

Trends in New York Registered Nursing Graduations, 1996 – 2009

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PREFACE

This report summarizes the results of the 2007 survey of New York registered nursing education programs, which was conducted by the New York Center for Health Workforce Studies (the Center). Deans of nursing education programs are surveyed annually and asked questions about applications, admissions, and registered nurse (RN) graduations from their programs as well as barriers to expanding student capacity and the local job market for newly-trained RNs. The primary goal of the survey is to document trends in nursing graduations statewide and regionally in New York and understand how these trends affect the supply of RNs. This survey is the eighth survey of nursing education programs in New York.

This report was prepared by Robert Martiniano and Jean Moore of the Center. The Center is a not-for-profit research center operating under the auspices of the School of Public Health at the University at Albany, State University of New York (SUNY), and Health Research, Incorporated (HRI). The ideas expressed in this report are those of the Center for Health Workforce Studies and do not necessarily represent views or positions of the School of Public Health, the University at Albany, SUNY, or HRI.

BACKGROUND

The Center for Health Workforce Studies (the Center) surveys registered nursing education programs in New York annually to better understand trends affecting the supply of RNs in the state. The most recent survey was conducted in the spring and summer of 2008. The brief survey included questions on applications, acceptances, and graduations for 2007 as well as projected graduations through 2009. The survey also asked about barriers to admitting more students and perceptions about the local job market for new RNs. This report summarizes the responses to the 2007 survey.

Of the 114 nursing programs in New York, 104 responded to the survey for a 91% response rate. Data for the 10 nonrespondents were imputed from responses to previous surveys; consequently, the following data reflect enrollments and graduations for all registered nursing programs in the state. It is important to note that not all RN graduations represent new RNs as many RNs who have completed an associate degree (ADN) or diploma program return to school to obtain a bachelor's degree in nursing (BSN). Based on survey responses, the Center estimates that approximately 30% of 2007 bachelor's degree graduates were already licensed as RNs, which means that approximately 12% of all RN program graduates in the state were previously licensed RNs.

While not every RN educated in New York will become licensed and practice in the state, and some RNs practicing in New York were educated outside of the state, RNs educated in New York were by far the single largest source of RNs practicing in the state. Data from the 2004 National Sample Survey of RNs indicated that more than 82% of RNs actively practicing in New York received their initial nursing degree in New York¹.

¹ 2004 National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

RN graduations in New York increased in 2007, rising by more than 400 or 5% over 2006 graduations, the fifth consecutive annual increase. Additionally, RN graduations are expected to continue to rise in 2008 and 2009, with 2009 total graduations projected to be 24% higher than graduations in 1996, the previous high point for RN graduations in New York.

After sharp gains in RN graduations in 2005 and 2006, the increase in 2007 and projected increases in 2008 and 2009 are expected to be smaller than they were in 2005 and 2006. This, coupled with fewer programs reporting increases in the number of acceptances into their programs, may indicate a leveling off of RN graduations.

In addition, the current economic downturn may adversely impact the job market for newly-trained RNs. Job losses in other sectors could result in an increasing number of experienced RNs returning to direct care nursing. Also, part-time and per diem RNs may either increase hours or move into permanent positions. The data presented here are retrospective and may not account for the effect of the current economic downturn on the demand for newly-trained RNs.

NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAM FINDINGS

- 1. For the fifth consecutive year, the number of RN graduates in New York in 2007 increased over the number of RN graduations in the previous year.**

It is estimated that over 8,200 individuals graduated from RN education programs in New York in 2007. This was the fifth successive year that RN graduations have increased, following six consecutive years of declines. This represents an increase in RN graduations of more than 60% since 2002 (Figure 1 and Table 1).

2. RN graduations in New York are projected to continue to rise in 2008 and 2009.

The number of RN graduations in New York in 2008 is expected to be nearly 74% higher than the number of RN graduations in 2002, and the number of RN graduations in 2009 is projected to be almost 88% higher than in 2002. For the second consecutive year, the number of RN graduations eclipsed the previous high point of RN graduations in 1996 (Figure 1 and Table 1).

3. The number of graduations from both ADN and BSN programs in New York rose in 2007 and is projected to continue to rise through 2009.

In 2007, ADN and BSN graduations each increased by 5% over 2006 graduations. Graduations from both ADN and BSN programs are expected to continue to rise in 2008 and 2009 and are projected to exceed 1996 ADN and BSN graduation levels (Figure 1 and Table 1).

