcentral region outside of Anchorage (e.g., Kodiak, Palmer, Seward, etc.). A large number of RNs worked for employers located outside of Alaska, including 21.1% in other states and 0.4% (16 RNs) in other countries.

Figure 4: Work location of RN respondents.



The work location of RNs responding to the survey has changed over several surveys. Table 4 provides evidence of shifting employment locations including increasing numbers of nurses working outside Alaska.

Table 4: RN work locations (by percent) by survey year

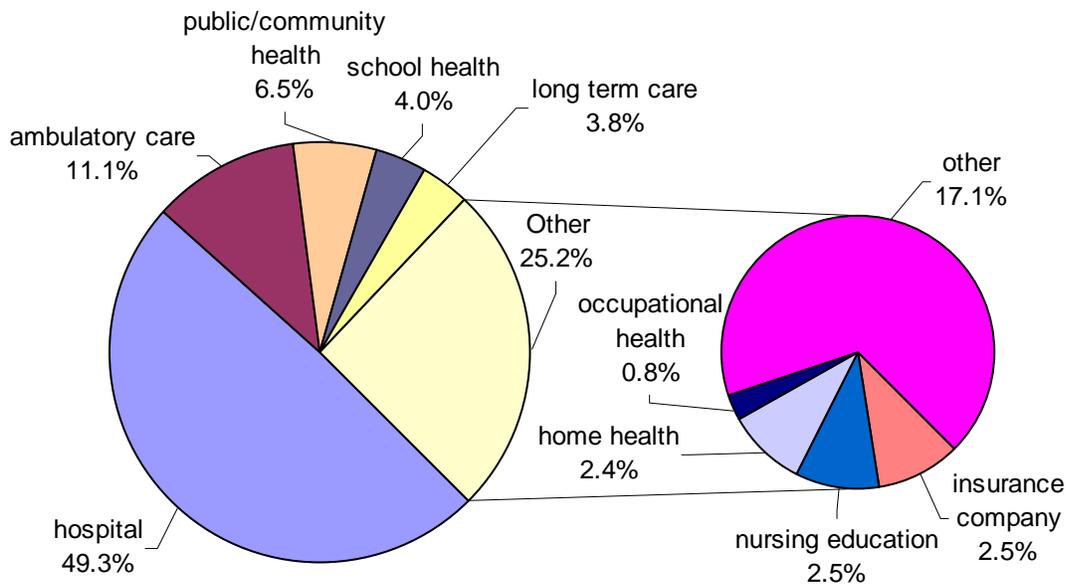
	Anchorage	Southcentral (excluding Anchorage)	Interior, North, & West	Southeast	US not Alaska	Outside the US
1998	49.6	17.6	20.5	12.3	*	*
2000	51.0	16.1	20.4	12.5	*	*
2002	53.3	15.8	14.6	16.3	*	*
2006	42.4	16.5	13.0	9.4	18.5	0.3
2008	42.9	13.7	13.1	8.8	21.1	0.4

