



The Long Term Care Nurse Staffing Study (LTCNSS) assesses nurse staffing and related issues in the long term care setting. In 2018, approximately 27% of licensed vocational nurses (LVNs) and 3% of registered nurses (RNs) in Texas worked in the nursing home/extended care setting. Long term care facilities may also employ certified nurse aides (CNAs), certified medication aides (CMAs), and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs). During the summer of 2019, the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) administered the LTCNSS to directors of nursing (DONs) or facility administrators of 1,205 Texas nursing facilities. A total of 314 facilities participated for a final response rate of 26.1%.

Studies have shown that DONs can have an impact on the quality of care in long term care settings.¹ Facilities that reported having a DON with longer job tenure had higher quality of care scores.¹ This report provides information on DONs in Texas long term care nursing facilities, including salary, longevity, qualifications/experience, and reasons for DON turnover. 309 of 314 (98.4%) facilities reported having a DON at the time of data submission.

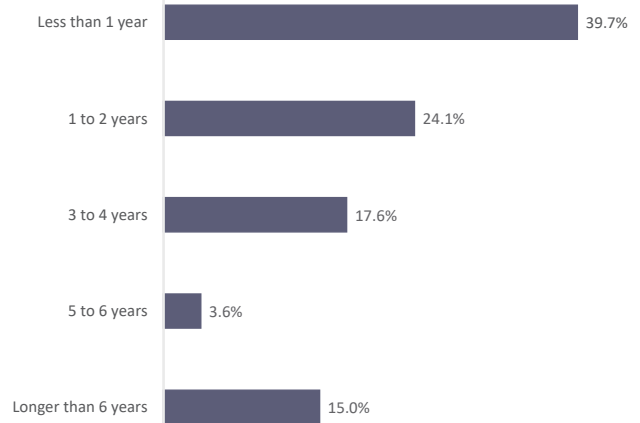
¹Krause, M.R. (2012) Director of Nursing Current Job Tenure and Past Experience and Quality of Care in Nursing Homes. *Health Care Manage Rev.*, 37, 98-108.

Longevity and Tenure

Figure 1 shows the proportions of DONs that have held their current position over various time periods and Figure 2 shows the proportions of DONs with various levels of long term care experience.

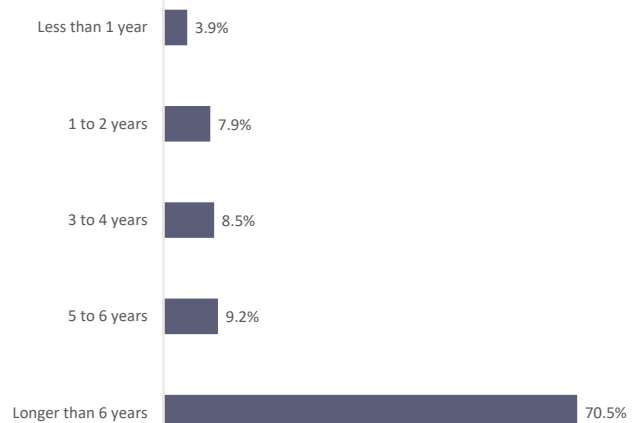
- 122 of 307 (39.7%) DONs held their current position for less than 1 year. Research has shown that facilities who employed a DON with shorter current job tenure had considerably lower quality of care scores compared to those facilities who had a DON with longer tenure.¹
- In 2019, 215 out of 305 (70.5%) DONs had 6 or more years experience in long term care, up from 67.1% in 2017.

Figure 1. DON long term care position tenure (n=307)



Note: n=number of respondents

Figure 2. DON long term care experience (n=305)



Note: n=number of respondents



Reasons for DON Turnover

Table 1. Frequency of reasons reported for DON turnover

Reason for DON turnover	# of respondents	% of respondents
DON turnover is not an issue in my facility	132	43.9%
Exhaustion and burnout	122	40.5%
Burden of regulatory requirements	87	28.9%
Staffing issues	86	28.6%
Excessive paperwork	75	24.9%
Expectations of residents and/or resident's family	54	17.9%
Lack of management and/or leadership skills	44	14.6%
Pay and/or benefits not commensurate with job duties and responsibilities	38	12.6%
Lack of administrative and/or corporate support	37	12.3%
Fear of litigation	30	10.0%
Lack of experience in long term care setting	28	9.3%
Other	13	4.3%
Lack of nursing knowledge	7	2.3%

Respondents were asked to select the issues that contributed to the turnover of directors of nursing in their long term care facility. Note that respondents could select all that apply in this question, unless they selected “DON turnover is not an issue.”

- 132 of 301 (43.9%) respondents indicated that DON turnover was not an issue at their facility (Table 1), which was an increase from the 2017 LTCNSS (38.3% of 431 respondents).
- The most frequently cited reason for DON turnover was exhaustion and burnout (40.5%).