Figure 1
New York RN Graduations by Degree Type, 1996 to 2009

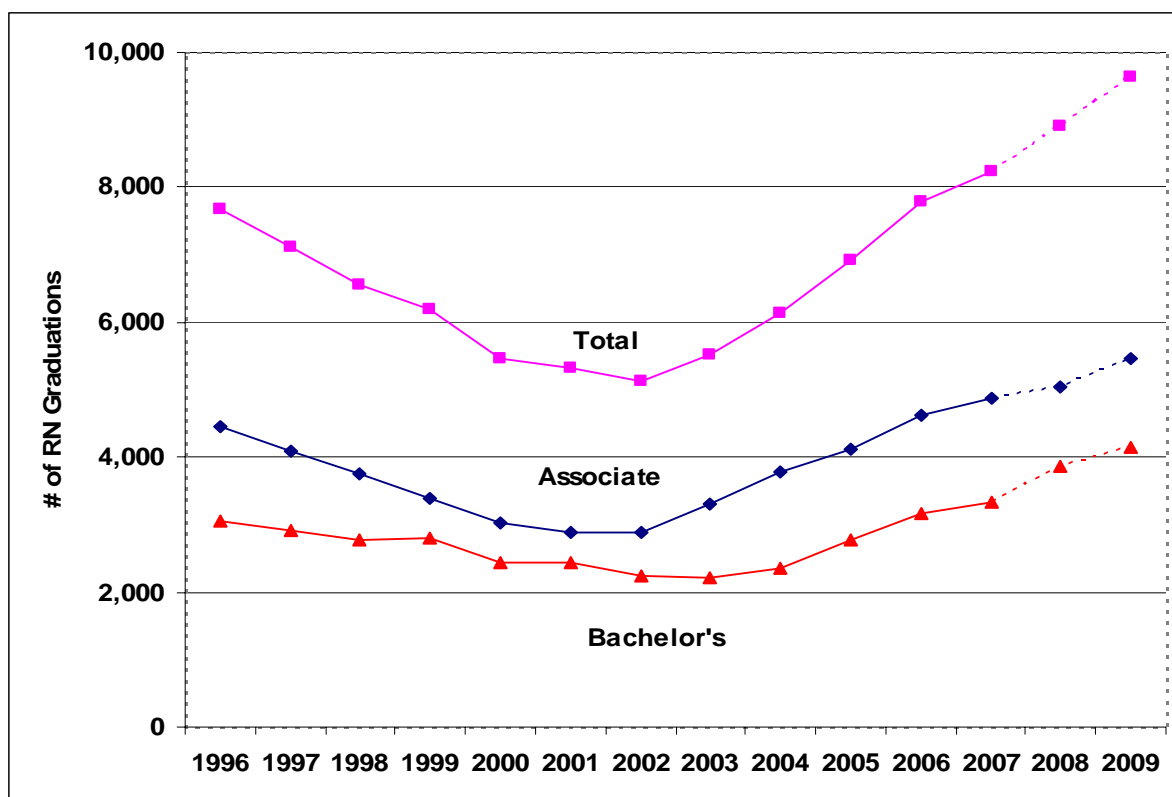


Table 1
New York RN Graduations by Degree Type, 1996 to 2009

School Year		Degree Type			Totals
		Associate	Bachelor's	Diploma	
Actual Graduations	1996	4,447	3,062	176	7,685
	1997	4,102	2,911	94	7,107
	1998	3,763	2,780	13	6,556
	1999	3,381	2,792	4	6,177
	2000	3,015	2,437	4	5,456
	2001	2,885	2,437	12	5,334
	2002	2,877	2,248	3	5,128
	2003	3,311	2,199	3	5,513
	2004	3,772	2,344	11	6,127
	2005	4,119	2,779	14	6,912
	2006	4,620	3,173	8	7,801
	2007	4,872	3,341	9	8,222
Projected Graduations	2008	5,049	3,853	7	8,909
	2009	5,464	4,158	12	9,634

4. Between 2002 and 2009 RN graduations are projected to increase in all regions of New York.

All regions² in New York are projected to experience significant increases in RN graduations between 2002 and 2009, ranging from 24% in the Central New York region to nearly tripling in the Long Island region. Two other regions are projected to more than double their RN graduations between 2002 and 2009 (Finger Lakes and Southern Tier). RN graduations in 2009 are projected to surpass 1996 RN graduations in eight of the ten regions of the state (Figure 2 and Table 2).

² The 1997 New York State Department of Labor regions were used in this report.