* Data unavailable

Work Setting and Roles

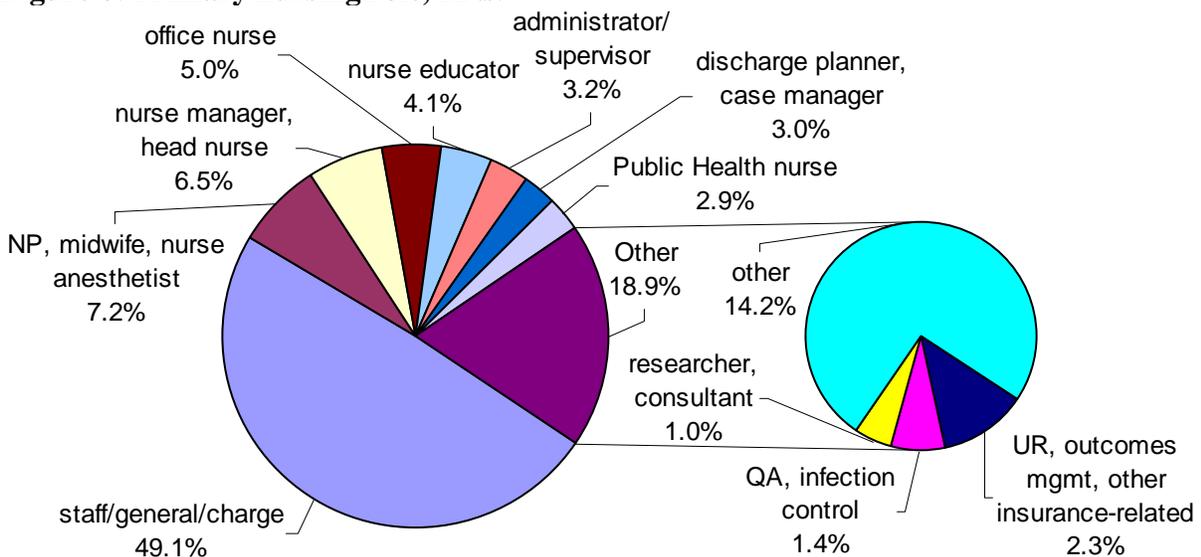
The surveys asked working RNs to select their primary work setting and role. The results are displayed in Figures 5 and 6. Among the RNs responding, nearly half (49.3%) reported working in a hospital setting, with another 11.1% reporting that they worked in an ambulatory care setting. A large number of RNs (17.1%) did not feel that their work setting fit into one of the given categories.

Figure 5: Primary work setting, RNs.



Nearly half (49.1%) of the RNs responding felt their role fit one given category, that of staff or general duty nurse, team leader, or charge nurse. The second most common response (not considering “other”) was for nurse practitioner, certified nurse midwife, or nurse anesthetist (7.2%). Nearly 15% (14.2%) of RNs responding did not feel their primary role fit into one of the given categories. Thus, while many RNs reported working in one broad type of role, a variety of other positions were reported by small numbers of nurses.

Figure 6: Primary nursing role, RNs.

