

Healthcare Practitioners and Technicians

Registered Nurses

Registered Nurses (RNs) treat and educate patients, patients' families and the general public about medical conditions and how to manage their illnesses or injuries. Registered nurses responsibilities include recording patients' medical histories and symptoms, performing diagnostic tests, analyzing results, operating medical machinery, administering treatment and medications, and helping with patient follow-up and rehabilitation. They explain post-treatment home care needs; diet, nutrition, and exercise programs; and self-administration of medication and physical therapy. Some RNs may work to promote general health by educating the public on warning signs and symptoms of disease. RNs also might run general health screening or immunization clinics, blood drives, and public seminars on various conditions.

Registered nurses will often establish a care plan or contribute to an existing plan for a patient in their care. Plans may include numerous activities, including careful checking of dosages and avoiding interactions as well as starting, maintaining, and discontinuing intravenous (IV) lines for fluid medication or blood. Many RNs provide direction to licensed practical nurses and nursing aides regarding patient care. Those with advanced educational preparation and training may perform diagnostic and therapeutic procedures and may have prescriptive authority. Most RNs work as staff nurses as members of a team providing critical healthcare. However, some RNs choose to become advanced practice nurses, who work independently or in collaboration with physicians, and may focus on the provision of primary care services.

An RN's duties and title are often determined by their work setting or patient population served. RNs can specialize in one or more areas of patient care. There generally are four ways to specialize:

- Working a particular setting or type of treatment; such as perioperative nurses, who work in operating rooms and assist surgeons.
- Specializing in specific health conditions; as do diabetes management nurses, who assist patients to manage diabetes. RNs specializing in a particular disease, ailment, or healthcare condition are employed in virtually all work settings, including physicians' offices, outpatient treatment facilities, home healthcare agencies, and hospitals.
- Working with one or more organs or body system types, such as dermatology nurses, who work with patients who have skin disorders. RNs specializing in treatment of a particular organ or body system usually are employed in hospital specialty or critical care units, specialty clinics, and outpatient care facilities

- Working with a well-defined population; such as geriatric nurses, who work with the elderly. RNs who specialize by population provide preventive and acute care in all healthcare settings to the segment of the population in which they specialize.

Some RNs may combine specialties. For example, pediatric oncology nurses deal with children and adolescents who have cancer. The opportunities for specialization in registered nursing are extensive and are often determined on the job. Registered nurses work as healthcare consultants, public policy advisors, pharmaceutical and medical supply researchers and salespersons, and medical writers and editors.

Most RNs work in well-lit, comfortable healthcare facilities, although some registered nurses travel around the United States and throughout the world providing care to patients in areas with shortages of healthcare workers. Home health and public health nurses travel to patients' homes, schools, community centers, and other sites. RNs may spend considerable time on foot while completing their duties, which can include heavy lifting. RNs are sometimes in close contact with individuals who have infectious diseases and with toxic, harmful, or potentially hazardous compounds, solutions, and medications. Patients in hospitals and nursing care facilities require 24-hour care; consequently, nurses in these institutions frequently work nights, weekends, and holidays and are often required to be on call. Nurses who work in offices, schools, and other settings that do not provide 24-hour care are more likely to work regular business hours.

Education/Training

How to Obtain:

To become a registered nurse a nursing degree from an accredited program must be obtained. A degree can be obtained through an Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) or a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). An associate degree in nursing takes approximately 2 - 3 years to complete and a bachelor of science in nursing takes 3 - 4 years to complete. In all States and the District of Columbia, students must graduate from an approved nursing program and pass a national licensing examination in order to obtain a nursing license. Nurses may be licensed in more than one State, either by examination, by the endorsement of a license issued by another State, or through a multi-State licensing agreement. All States require periodic renewal of licenses, which may involve continuing education.

Once a nursing program has been completed the student is allowed to sit for the National Council Licensure Examination-Registered Nurse (NCLEX-RN). Passing this exam is required by all U.S. states and territories' Boards of Nursing. Other requirements for licensure as an RN vary by state. In this state of New York they are:

- Be at least 18-years-old
- Be of good moral character
- Be a graduate from an accredited nursing program

- Pass the NCLEX-RN
- Take coursework in the identification and reporting of child abuse offered by a New York State provider

To become an advance practice nurse or nurse practitioner a master's degree in nursing (MSN), which is typically completed in two years, must be obtained. Further qualification can be pursued through a PhD or a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program.

The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) internationally renowned credentialing programs certify nurses in specialty practice areas. Certifications must be renewed every 5 years. Specialties include:

- Acute Care NP
- Adult NP
- Adult Psychiatric & Mental Health NP
- Diabetes Management - Advanced
- Family NP
- Family Psych & Mental Health NP
- Gerontological NP
- Pediatric NP
- School NP

Requirements vary by specialty. The Adult Psychiatric & Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Certification Eligibility Criteria include:

- A current, active RN license in a state or territory of the United States or the professional, legally recognized equivalent in another country.
- A master's, post-master's, or doctorate from an adult psychiatric and mental health nurse practitioner program accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) or the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) with a minimum of 500 faculty supervised clinical hours included.
- Clinical training in at least two psychotherapeutic treatment modalities.
- The APMHNP graduate program must include course work in:
 - advanced health assessment
 - advanced pharmacology
 - advanced pathophysiology
 - health promotion and disease prevention, and

- differential diagnosis and disease management

More Information on Licensing and Certification:

- American Nurses Association (ANA): <http://www.nursingworld.org/>
- National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN): <https://www.ncsbn.org/index.htm>
- New York State RN Licensure Requirements: <http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/nurse/nursing.htm>
- National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission: <http://nlnac.org/home.htm>
- The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC): <http://www.nursecredentialing.org/>

Average Costs:

Tuition and fees for a master's degree earned at an accredited public university in nursing costs an average of \$11,500* per year. Completion time is generally two years. Tuition and fees for the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program or a PhD in nursing, cost an average of \$14,900* per year. Completion time is generally three to four years.

Licensure Fee varies by state. New York State Licensure Fee is \$143, plus the cost of any study aids.

The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) certification costs range from \$270 - \$390. Renewal costs range from \$200 - \$350

Costs of continuing education vary.

* Note: This figure does not include federal, state, or university financial aid resources such as grants, fellowships, scholarships or work study. It also does not include vocational rehabilitation or other state resources available specifically to people with disabilities. The out-of-pocket expense may be significantly less.