Figure 2
Projected Percentage Increase in RN Graduations, 2002 – 2009, by Region

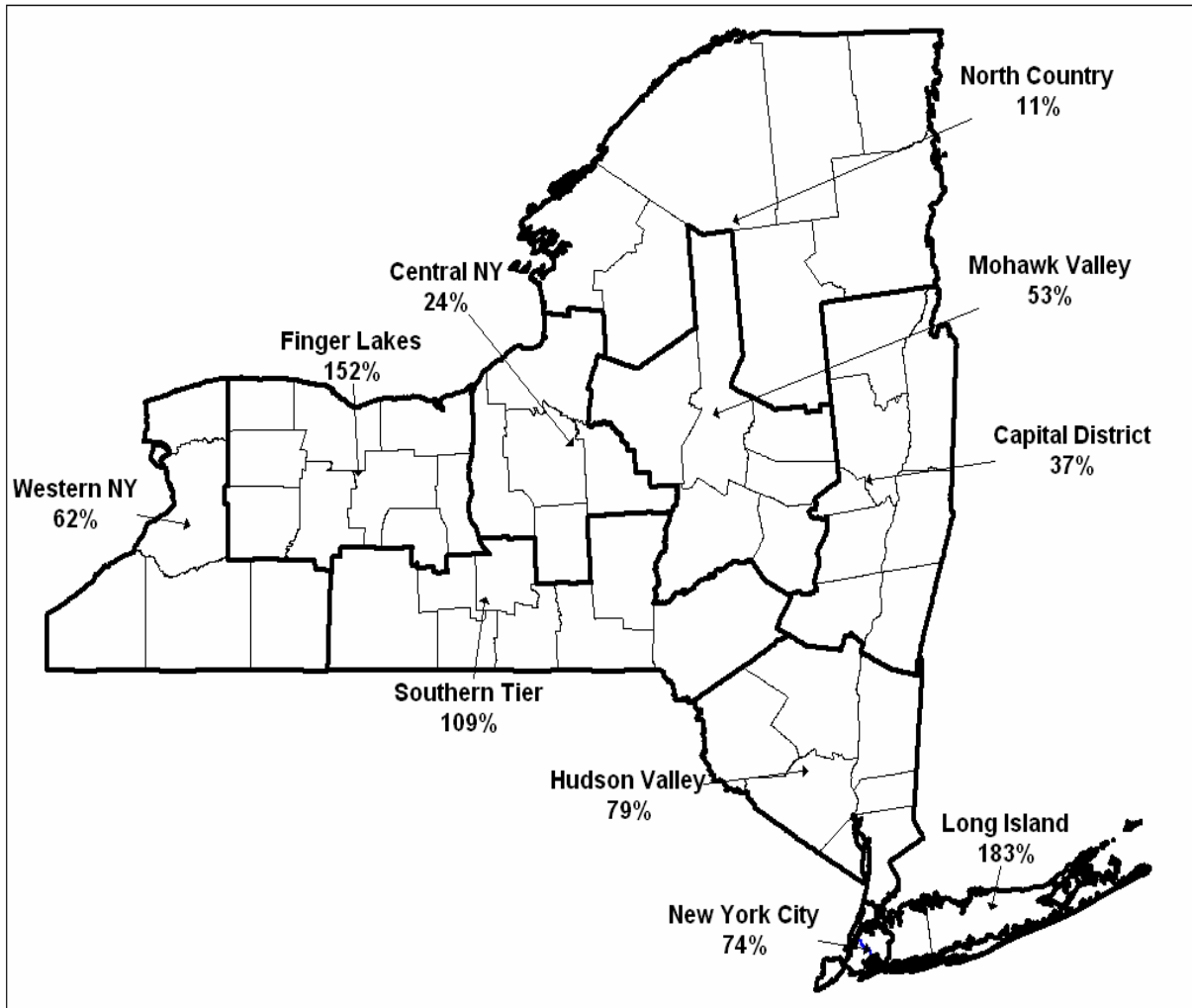


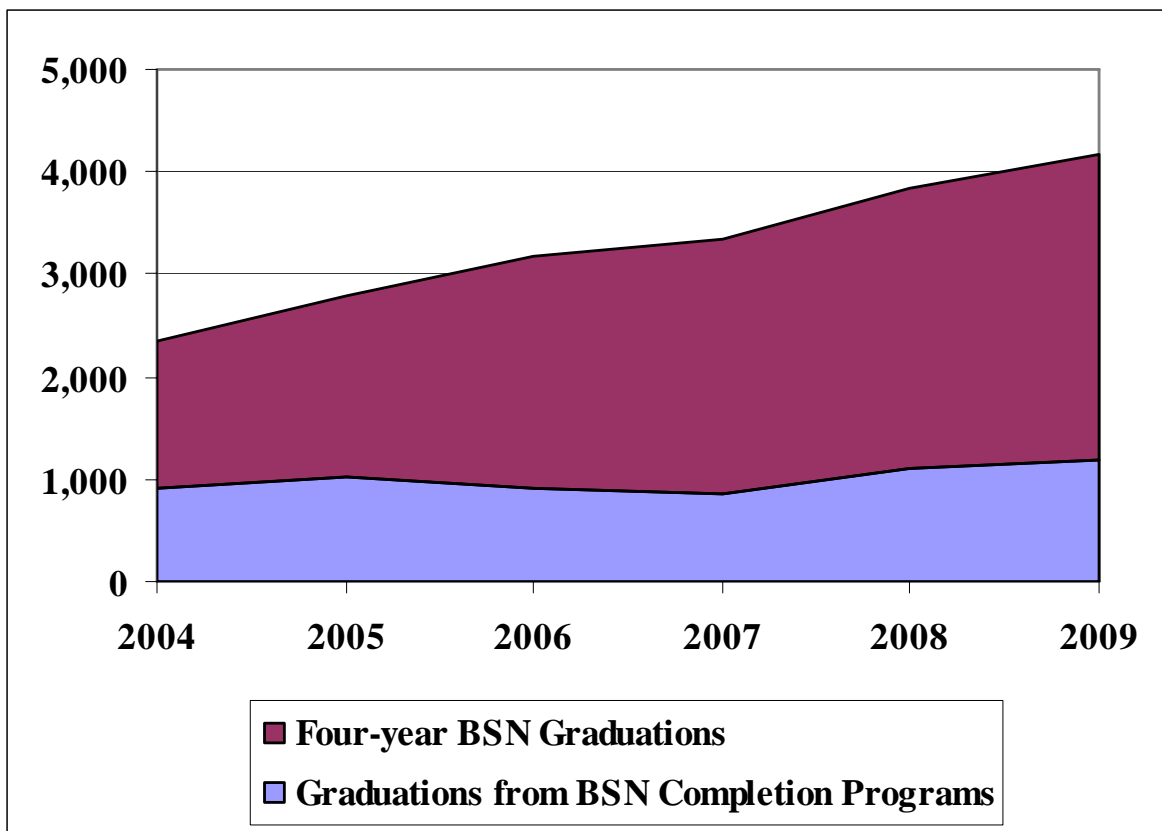
Table 2
Percent Change in the Number of RN Graduations by Region

Region	1996	2002	2003	2006	2007	Projected		% Change		
						2008	2009	96 to 02	02 to 09	96 to 09
Capital District	404	358	395	458	456	451	491	-11.4%	37.2%	21.5%
Central New York	476	289	303	366	376	370	359	-39.3%	24.2%	-24.6%
Finger Lakes	518	385	431	657	698	791	970	-25.7%	151.9%	87.3%
Hudson Valley	1,058	616	689	1,045	1,001	1,057	1,103	-41.8%	79.1%	4.3%
Long Island	937	677	795	1,302	1,571	1,783	1,918	-27.7%	183.3%	104.7%
Mohawk Valley	301	234	231	313	283	349	357	-22.3%	52.6%	18.6%
New York City	2,258	1,544	1,605	2,244	2,350	2,543	2,692	-31.6%	74.4%	19.2%
North Country	232	170	166	227	219	177	188	-26.7%	10.6%	-19.0%
Southern Tier	417	248	358	486	515	501	517	-40.5%	108.5%	24.0%
Western NY	890	535	473	644	672	724	864	-39.9%	61.5%	-2.9%

5. The number of graduations from RN to BSN completion programs is projected to remain constant through 2009.

Between 2004 and 2009, the number of four-year BSN graduations is projected to more than double, going from 1,437 to nearly 3,000. In addition, the number of graduations from BSN completion programs is expected to increase by nearly 31% over the same period. It is projected that in 2009, BSN completers will represent slightly more than 28% of all graduations (Figure 3).

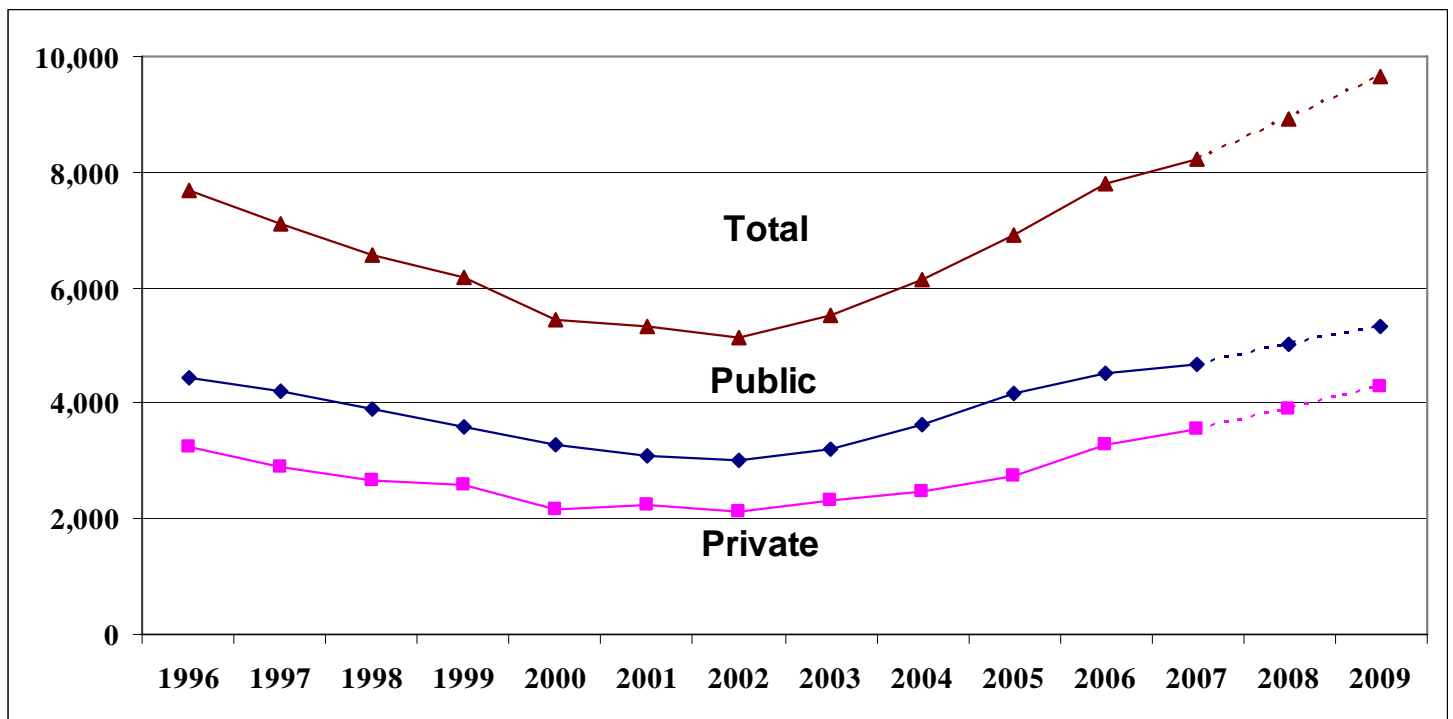
Figure 3
Graduations from BSN and BSN Completion Programs
2004 – 2009



6. RN graduations from privately sponsored nursing education programs are increasing faster than RN graduations from publicly sponsored programs.

