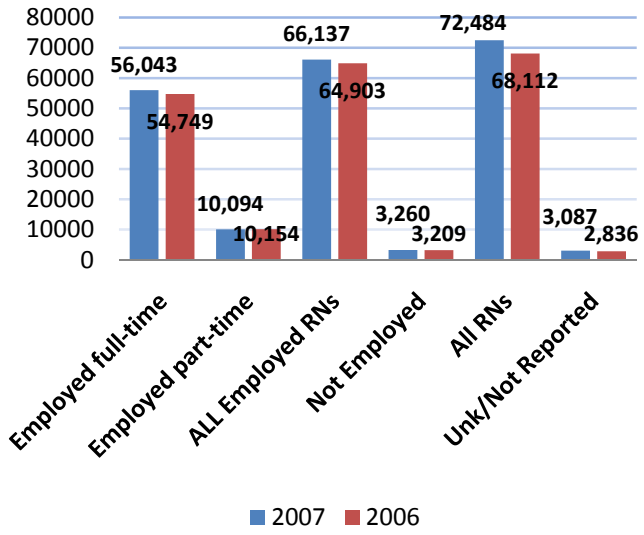
The Registered Nurse Population in Tennessee, June 2006 and 2007

Registered Nurses in Tennessee

The Tennessee Board of Nursing provides data to the Tennessee Center for Nursing annually on the cumulative population of nurses licensed in the State of Tennessee. The list is provided shortly after the end of the second quarter of each year. The following information includes RNs with an active license status in Tennessee.

Chart 1. Registered Nurse Population, by Nursing Employment Status in Tennessee, 2006 & 2007

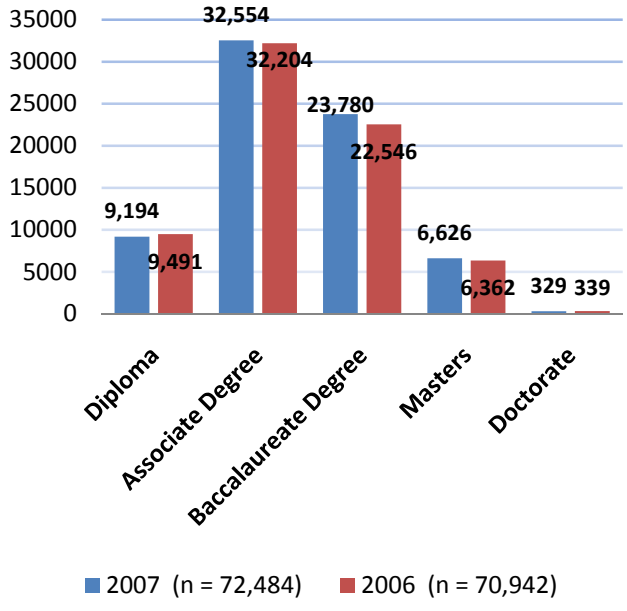


According to the most current national data available[1], 2004, 83.2% of RNs with active licenses were employed in nursing versus 91.2% of those in Tennessee in 2007 (a decrease of 0.3% from 2006). See Chart 1. Nationally, 58.3% of active RNs were employed full time, 24.8% employed part time and 16.8% were not employed in 2004. In Tennessee, 77.3% of active RNs were employed full time (a 0.1% increase from 2006), 13.9% were part time (a decrease of 0.4% from 2006), and 4.5% were not employed (no change from 2006).

