

# AHEC Nursing Workforce Development

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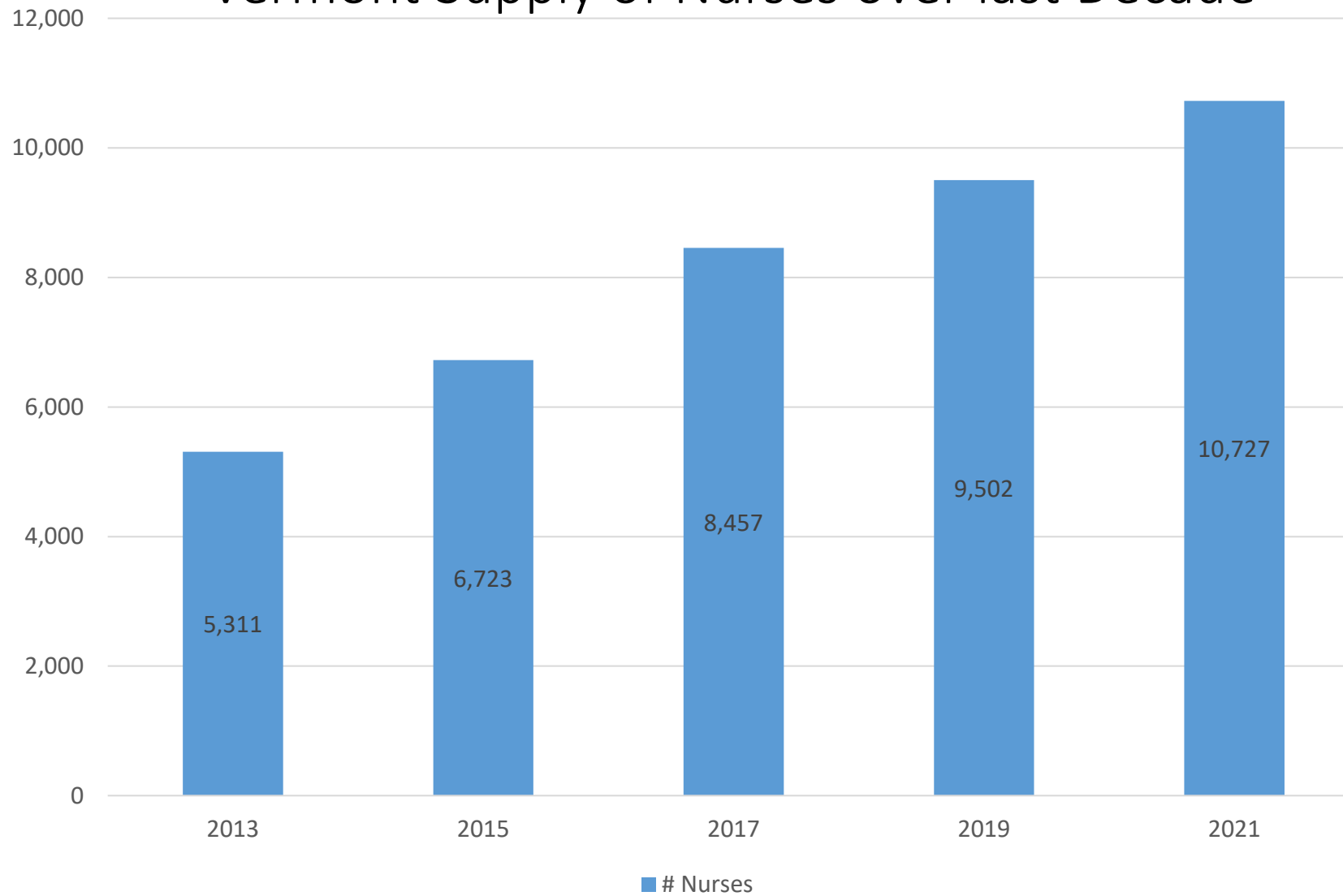
**THE VERMONT AHEC NETWORK**

# Nurses' "Great Resignation" or Re-imagining?

- Safety concerns due to COVID – e.g., young families and older workers
- Burnout due to the emotional cost of COVID and staff shortage
- Opportunity elsewhere
  - Pay, travel pay
  - Schedules
  - Promise of “new”
  - Telehealth
- Lack of flexibility of employers, in part due to current shortage