Between 2002 and 2009, RN graduations from publicly sponsored programs (State University of New York and City University of New York schools (CUNY)) are projected to increase by nearly 78%, while RN graduations from privately sponsored programs (including hospital-run programs) are expected to more than double (Figure 4).

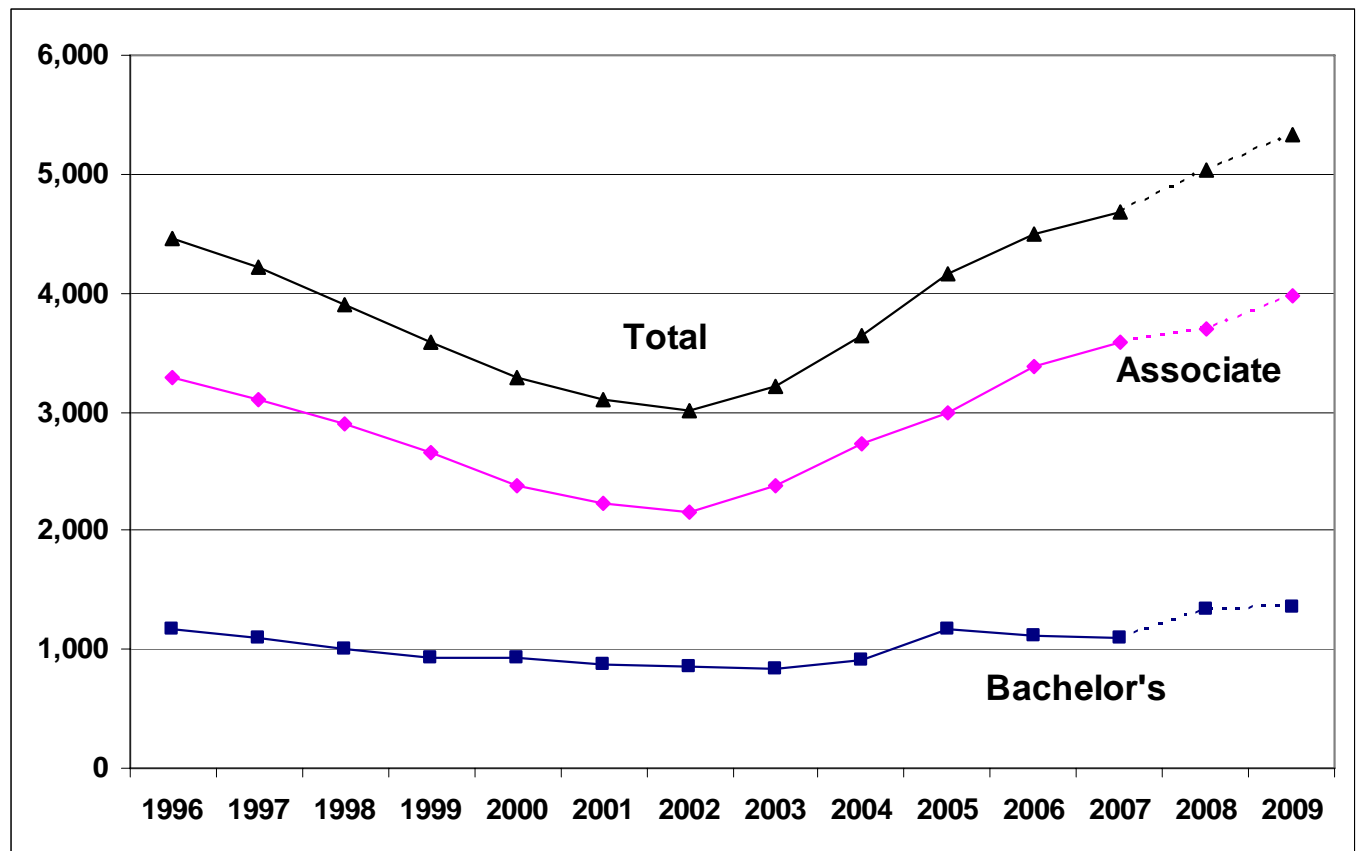
Figure 4
Change in RN Graduations in Public and Private Nursing Programs, 1996 to 2009



7. Graduations from publicly sponsored ADN programs are projected to increase by 85% between 2002 and 2009.

Publicly sponsored ADN graduations are projected to increase by more than 1,800 between 2002 and 2009, or 85%. Publicly sponsored BSN graduations are projected to increase by almost 60% during the same period (Figure 5).

