

Wisconsin in Top Quartile of States for RNs per Capita

Wisconsin ranks 13 in the nation for the number of registered nurse (RN) licenses per 100 residents, according to an analysis by [Becker's Healthcare](#), with only eleven other states and the District of Columbia, which was also included in the ranking, having higher ratios.

According to the publication's analysis of 2020 U.S. Census data from the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Nursys system, Wisconsin has 1.93 active RN licenses per 100 residents. The District of Columbia and the U.S. state with the smallest population, Vermont, topped the list with 4.30 and 3.30 RN licenses per 100 residents, respectively.

For its population of 623,347 people, Vermont has 20,587 active RN licenses. In comparison, Wisconsin has 112,441 active licenses for a population of 5,832,655. California, the nation's largest state by population, has just 468,171 active RN licenses for its 39,368,078 residents. The U.S. rate is 1.55, with 5,099,874 RN licenses for a national population of 329,484,123.

As WHA's 2022 Wisconsin Health Care Workforce Report notes, "When COVID-19 hospitalizations subside, and COVID-19 seasons' become more discernible, health care employers, educators and other key stakeholders will need to determine which trends represent true shortages and which reflect maldistribution between settings or changes in employment models and determine the best strategies to cope with the peaks and valleys of COVID-19 and the Silver Tsunami."

The distribution of RN licenses per population provides insight into the distribution of registered nurses across the U.S. As the nation experiences the simultaneous rise in health care needs of an aging population and increasing retirements of the large baby boom workforce—a trend known as the "Silver Tsunami"—it will be important to monitor, grow and attract the nursing and health care workforce needed to sustain Wisconsin's high-quality health care.

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