*Review data from AHEC's nursing workforce development programs.*

# Vermont Supply of Nurses over last Decade



- In 2021, more than 10,000 nurses now care for Vermont residents; nurses providing telehealth care (30.5%) are now equal to the number working in hospital settings (30.3%) (AHEC Registered Nurses Working in VT, 2021)

# Education Data Reported in 2021 and 2017

In 2021



**63%** Educated in another state  
**35%** Educated\* in Vermont  
**2%** Educated outside USA

In 2017

**55%**  
Educated in  
another state  
(4,684 / 8,467)

**44%**  
Educated in  
Vermont  
(3,665 / 8,457)

**1%**  
Educated outside  
the USA  
(108 / 8,457)

\*Location of program qualifying respondent for RN licensure

- 2021: N= 10,727 (63%= 6,758; 35% =3,754; 2%= 215)
- From 2017 to 2021, the number of nurses caring for Vermonters increased by 2,260; telehealth accounts for significant growth. During this same time period, the number of nurses educated\* in Vermont increased by 89.
- Over eight years, 2013 to 2021, the number of nurses caring for Vermonters more than doubled from 5,311 to 10,727.

# 2021 AHEC Registered Nurse (RN) Workforce Report

Data from the 2021 Board of Nursing Relicensure Survey

## EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS



\*Three fourth of the workforce is working part time only

# Interventions: Employer Recruitment and Retention Responsibilities

**Innovative Retention Strategies**

Nurse retention strategies must address the needs and values of an intergenerational workforce.

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Flexible staffing</b>	Flexible staffing options offer nurses unique socialization and professional growth opportunities.
<b>Organizational policies</b>	Employment, wages, pension, and well-being policies address the specific needs of the intergenerational workforce.
<b>Innovative models of care</b>	New models of care support new graduate nurses and retain the intellectual capital of experienced nurses.

Gaffney,T (2022) Retaining nurses to mitigate shortages. American Nurse Journal (17):1 pp 14-25.

# Interventions:

## Governmental Incentive Programs--examples

- Educational Loan Repayment (ELR)
- Scholarships
- Tax incentives for nursing faculty
- Tax incentives for 2 years of service in areas of shortage
- Department of Labor funding for internships for new graduates in areas of need, and innovative recruitment and retention programs.
  
- Re-examine recommendations of the VT Blue Ribbon Commission on Nursing 2012  
[nursing\\_blue\\_ribbon\\_commission\\_report\\_september\\_2012.pdf\(uvm.edu\)](#)

# Interventions:

## AHEC Nursing Workforce Initiatives--examples

### **Early Pipeline Development (grades 5-12)**

- Career awareness and exploration programs, e.g., MedTrek, MedQuest

Nursing is the most popular career interest of students participating in AHEC's early pipeline programs.

### **Support and Resources for Current Workforce (Recruitment and Retention)**

- Research and data reports  
<http://www.med.uvm.edu/ahec/workforceresearchdevelopment/reports>
- Online clinical resources
  - [www.vtad.org](http://www.vtad.org)
  - <http://www.med.uvm.edu/ahec/healthprofessionals/continuing-education-and-quality-improvement/project-echo>
- Programs customized for school nurses



# Interventions:

## Quality Improvement and Continuing Education

In FY21, AHEC provided professional development programs for a wide-range of health professionals, specialties and disciplines.

### Nurses--Total Participants

RN	248
LPN	38
LNA	6
Total	292

### Nurses--**Unique** Participants

RN	156
LPN	9
LNA	3
Total	168

# Interventions:

## AHEC/VT Educational Loan Repayment (ELR)

Notes: the “maximum annual award allowed” refers to policies for state/federal funds; actual total award may be higher, up to double, with employer matching funds. Awards for this program are income tax exempt (as authorized by the Affordable Care Act/Public Service Act, March 2010.)

2022 Snapshot	Allocation	Maximum annual award allowed	# Applications received	Less Recruitment Applications	Range of debt of applicants (lowest to highest)	Total Debt of all applicants	Average (mean) Debt of applicants (1)
Primary Care	\$392,111	\$20,000	79	71	\$22,294 - \$602,146	\$9,637,519	\$135,740
Dentists	\$125,000	\$20,000	14	11	\$67,574 - \$511,311	\$2,922,022	\$265,638
Nurses	\$150,000	\$10,000	38	38	\$7,315 - \$165,312	\$1,754,478	\$46,171
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$667,111</b>		<b>131</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>\$7,315 - \$602,146</b>	<b>\$14,314,019</b>	<b>\$119,284</b>

(1) Removes unknown persons/recruitment applications from this calculation because debt is unknown (\$0) at this time  
 From 2021 to 2022, the average (mean) debt of applicants decreased by \$8,844 (from \$128,128 to \$119,284).