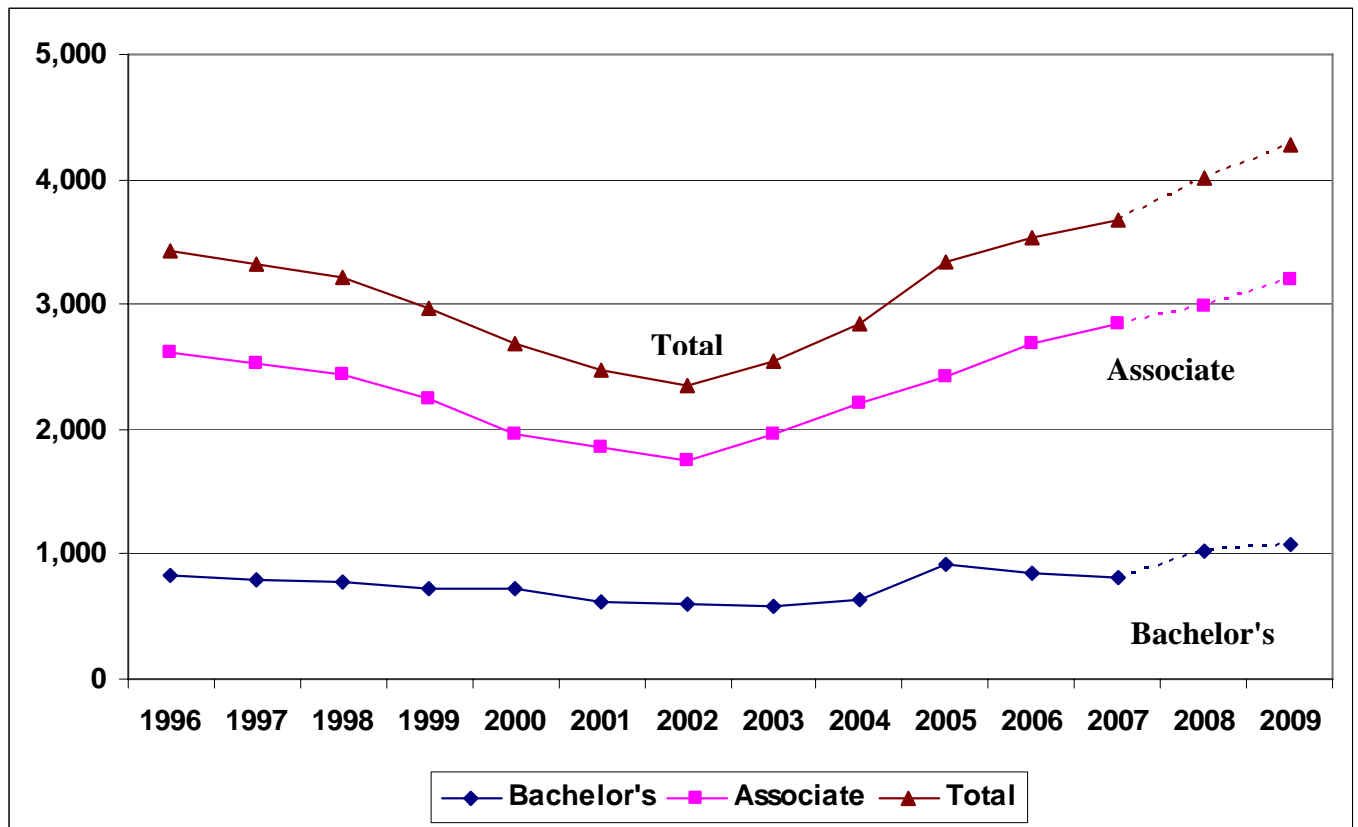
Figure 5
Publicly Sponsored RN Graduations by Degree Type, 1996 to 2009



8. State-sponsored ADN graduations are projected to increase by 85% between 2002 and 2009.

In 2007, nearly 78% of all state-sponsored RN graduations were from ADN programs based in community colleges³. This trend is projected to continue through 2009. Between 2002 and 2009, state-sponsored ADN graduations are projected to increase by 85% and state-sponsored BSN graduations are projected to increase by 59%. All state-sponsored RN graduations are projected to be 20% higher in 2009 than they were in 1996 (Figure 6).

Figure 6
State-sponsored RN Graduations by Degree Type, 1996 to 2009

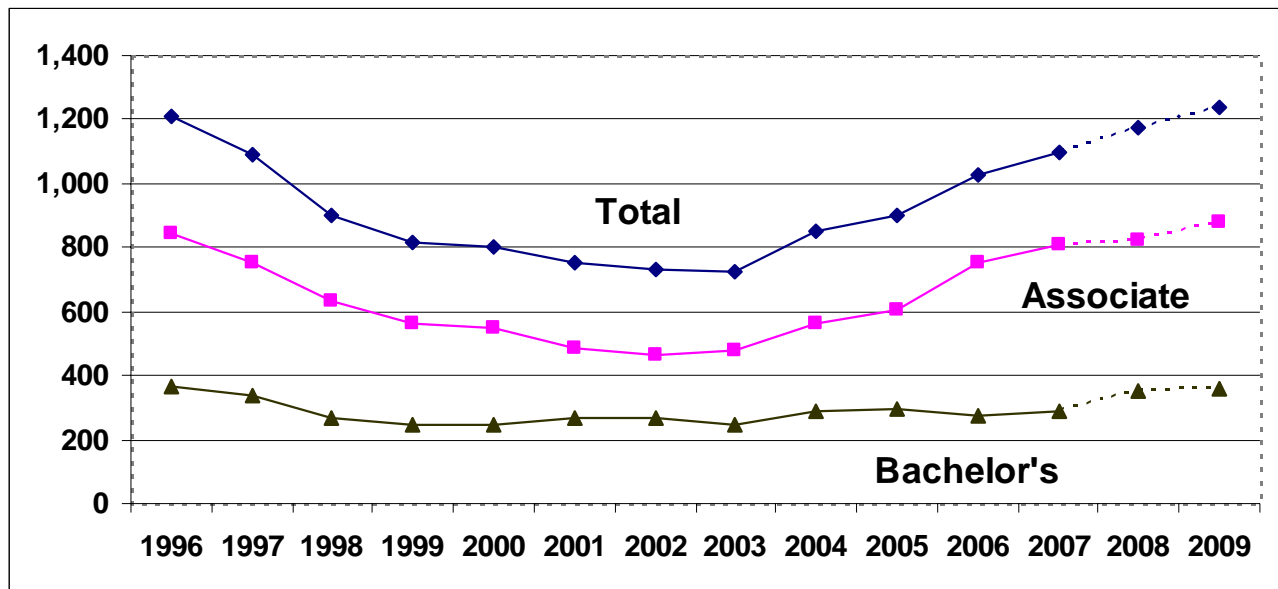


³ ADN programs at state-sponsored community colleges receive both state and county funding.

9. Between 2002 and 2009, ADN graduations at CUNY programs are projected to increase at a faster rate than BSN graduations.

Between 2002 and 2009, ADN graduations at CUNY nursing programs are expected to increase by nearly 90% while BSN graduations are projected to increase by 35%. Between 1996 and 2009, CUNY RN graduations increased by about 2%, with ADN graduations rising by nearly 4% and BSN graduations declining by just over 1% (Figure 7).

