



REGISTERED NURSE

JOB DESCRIPTION

Registered nurses (RNs), regardless of specialty or work setting, perform basic duties that include treating patients, educating patients and the public about various medical conditions, and providing advice and emotional support to patients' family members. RNs record patients' medical histories and symptoms, help to perform diagnostic tests and analyze results, operate medical machinery, administer treatment and medications, and help with patient follow-up and rehabilitation.

RNs teach patients and their families how to manage their illness or injury, including post-treatment home care needs, diet and exercise programs, and self-administration of medication and physical therapy. Some RNs also are trained to provide grief counseling to family members of critically ill patients. RNs work to promote general health by educating the public on various warning signs and symptoms of disease and where to go for help. RNs also might run general health screening or immunization clinics, blood drives, and public seminars on various conditions.

EXPERIENCE & SKILLS

Nurses should be caring, sympathetic, responsible, and detail oriented. They must be able to direct or supervise others, correctly assess patients' conditions, and determine when consultation is required. They need emotional stability to cope with human suffering, emergencies, and other stresses.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

In all States and the District of Columbia, students must graduate from an approved nursing program and pass a national licensing examination, known as the NCLEX-RN, in order to obtain a nursing license. Nurses may be licensed in more than one State, either by examination or by the endorsement of a license issued by another State. Currently 18 States participate in the Nurse Licensure Compact Agreement, which allows nurses to practice in member States without recertifying. All States require periodic renewal of licenses, which may involve continuing education. There are three major educational paths to registered nursing: A bachelor's of science degree in nursing (BSN), an associate degree in nursing (ADN), and a diploma. BSN programs, offered by colleges and universities, take about 4 years to complete. ADN programs, offered by community and junior colleges, take about 2 to 3 years to complete. Diploma programs, administered in hospitals, last about 3 years.

SALARIES

Entry level: \$43, 370
Average: \$52,330
Experienced: \$74, 760

Employment services: \$63,170
Hospitals: \$53, 450

Home health care, nursing homes,
and physician's offices: \$48, 500

EMPLOYMENT & ADVANCEMENT PROSPECTS

Job opportunities for RNs in all specialties are expected to be excellent. Employment of registered nurses is expected to grow much faster than average for all occupations through 2014, and, because the occupation is very large, many new jobs will result. In fact, registered nurses are projected to create the second largest number of new jobs among all occupations. Thousands of job openings also will result from the need to replace experienced nurses who leave the occupation, especially as the median age of the registered nurse continues to rise.

RELATED OCCUPATIONS

- Licensed Practical & Vocational Nurses
- Physicians & Surgeons
- Physician Assistants
- Nutritionists
- Health Aides
- Occupational & Physical Therapy
- Medical Technicians & Health Services Management

REFERENCES

National League for Nursing, 61 Broadway, New York, NY 10006. Internet: <http://www.nln.org>

American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 1 Dupont Circle NW., Suite 530, Washington, DC 20036. Internet: <http://www.aacn.nche.edu>