

Fact Sheet: Minnesota's Respiratory Care Practitioner Workforce – 2009



The Office of Rural Health and Primary Care (ORHPC), in cooperation with the Minnesota Board of Medical Practices, collects information about the demographics, employment and career plans of respiratory care practitioners (RCPs). Minnesota respiratory care practitioners voluntarily complete workforce surveys during the annual licensing renewal process. Unless noted, all data presented are based on information collected from respiratory care practitioners renewing licenses by July 1, 2009. **Contact ORHPC with questions or data requests about RCPs or other Minnesota health care professionals at (651) 201- 3838, or visit ORHPC at: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/orhpc/workforce.**

Overall:

- According to the Minnesota Board of Medical Practices, a total of 1,626 respiratory care practitioners (RCPs) renewed their Minnesota licenses for 2009. ORHPC received 1,338 survey responses, representing an 82 percent response rate.
- Among survey respondents, 1,113 RCPs or 83 percent reported actively practicing in Minnesota. The remaining 225 respondents were not practicing as an RCP, were practicing in another state, or did not indicate practice location.
- Based on number of respondents and licensed RCPs, an estimated 1,350 RCPs were practicing in Minnesota or approximately 25 per 100,000 population¹.

Sex, Race and Ethnicity:

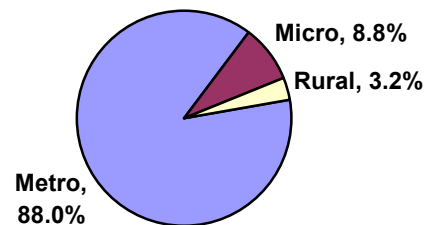
- Respiratory care practitioners are predominately female (64 percent).
- Nearly all RCPs identified themselves as White (93.5 percent).
- Only 6.5 percent of RCPs identified themselves as African American, Native American, Asian, Hispanic or multiracial.

Geographic Distribution:

- The majority of RCPs were practicing in metropolitan² areas (metro) of Minnesota (88 percent). Only 12 percent of RCPs said their primary work site was located in a

micropolitan³ (micro) or rural⁴ area of Minnesota (Graph A).

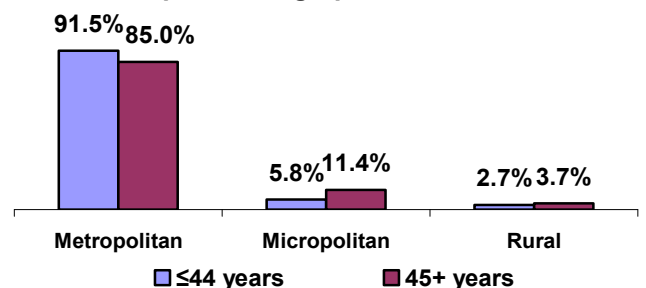
Graph A
Geographic Distribution of Respiratory Care Practitioners, 2009



Age Range:

- Based on license information, more than half of RCPs were 45 years or older (53 percent).
- Older RCPs (45+ years) outnumber younger RCPs nearly two to one in the micropolitan and rural areas of Minnesota (Graph B).

Graph B
Respiratory Care Practitioners by Age Group and Geographic Location, 2009



¹ 2008 Minnesota Population Estimates

² Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) = 23 counties included in seven metropolitan statistical areas (Minneapolis-St. Paul, St. Cloud, Rochester, Duluth-Superior, Fargo, Grand Forks and La Crosse).

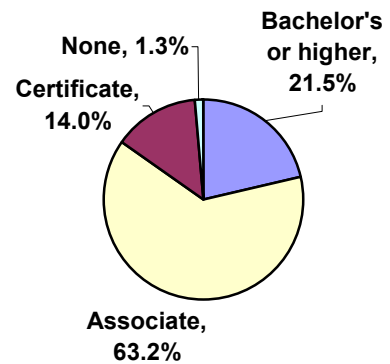
³ Micropolitan counties = 18 counties surrounding smaller urban centers of at least 10,000 people.

⁴ Rural = 46 counties outside MSAs and Micropolitan areas

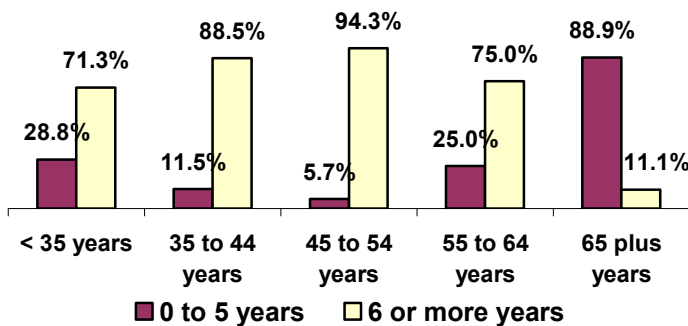
Practice Longevity Plans:

- 16 percent of RCPs expected to stop practicing within the next five years.
- 22 percent of RCPs intended to practice another six to 10 years.
- Most (62 percent) RCPs planned to practice another 10 years or more.
- With the exception of those 65 years and older, RCPs younger than 35 were most likely to stop practicing within the next five years compared to any other age group (Graph C).

Graph D
Respiratory Care Practitioners
by Type of Degree, 2009



Graph C
Practice Plans of Respiratory Care
Pratitioners by Age Group, 2009



Primary Practice Setting:

- RCPs worked an average of 11 years at their current work site or facility.
- Most (66 percent) worked 35 or more hours per week.
- The median wage for an RCP rose from \$20.97/hour in 2001 to \$28.18/hour in 2009, a 37 percent increase.⁵
- The most common practice setting for RCPs was a hospital (80 percent).

Training and Education:

- Minnesota currently has five respiratory therapy programs.
- 74 percent of RCPs received their training and education from a program in Minnesota.
- More than half (63 percent) received an associate degree in preparation for licensure as an RCP. In 2001, the National Board for Respiratory Care started requiring an associate degree for certification (Graph D).

Primary Activity:

- Nine out of 10 RCPs reported direct patient care as their primary activity.
- Among the 80 percent of RCPs who reported hospitals as their primary practice setting, medical/surgical rooms and intensive care units were the most common areas of practice (21 percent), followed by emergency rooms (18 percent) and operating/recovery (11 percent).

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⁵ Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2008-09 Edition, Respiratory Therapists, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos084.htm> (visited October 12, 2009).