Of those respondents who selected the “other” category in their response to which issues contribute to DON turnover, 10 provided a written response.

- Other responses included administrator turnover (1 facility) and the facility survey process (1 facility).

Education

In 2011, the Institute of Medicine published *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*¹. This report recommended a series of concrete policy and administrative changes that would allow the American healthcare professions to deal with our country’s healthcare workforce needs. Two of these recommendations deal specifically with the education and training of nursing staff:

- Increase the proportion of nurses with at least a baccalaureate degree to 80% by 2020.
- Double the number of nurses with a doctorate in nursing by 2020.

With respect to these recommendations, respondents were asked about the educational attainment of DONs in Texas long term care facilities. Table 2 presents a breakdown of the most commonly held degrees by DONs.

- Though 287 out of 304 (94.4%) DONs had a nursing degree, just 42.8% had a bachelor’s degree or higher in nursing.
- The most common degree type among DONs was an associates in nursing (46.1%).

Table 2. Educational attainment of DONs (n=304)

Degree Type	# of DONs	% of DONs
Diploma in nursing	17	5.6%
Associates in nursing	140	46.1%
Bachelor's in nursing	109	35.9%
Bachelor's in field other than nursing	7	2.3%
Master's in nursing	20	6.6%
Master's in field other than nursing	5	1.6%
Other	6	2.0%
Total	304	100.0%

Note: n=number of respondents; 5 of the 309 facilities (1.6%) that reported having a DON did not answer this question.

¹Institute of Medicine (IOM). (2011). *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press. Retrieved from: http://thefutureofnursing.org/sites/default/files/Future%20of%20Nursing%20Report_0.pdf



The 2019 LTCNSS introduced a questions asking DONs if they received orientation and how well the orientation prepared them for the DON role.

- Of the 94 DONs who responded to the question asking if they had received orientation, 72 (76.6%) received orientation to the DON position.
- As reported in Table 3, 94.4% of respondents indicated that the orientation at least adequately prepared them for the DON role.
- 34 of 72 DONs (47.2%) indicated the orientation prepared them for the DON role well or very well.
- In an open-ended question, DONs were asked to specify why orientation was inadequate. Of the 2

Table 3. Frequency of how well orientation prepared DONs for role (n=72)

	# of DONs	% of DONs
Very Poorly	1	1.4%
Poorly	3	4.2%
Adequately	34	47.2%
Well	13	18.1%
Very well	21	29.2%

Note: n=number of respondents

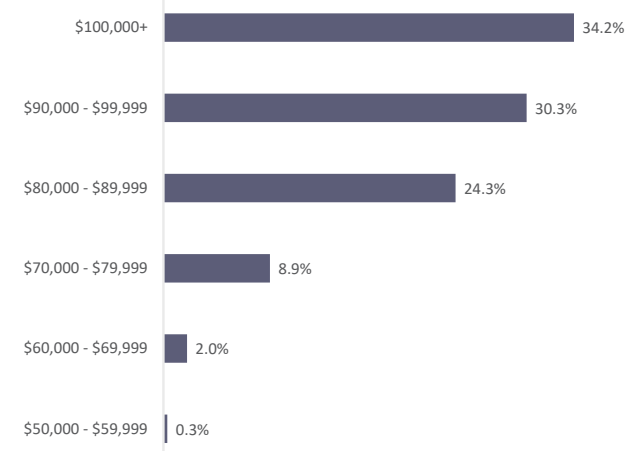
responses to this question, both indicated that the orientation was inadequate because it was not long enough.

Salary

Survey respondents chose a salary range for the DON, from a minimum of less than \$40,000 to a maximum of \$100,000 and over (Figure 3). None of the survey respondents reported a salary below \$50,000.

- The statewide median DON salary range is between \$90,000 and \$99,999, which was the same in the 2016 and 2017 surveys.
- Over one-third of DONs had salaries greater than \$100,000.

Figure 3. DON salary range distribution (n=304)



Note: n=number of respondents

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Nearly 40% of responding facilities currently had a DON who was at the facility less than a year. This is an issue that must be addressed because research has shown that quality of care is negatively impacted when long term care facilities employ a DON that does not have long tenure.¹ Exhaustion and burnout was the most frequently reported reason for DON turnover. The proportion of DONs with a bachelor's or higher in nursing was less than the proportion with a diploma or associates in nursing. The median salary range for DONs has remained the same at \$90,000 and \$99,999 from 2016 to 2019.

TCNWS Advisory Committee Recommendations

Stakeholders should develop and implement solutions to ensure the transition into the role of the DON for the first time and support DONs as they learn to effectively fulfill their role in a new long term care setting, specifically:

- Create a high-quality transition to practice program for new DONs including extended, intermittent training; training on managing the regulatory process; and participation in a long-term mentoring program paired with an experienced DON.
- Facilities should offer leadership training, send DONs to the DON Academy, or identify other opportunities to support DONs.