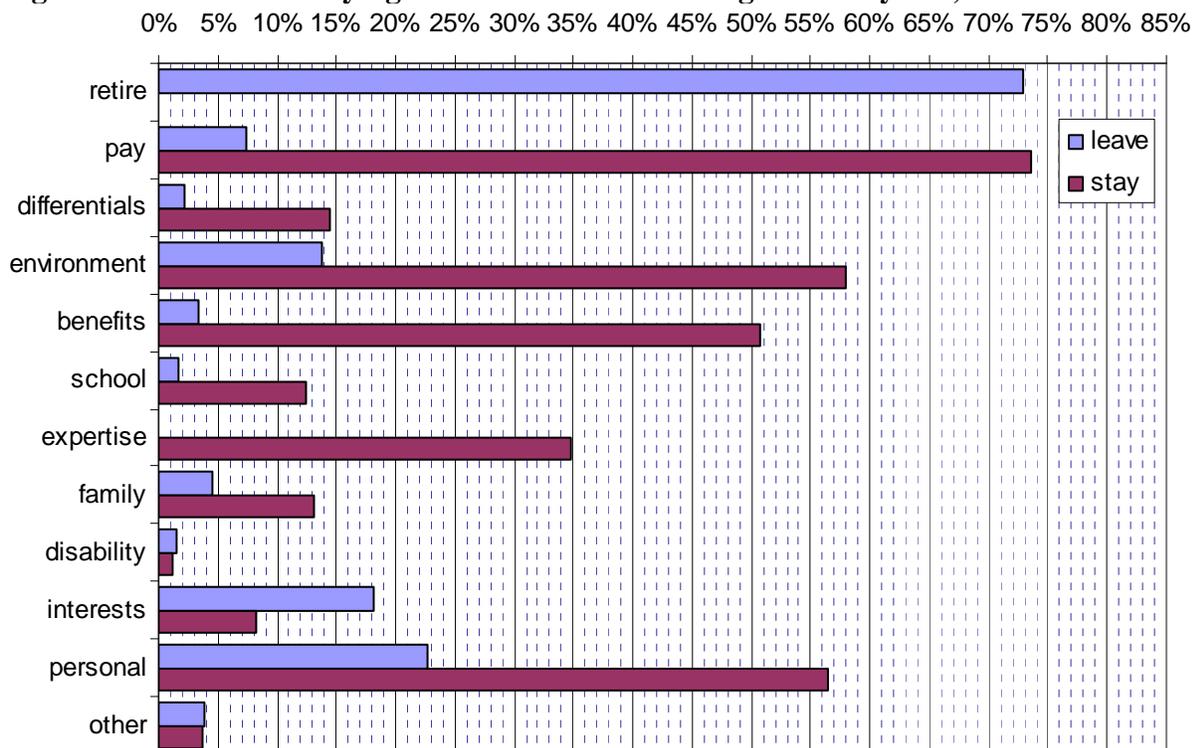


Years Planning to Work in Nursing

The modified version of the variable assessing how long the working RNs planned to remain in the profession had a mean of 13.5 years and ranged from 0.08 (one month) to 55.0 years. The mean years reported in 2008 (13.5 years) is consistent with the mean years reported in 2000 (13.8 years) and 2002 (13.3 years). In 2006, the mean years RNs reported they would continue in the nursing profession was 12.4 years. While most RNs indicated plans to remain in the profession for some time (e.g., 28.8% reported wishing to continue working for 20 or more years), 17.6% indicated they would leave the field within 5 years. Figure 7 compares the reasons for leaving the field soon with the reasons for staying in the field for the two groups of working RNs.

The RNs planning to leave the profession were on average 56.7 years of age, and thus retirement was cited as the main reason for leaving the field soon (72.9%). The percentage of RNs planning to retire in the next five years decreased from 84.4% in the 2006 survey to 72.9% in the 2008 survey. Personal meaning (enjoyment, fulfillment, challenge, etc.) was the second most prominent reason for leaving soon (22.7%), followed by other interests (employment or activities outside of nursing; 18.2%).

Figure 7: Reasons for staying in the field versus leaving within 5 years, RNs.



In contrast, the younger group of RNs not planning to leave the profession soon (average age 46.7 years) were more varied in their reasons and more likely to endorse more than one reason.

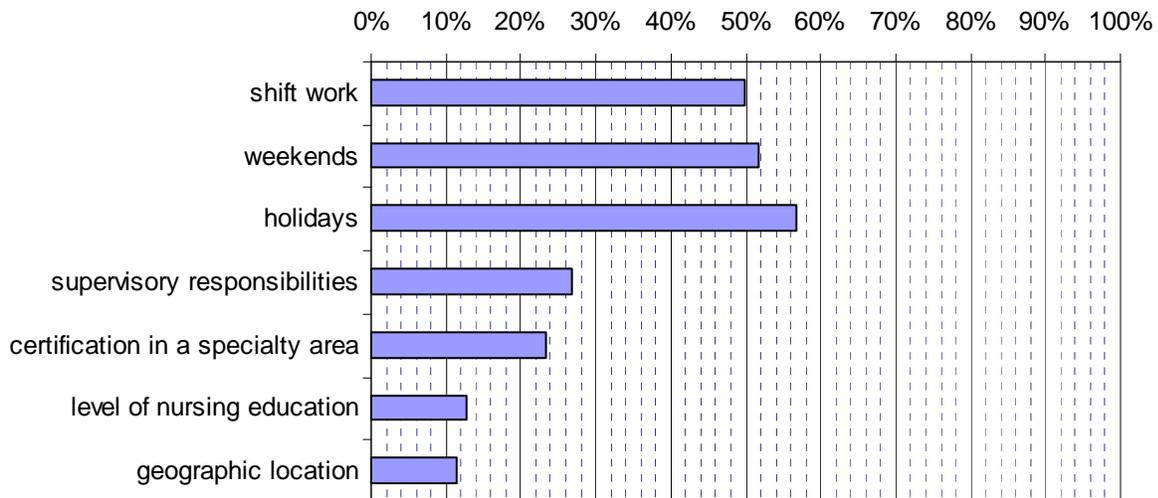
Financial reasons were a prominent reason selected for continuing as a nurse, with salary cited by 73.5% of those RNs staying in the field. Pay differentials were cited by 14.4% and benefits by 50.7% of those responding. Compare this to the RNs leaving the field, of which 7.4% cited salary issues as a factor driving them out of the field. Another 2.1% cited pay differentials, and 3.4% cited health care, retirement, and other benefits. The work environment (scheduling, flexibility, co-workers, etc.) was the second most common reason for staying (58.0%) and the fourth most common reason for leaving (13.8%).

