

**Poll: N.Y. nursing prospects grim**

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(October 20, 2003) — A new survey, released Sunday in Rochester at a state convention of nurses, paints a grim picture for the future of the profession.

There aren't enough registered nurses in New York state to care for the growing population, and aging nurses are leaving the profession at a higher rate than new nurses are entering the field, Barbara Zittel, executive secretary for the New York State Board for Nursing, said Sunday.

Zittel outlined the results of a 124-question survey of more than 31,000 registered nurses in the state on Sunday, the final day of the four-day New York State Nurses Association Convention at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center.

Nurses are leaving the occupation because they are often stressed at work and work too much overtime, Zittel reported.

"Compensate us," said Karen Ballard, director of practice and government affairs for NYSNA. "Don't make us work all this overtime."

Of the 220,000 registered nurses in the state, about 160,000 work as nurses in the state. Others have retired or left the profession. About 2.1 million nurses are registered in the nation, Ballard said.

According to the study, commissioned by the state Department of Education, New York is about 16,000 nurses shy of the number needed to care for state residents.

Nearly half of the nurses working in New York will leave their jobs in the next five years, according to the study. Half of those nurses will move to other nursing jobs at another agencies, the other half will leave the profession altogether, Zittel said.

Registered nurse Mimi Gonzalez, 65, of Queens, Queens County, wants to encourage more Hispanic teens to enter the field to reflect the growing Hispanic population. Currently, only 2 percent of New York nurses are Hispanic. About 15 percent of New Yorkers are Hispanic, according to the 2000 census.

A statewide collaboration of universities, state agencies and nurses groups launched a new program this year to encourage high school freshmen to enter the field.

Part of the reason for the shortage is that women have more career choices, and they aren't choosing nursing, said Susan Hauptfleisch, 54, of Henrietta, a registered nurse of 33 years.

For more information, go to [www.op.nysed.gov/nurse.htm](http://www.op.nysed.gov/nurse.htm).

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