2021 Snapshot	Allocation	Maximum annual award allowed	# Applications received	Less Recruitment Applications	Range of debt of applicants (lowest to highest)	Total Debt of all applicants	Average (mean) Debt of applicants (1)
Primary Care	\$392,111	\$20,000	106	101	\$18,757 - \$538,095	\$15,168,848	\$150,187
Dentists	\$125,000	\$20,000	18	17	\$59,422 - \$512,531	\$3,570,863	\$210,051
Nurses	\$150,000	\$10,000	43	43	\$8,915 - \$134,378	\$1,888,841	\$43,927
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$667,111</b>		<b>167</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>\$8,915 - \$538,095</b>	<b>\$20,628,552</b>	<b>\$128,128</b>

(1) Removes unknown persons/recruitment applications from this calculation because debt is unknown (\$0) at this time  
 From 2020 to 2021, the average (mean) debt of applicants increased by \$15,617 (from \$112,511 to \$128,128).

# Interventions:

## AHEC/VT Educational Loan Repayment (ELR)

2020 Snapshot	Allocation	Maximum annual award allowed	# Applications received	Less Recruitment Applications	Range of debt of applicants (lowest to highest)	Total Debt of all applicants	Average (mean) Debt of applicants (1)
Primary Care	\$392,111	\$20,000	93	84	\$19,666 - \$671,358	\$11,344,435	\$135,053
Dentists	\$125,000	\$20,000	19	18	\$33,997 - \$553,999	\$4,646,834	\$258,157
Nurses	\$150,000	\$10,000	63	63	\$6,351 - \$165,537	\$2,573,084	\$40,843
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$667,111</b>		<b>175</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>\$6,351 - \$671,358</b>	<b>\$18,564,353</b>	<b>\$112,511</b>

(1) Removes unknown persons/recruitment applications from this calculation because debt is unknown (\$0) at this time

From 2019 to 2020, the average (mean) debt of applicants decreased by \$24,740 (from \$137,251 to \$112,511).

2019 Snapshot	Allocation	Maximum annual award allowed	# Applications received	Less Recruitment Applications	Range of debt of applicants (lowest to highest)	Total Debt of all applicants	Average (mean) Debt of applicants (1)
Primary Care	\$442,111	\$20,000	104	100	\$15,776 - \$747,199	\$15,091,647	\$150,916
Dentists	\$125,000	\$20,000	31	27	\$27,024 - \$601,642	\$6,860,406	\$263,862
Nurses	\$100,000	\$10,000	47	47	\$6,068 - \$120,527	\$1,792,442	\$38,137
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$667,111</b>		<b>182</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>\$6,068 - \$747,199</b>	<b>\$23,744,495</b>	<b>\$137,251</b>

(1) Removes unknown persons/recruitment applications from this calculation because debt is unknown (\$0) at this time

From 2018 to 2019, the average (mean) debt of applicants increased by \$30,025 (from \$107,226 to \$137,251).

# AHEC/VT Educational Loan Repayment for Nurses (LPNs and RNs)

2021									
All Apps	Eligible Apps	Ineligible Apps	Original Offers	Declines from Original Offers	# Re-allocated	Un-allocated and/or Breach	Awards	% Awards to All Apps	% Awards to Eligible Apps
43	35	8	30	4	4	1	29	67%	83%
2020									
All Apps	Eligible Apps	Ineligible Apps	Original Offers	Declines from Original Offers	# Re-allocated	Un-allocated and/or Breach	Awards	% Awards to All Apps	% Awards to Eligible Apps
63	50	13	28	6	6	0	28	44%	56%
2019									
All Apps	Eligible Apps	Ineligible Apps	Original Offers	Declines from Original Offers	# Re-allocated	Un-allocated and/or Breach	Awards	% Awards to All Apps	% Awards to Eligible Apps
47	31	16	24	4	4	0	24	51%	77%
2018									
All Apps	Eligible Apps	Ineligible Apps	Original Offers	Declines from Original Offers	# Re-allocated	Un-allocated and/or Breach	Awards	% Awards to All Apps	% Awards to Eligible Apps
49	36	13	19	3	1	2	17	35%	47%

