

Measure Background

Nurses are critical to ensuring a patient's safety during their stay in a health care facility. While physicians make important diagnostic and treatment decisions for patients, physicians often spend limited time directly with the patient, limiting their ability to observe changes in the patient's condition. Nurses are a more regular presence at the patient's bedside, coordinating the patient's care with the health care team of physicians, pharmacists, family members, and other health care professionals. A nurse's role in patient safety includes monitoring the patient for clinical deterioration, recognizing mistakes, understanding the care process and identifying weaknesses within systems, reporting any changes in a patient's condition, and carrying out numerous other duties to ensure patients receive high-quality care.¹

Why is Nursing Workforce Important?

Literature on the relationship between the education of nurses and the quality of nursing care supports that increasing the proportion of Bachelor's-prepared nurses in facilities is linked to reduced patient mortality, length of stay, and readmissions.² As care continues to grow more complex, and nurses must make critical decisions associated with care for sicker, frailer patients, the demand for more highly educated nurses has followed.³ According to Kovner et al., recent graduates with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) demonstrated notably superior levels of readiness in key areas such as evidence-based practice, research abilities, and assessment of gaps in teamwork, collaboration, and general practice.⁴ These competencies are crucial for building a competent nursing workforce for the future.⁴

Nursing Workforce Standard

Leapfrog asks ASCs to report on the percentage of registered nurses (RNs) with direct care responsibilities who are BSN-prepared, meaning they have a bachelor's in nursing degree or higher degree.

Leapfrog scores and publicly reports ASC performance on this measure. ASCs achieving the Nursing Workforce standard have at least 80% of their RNs with a BSN degree or higher.

Download the complete Leapfrog ASC Survey scoring algorithms document on the [ASC Scoring and Results webpage](#).

Why Purchasers Need to Get Involved

Nurses play an outsized role in ensuring patient safety in health care facilities. The evidence is clear that nurse education is vitally important to improving patient safety. It is important that purchasers use their collective voice with facilities to ask about the nursing workforce - asking them how they establish their nurse staffing plans, how they are working to raise the education level of their nurses, and what actions are they taking to reduce burnout among their nurses.

References

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4. Kovner CT, Brewer CS, Yingrengreung S, Fairchild S. New nurses' views of quality improvement education. *Jt Comm J Qual Patient Saf*. 2010;36(1):29-35.