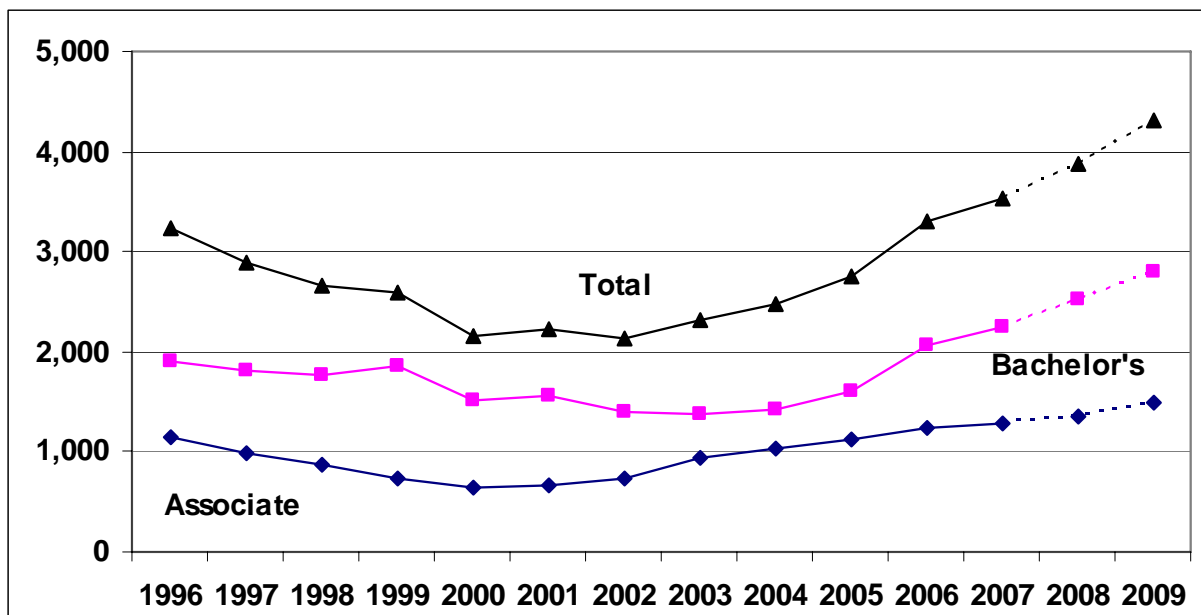
Figure 7
CUNY RN Graduations by Degree Type, 1996 to 2009



10. **Graduations from privately sponsored ADN and BSN programs are projected to more than double between 2002 and 2009.**

Privately sponsored ADN and BSN program graduations are expected to rise by more than 102% between 2002 and 2009. The total number of privately sponsored RN graduations is expected to be 33% higher in 2009 than in 1996 (Figure 8).

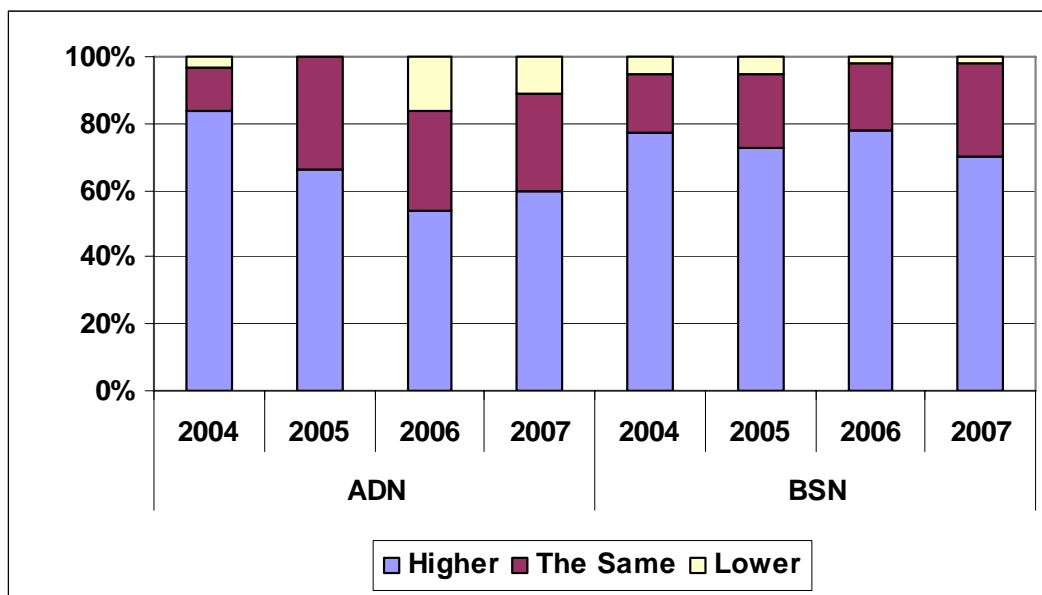
Figure 8
Privately Sponsored RN Graduations by Degree Type, 1996 to 2009



11. While a higher number of ADN programs reported an increase in applications between 2006 and 2007, an increased number of BSN programs reported a decline in applications during the same period.

The percent of ADN programs that reported a rise in applications increased by 6%, while the percent of BSN programs that reported an increase in applications declined by 8% (Figure 9). Overall, the number of nursing education programs that saw increases in applications remained the same between 2006 and 2007.

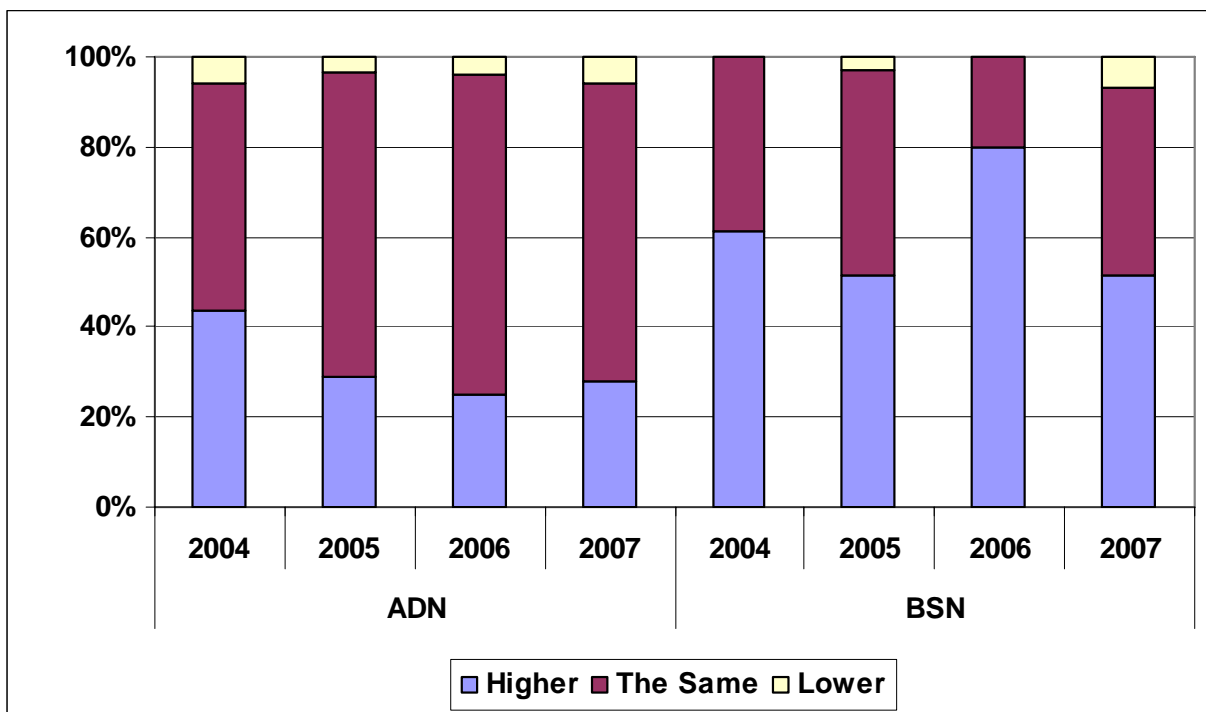
Figure 9
Percent Change in Number of Applications by Program Type, 2004 - 2007



12. A majority of ADN programs reported no change in the number of acceptances between 2006 and 2007, and an increased number of BSN programs reported no change in the number of acceptances during the same period.