Among those RNs planning to remain in the profession, 34.8% cited their expert status (experience, “what I know”, “what I do”). Interestingly, the proportion of RNs citing their expert status was no different than the proportion of LPNs who also cited this reason for staying in the profession. Personal meaning was a prominent reason for staying as well as leaving, with 56.4% of RNs staying in the field noting their personal enjoyment of their work as a reason for staying. Thus, a majority of RNs cited financial reasons as well as less tangible aspects of their enjoyment of their jobs as reasons for staying in the nursing field.

Salary

The analysis generated an estimated salary, based on reported average hours in a week for hourly workers, for 3,160 working RNs. This annual pay ranged from \$1700 (low values were due to RNs who work a small number of hours per week) to \$210,000, with a mean of \$65,526.25. Less than 1 in 10 RNs (9.3%) reported earning \$100,000 per year or more in this calculation, including 19 who reported making exactly \$100,000. In addition to their nominal base pay rates, 75.7% of the working RNs reported at least one of the seven pay differentials displayed in Figure 8, the most common being additional pay for working holidays (56.8% of RNs) and weekends (51.8%) and for shift work (49.9%).

Figure 8: Reported pay differentials in addition to base rate, RNs.



Education

RNs responding to the survey were asked about their initial education for nursing licensure and about their highest nursing degree. Results for these questions are presented in Table 5. Not surprisingly, RNs reported a variety of education to start their nursing careers with an RN diploma (15.7%), associate's degree (34.2%), or bachelor's degree (42.4%). Interestingly, 6.3% of the RNs reported starting with an LPN education before obtaining their RN education suggesting the LPN is a viable entry point to a more advanced nursing career. While most RNs have advanced no further than an associate's degree (31.5%) or bachelor's degree (43.6%), a substantial portion of Alaska's RNs (15.4%) have an advanced degree.

Table 5: Levels of formal nursing-related education reported, RNs.

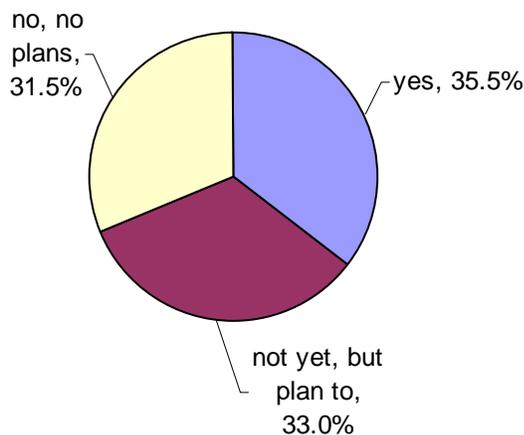
Degree	Initial education for nursing licensure	Highest nursing degree
LPN	6.3%	
RN diploma	15.7%	9.5%
Associate's	34.2%	31.5%
Bachelor's	42.4%	43.6%
Master's	0.7%	8.5%
ANP certificate	0.5%	4.2%
Doctorate		0.6%
Other	0.2%	2.2%

Note: Those with foreign degrees were asked to give their best estimate of the US equivalent.

Certification

As seen in Figure 9, more than one-third of the RNs (35.5%) reported that they have a specialty certification, while another third (33.0%) reported plans to obtain one. RNs were twice as likely to report having a certification as LPNs.

Figure 9: Certification in a nursing specialty.



Education Goals

The survey also asked working RNs about their formal education goals (not including certifications). As many RNs already had advanced degrees, further education plans were less common than among LPNs (43.1% of RNs versus 55.5% of LPNs) and, as demonstrated in Figure 10, the RNs more commonly aspired to a graduate degree. For most, these aspirations involved nursing education, including 19.3% aspiring to a master's degree and 4.4% a doctorate in nursing. The plans of the 13.3% who reported non-nursing goals are also displayed in Figure 10. Many of these plans (44.6%) involved degrees in health fields related to nursing, such as public health, medicine, and biology.

Figure 10: Further education plans, RNs.