**2021: \$150,000**—(50% increase in funds from 2018) -- 30 Offers / 4 Declines – 13% declined  
**2020: \$150,000**—(50% increase in funds from 2018) -- 28 Offers / 6 Declines – 21% declined  
**2019: \$110,000\*** (10% increase in funds from 2018)—24 Offers / 4 Declines – 17% declined  
**2018: \$100,000**—19 Offers / 3 Declines – 16% declined

- In recent years, AHEC notes a change in the applicants’ attitudes/beliefs regarding reasons for award declination and worksite transfer requests.
- In 2021, the mental health impact of working, balancing personal life/family needs, and workplace unhappiness were top issues.
- AHEC is spending more time counseling recipients on these issues and to prevent breach of contract.

\*Original allocation was \$100,000. Funds (\$10,000) added via program budget adjustment.

# AHEC/VT ELR Applicants

## Educational Pipeline--Location of Nursing Educational Program

	2021	2020	2019	2018
<b>Total Applications:</b>	43	63	47	49
<b># with VT Hometown at HS Grad:</b>	33	47	35	36
<b>% with VT Hometown at HS Grad:</b>	77%	75%	74%	73%
<b># Graduated from VT Nursing Program:</b>	28	46	34	34
<b>% Graduated from VT Nursing Program:</b>	65%	73%	72%	69%
<b># VT HS Grads Graduated from VT Nursing Program:</b>	23	34	26	27
<b>% VT HS Grads Graduated from VT Nursing Program:</b>	53%	54%	55%	55%
<b># Graduated from Out-of-State Nursing Program:</b>	15	17	13	15
<b>% Graduated from Out-of-State Nursing Program:</b>	35%	27%	28%	31%
<b># VT HS Grads Graduated from Out-of-State Nursing Program:</b>	10	13	9	9
<b>% VT HS Grads Graduated from Out-of-State Nursing Program:</b>	23%	21%	19%	18%

Note: Southern VT College closed in 2019.

	Year	Total	UVM	Castleton	VTC	Southern VT	Norwich U
<b># Graduated from VT Nursing Program:</b>	2021	28	2	7	15	0	4
<b># VT HS Grads Graduated from VT Nursing Program:</b>	2021	23	1	6	14	0	2
<b># Graduated from VT Nursing Program:</b>	2020	46	4	11	23	1	7
<b># VT HS Grads Graduated from VT Nursing Program:</b>	2020	34	3	11	16	0	4
<b># Graduated from VT Nursing Program:</b>	2019	34	2	9	15	1	7
<b># VT HS Grads Graduated from VT Nursing Program:</b>	2019	26	1	9	11	0	5
<b># Graduated from VT Nursing Program:</b>	2018	34	4	10	16	2	2
<b># VT HS Grads Graduated from VT Nursing Program:</b>	2018	27	3	9	13	2	0

# Workforce Pipeline Development, Recruitment, and Retention

- Workforce development is complex. The process by which education, career pathways, and employment decisions come to fruition are complicated—and often an unknowable combination of factors and values.
- Recruitment and retention tools, such as educational loan repayment, are necessary to be competitive nationally, and at the same time, they have limitations. Long range investments are necessary. Vermont needs a coordinated system of sustainable workforce development interventions and tools starting with K-12 students.
  - FY23, AHEC is requesting \$1,500,000 in annual state funding to expand youth programs and early pipeline development
  - FY23, Educational Loan Repayment requires administrative funding. Program expansion (broader eligibility, new professions) requires increased funding.
- Workforce challenges are a chronic condition and require ongoing attention and management, with long-, medium-, and short-range initiatives.
- Action plans and longitudinal outcomes data are necessary to gauge each program's effectiveness and impact. These data inform direction and investments for future programs.
- Based on direct feedback to AHEC from educational loan repayment applicants, it is beneficial for all organizations to look inward about what they do to attract and retain its workforce. Why would somebody want to work at your organization? What is the culture? How is the morale? Do employees feel supported?

# References

- AHEC Vermont Nursing Workforce reports (2008 to 2021) retrieved from [Reports, Publications, AHEC, Larner College of Medicine, UVM](#)
- Gaffney,T (2022) Retaining nurses to mitigate shortages. American Nurse Journal (17):1 pp 14-25.
- Recommendations of the Vermont Blue Ribbon Commission on Nursing (2012) retrieved from [nursing blue ribbon commission report september 2012.pdf \(uvm.edu\)](#)