Nearly two-thirds of ADN programs reported the same number of acceptances in 2006 and 2007, while another 28% reported an increase in acceptances during the same period. The number of BSN programs reporting the same number of acceptances doubled between 2006 and 2007, while the number of BSN reporting increases in acceptances dropped by 33%. Overall, fewer nursing programs report increases in acceptances between 2006 and 2007.

Figure 10
Percent Change in Number of Acceptances by Program Type, 2004 – 2007



13. Compared to 2006, fewer nursing education programs reported turning away qualified applicants in 2007.

Fifty-four percent of nursing education programs reported turning away qualified applicants in 2007, compared to 59% in 2006 and 67% in 2005. ADN programs were more likely to turn away qualified applicants than BSN programs. Nearly two-thirds of ADN programs and slightly more than 40% of BSN programs reported turning away qualified applicants in 2007 (Table 3).

Table 3
Percent of Respondents Reporting
Turning Away Qualified Applicants by Program Type, 2004 - 2007

	2004	2005	2006	2007
All Programs	57%	67%	59%	54%
ADN	73%	80%	72%	65%
BSN	39%	50%	43%	41%

14. Fewer qualified applicants were denied admission to nursing education programs in 2007 than in 2006 or 2005.

Both ADN and BSN programs reported turning away fewer qualified applicants in 2007 than in 2006. The percent of ADN and BSN programs that turned away 41 or more qualified applicants declined from 28% to 17% between 2005 and 2007 (Table 4). Based on survey responses, it was estimated that about 2,000 qualified applicants were turned away from New York's nursing education programs in 2007, down from nearly 2,200 in 2006 and around 3,000 in 2005. Since applicants may apply to more than one nursing education program, these numbers do not represent an unduplicated count of qualified applicants denied admission to nursing education programs in the state. Additionally, the estimate does not consider students who are waited-listed.

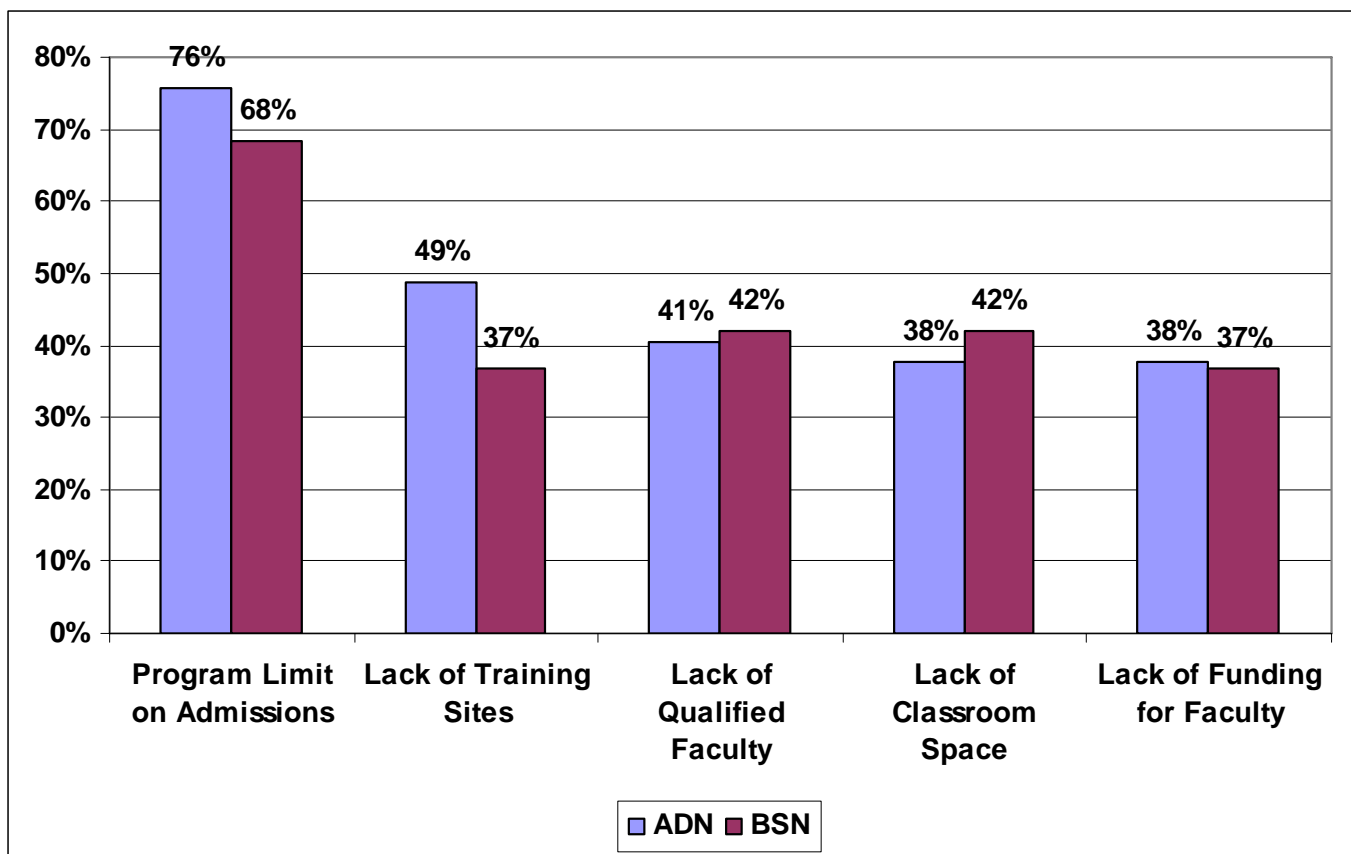
Table 4
Number of Qualified Applicants Turned Away
by Program Type

Number of Qualified Applicants Turned Away	Type of Program								
	All Nursing Programs			Associate Degree			Bachelor's Degree		
	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007
1 – 20	29%	21%	25%	34 %	35%	30%	23%	9%	20%
21 – 40	6%	11%	13%	7%	17%	18%	5%	7%	7%
41 – 60	8%	8%	5%	7%	6%	5%	3%	14%	4%
61 – 80	4%	4%	2%	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%	0%
81 or More	16%	9%	10%	20%	11%	9%	10%	9%	11%

15. The primary reason nursing education programs reported turning away qualified applicants was limits on program capacity (i.e., slots for new students in their programs.)

