The Alabama Health Action Coalition: Developing Nursing Workforce Data in Alabama
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Objectives

1. Discuss the background to Alabama’s history with nursing workforce data.

2. Identify the significance of nursing workforce data and discuss its application to the needs of underserved and diverse populations in Alabama.

3. Describe the Alabama Health Action Coalition’s (AL-HAC) recommendations for robust nursing workforce data.

4. Identify current progression in nursing workforce data.
Alabama’s History with Nursing Workforce Data
What Makes Alabama Different?

- Alabama’s Center for Nursing Excellence closed in 2009

- Alabama was not using the National RN Minimum Data Set or any nationally vetted templates for license renewal questions

- The Alabama Board of Nursing (ABN) did not have the capacity to analyze data beyond that mandated by law
  - No correlation with Alabama’s population demographics
  - Only aggregate data available
  - No evidence-based ability to contribute to health policy decisions
Improving Alabama’s Workforce Data

• AL-HAC was designated by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in 2012

• AL-HAC spent most of 2014 researching, networking with, and hosting conference calls and webinars with states that have provided best practices with workforce data centers including:
  o Virginia Department of Health Professions
  o Sheps Center in North Carolina
  o Indiana Bowen Center for Health Workforce Research and Policy
  o HRSA Bureau of Health Workforce
  o National Council of Boards of Nursing
Improving Alabama’s Workforce Data

• Collaborated with ABN and its Executive Director to enhance the data collection on the nursing workforce using the RN and LPN license renewal surveys (2012, 2013, 2014)

• Gap analysis completed using the National RN Workforce Supply Survey tool and Alabama’s initial and renewal licensure questions

• Presentation made to ABN Board of Directors (BOD) collaboratively with the Alabama Hospital Association and the Alabama Director of Rural Development
**2009:** Last published Biannual Analysis of Alabama’s Registered Nursing Workforce (using 2008 data)

**2010:** The IOM’s *Future of Nursing: Leading Change and Advancing Health* was released; Campaign for Action was launched

**2012:** In February, AL-HAC designated as Action Coalition

**2013:** Nine questions added by ABN to LPN Licensure Renewal Survey

**2014:** In August, HRSA announced new Bureau of Health Workforce

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**2009:** HRSA released initial findings of RN Population report (using 2008 data); last report published

**2014:** 1st time RN MDS administered nationally

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**2012:** Six questions added by ABN to RN Licensure Renewal Survey
Benefits to Improving Workforce Data in Alabama

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Benefits to Alabama’s Consumers

• Forecasting workforce needs
  o Many of Alabama’s hospitals are using agency nurses
  o Educational programming needs

• Healthcare policy, strategy, and planning
  o Alabama’s Health Ranking is 46th**
  o 64 of Alabama’s 67 counties designated as health professional shortage areas*
  o All of Alabama’s counties contain federally designated medically underserved areas or populations*
  o 55 of the 57 counties in rural areas*

*U.S. Census Bureau: Alabama Quick Facts, 2014
**America’s Health Rankings from United Health Foundation, 2015
Initial Challenges

• Nurses were not educated on the importance of workforce data

• All questions not consistent between years

• All demographics not available or aligned with national definitions

• Nurses holding both an RN and LPN license captured in both licensure surveys

• Data was not de-identified
Initial Challenges

• No workforce projection questions asked
  o County of work vs county of residence
  o Projected retirement

• No ability to comprehensively assess healthcare workforce needs for the state
  o Only information available in 2015 white paper by Dr. Bill Coleman on Primary Care Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, and Physicians Assistants
    ▪ “An Assessment of Alabama Residents Access to Primary Care Physicians”
Findings From Initial Analysis
Nursing Workforce Data Reports

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Nursing Workforce Diversity

• Hispanic/Latino overall population has grown to 4.1%*
  o Fewer than 1% of all nursing jobs are held by Hispanics
• African Americans represented 26.6% of the Alabama population in 2013*
  o In 2014, only 13.9% of the Alabama RN workforce reported as African American

*U.S. Census Bureau: Alabama Quick Facts, 2013
National average of RNs with a BSN or Higher was 50.3% in 2014
Milestones

• ABN added the MDS to LPN license renewal survey as voluntary section in 2015
  o Analysis will be completed by AL-HAC this Spring

• MDS will appear on 2016 RN license renewal

• House Bill 125 creates the Alabama Longitudinal Data System

• Senate Bill 227 creates loan repayment program for Advanced Practice Nurses

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Looking Ahead...

• Three AL-HAC members continue serving on the Alabama Health Care Improvement Taskforce appointed by the Governor

• Continue to advocate for a Comprehensive Alabama Health Workforce Data Repository

• AL-HAC will perform analysis on 2015 LPN and 2016 RN license renewal data and updated workforce snapshots for distribution

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Take Home Points

- AL-HAC is an action coalition providing workforce analysis in the absence of a Nursing Workforce Center

- Prior to AL-HAC’s work, no analysis performed or disseminated on nursing workforce data since 2009

- AL-HAC, with partners, highlighted successes and shortcomings in nursing workforce data in reports
Take Home Points

• ABN adopted use of RN MDS in 2015

• AL-HAC continues to provide analysis on workforce data

• AL-HAC will add nursing faculty diversity and MDS data and response rate analysis to research in 2016 going forward

• Partnering to support comprehensive health workforce data repository for state

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Thank You and Questions

www.al-hac.org

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