The majority of ADN and BSN programs that denied admissions to qualified applicants cited limits on program admissions as the primary reason for doing so. Other reasons included a lack of clinical training sites and a lack of qualified faculty (Figure 11).

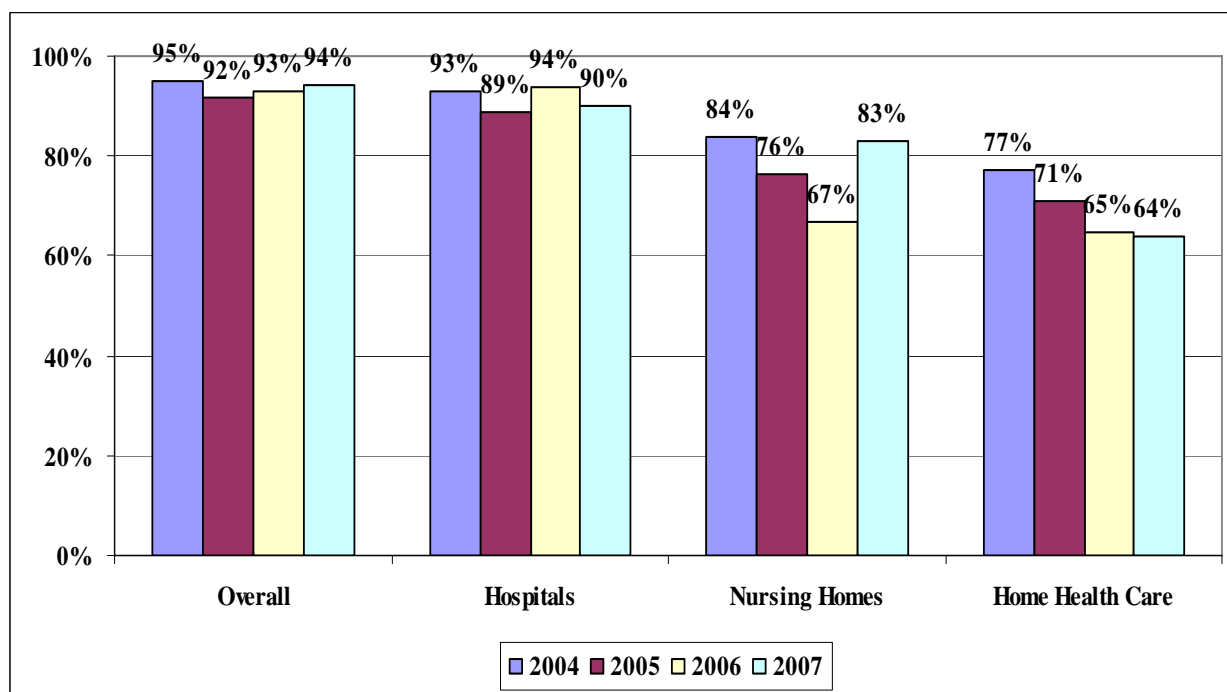
Figure 11
Reasons for Turning Away Qualified Applicants by Degree Program Type



16. Demand for newly-trained RNs was reported to be strong, but this may be changing.

The vast majority of New York's nursing programs reported continued high demand for newly-trained RNs in 2007. More than 90% of the respondents indicated that, overall, many jobs were available for newly-trained RNs. From 2004 to 2007, demand for newly-trained RNs remained relatively constant in the hospital sector but declined in the home health sector (Figure 12). However, this assessment was made prior to the current economic downturn, which could impact on the demand for newly-trained RNs.

Figure 12
Demand for Newly-trained RNs between 2004 and 2006



HOSPITAL NURSE RECRUITER SURVEY FINDINGS

Despite the fact that nursing program deans reported a strong job market for their graduates, anecdotal evidence suggests that new RNs are having a harder time finding jobs this year than they have in past years. In an effort to better understand the job market for new RNs, the Center surveyed nurse recruiters from downstate hospitals in late 2008. Thirty-eight recruiters, primarily representing hospitals, responded to the survey. Key findings from this survey are:

- More than two-thirds of the nurse recruiters reported an increase in the number of new RN graduates applying for direct care nursing positions and over one-third cited an increase in the number of experienced RNs applying for these positions.
- About 60% of respondents reported an increase in the number of per diem and traveler RNs hired for permanent nursing positions.
- Over 42% of respondents saw an increase in the number of experienced RNs hired for direct care nursing positions.

The results of this survey indicate that new RN graduates may face a more competitive nursing job market. This may be due, in part, to the current economic downturn which could result in more experienced RNs competing for available direct care nursing jobs or remaining longer in direct care positions with more predictable number of hours.

DISCUSSION

RN graduations have steadily increased since 2002, but it is unclear whether this trend will continue or whether the increase in the number of RN graduations will eliminate the current and projected shortage of RNs in the state. Based on information from a recent Center's report⁴ on forecasting the supply and demand of RNs, New York will be about 30,000 RNs short by 2020 if existing trends continue through 2020. Using up-to-date RN production data, New York would need to graduate an additional 3,100 RNs each year between 2009 and 2019 to eliminate the projected shortage of RNs by 2020.

Estimates of nursing supply and demand, however, cannot account for changing economic conditions, which could clearly affect the number of available jobs or the number of RNs looking for positions. Some of the potential impacts of the current recession on the state's health care delivery system are:

- rising numbers of uninsured and underinsured New Yorkers who may delay seeking care and be unable to cover the cost of health care they receive;
- tight credit markets that may limit providers' ability to borrow funds for needed investments in, among others, health information technology;
- the potential for revenue shortfalls that could lead to staffing cuts; and
- the easing of current nursing shortages if there are fewer vacant positions to fill.

These short-term impacts may have long-term consequences. If the job market for newly-trained RNs becomes more competitive, a possible market response is a decline in interest in RN careers, leading to declines in RN enrollments and graduations. As a result, if the supply of RNs declines and the projections of future demand are accurate, then shortages will worsen.

⁴ "Toward a Methodology for Substate Projections of Registered Nurse Supply and Demand in New York: Data, Methods, and Preliminary Findings for Counties and County Groups, 2005 – 2020.