Educational Preparation

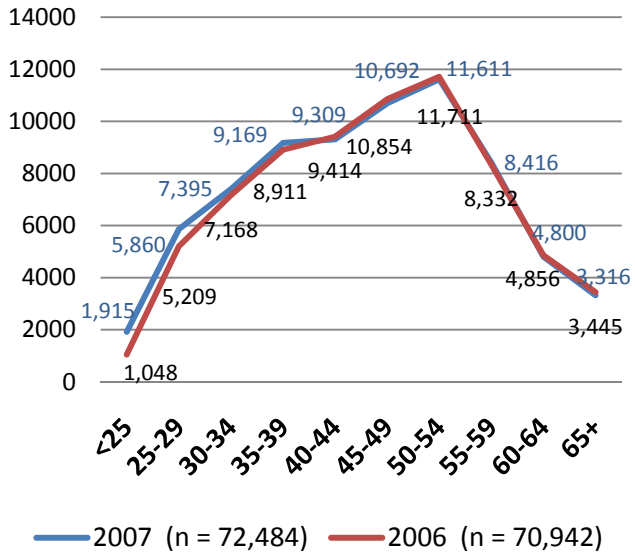
According to the national nursing survey, in 2004, 25.6% of active nurses reported having a diploma, 43.9% reported having an Associate Degree and 31.5% reported having a Baccalaureate Degree or higher. In Tennessee, 12.7% of active RNs reporting having a diploma (a 0.7% decrease from 2006), 44.9% an Associate Degree (a 0.5% decrease from 2006), and 42.4% a Baccalaureate Degree or higher (a 1.1% increase from 2006) (See Chart 2).

Chart 2. Distribution of RNs According to Basic Nursing Education in Tennessee, 2006 & 2007



AGE

Chart 3. Age Distribution of the Registered Nurse Population in Tennessee, 2006 & 2007



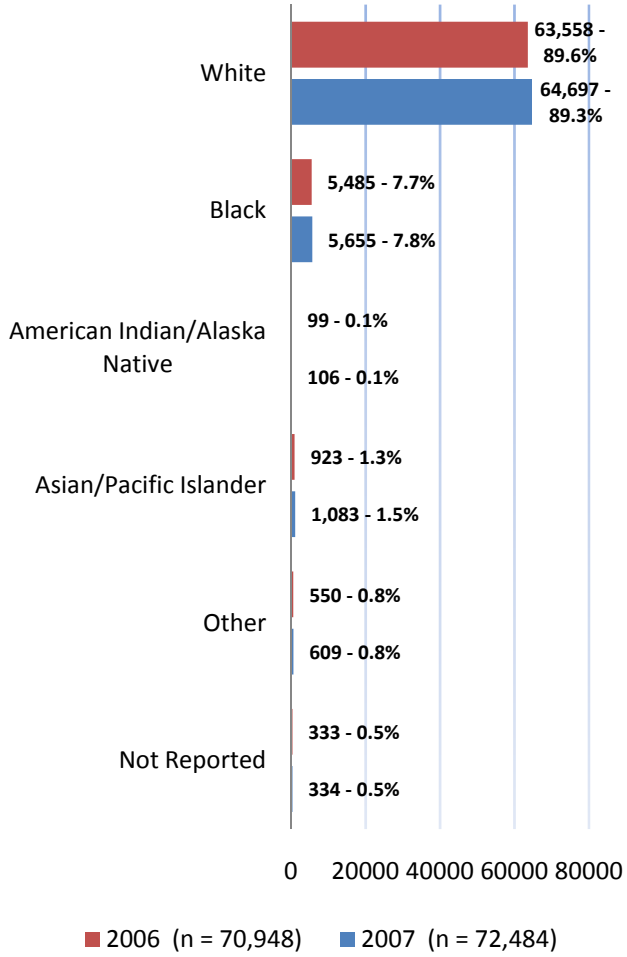
The average age of the RN population in the US is 46.8 (2004) versus Tennessee's 45.3 (2007), which is down slightly from the 2006 average age of 45.8. In Tennessee, almost 30% of the registered nurse population is over the age of 50 versus 41% nationally (See Chart 3). Only 10.7% of TN RNs are under the age of 30 compared to 8% nationally.

Men still comprise a very small percentage (5.8%) of the total RN population nationally, but are slightly higher for Tennessee (9%).

RACIAL / ETHNIC BACKGROUND

Nationally, the RN workforce is predominately white, 82% in 2004. This number is slightly higher for Tennessee, with almost 90% of the RN workforce being white in 2006 and 2007 (See Chart 4). The largest minority group of RNs is black, comprising 4.2% of the national workforce in 2004. The RN population in TN has a slightly higher percentage blacks, almost 8%. Less than one and a half percent of the RN workforce is composed of American Indian/Alaskan Native and Asian/Pacific Islander.

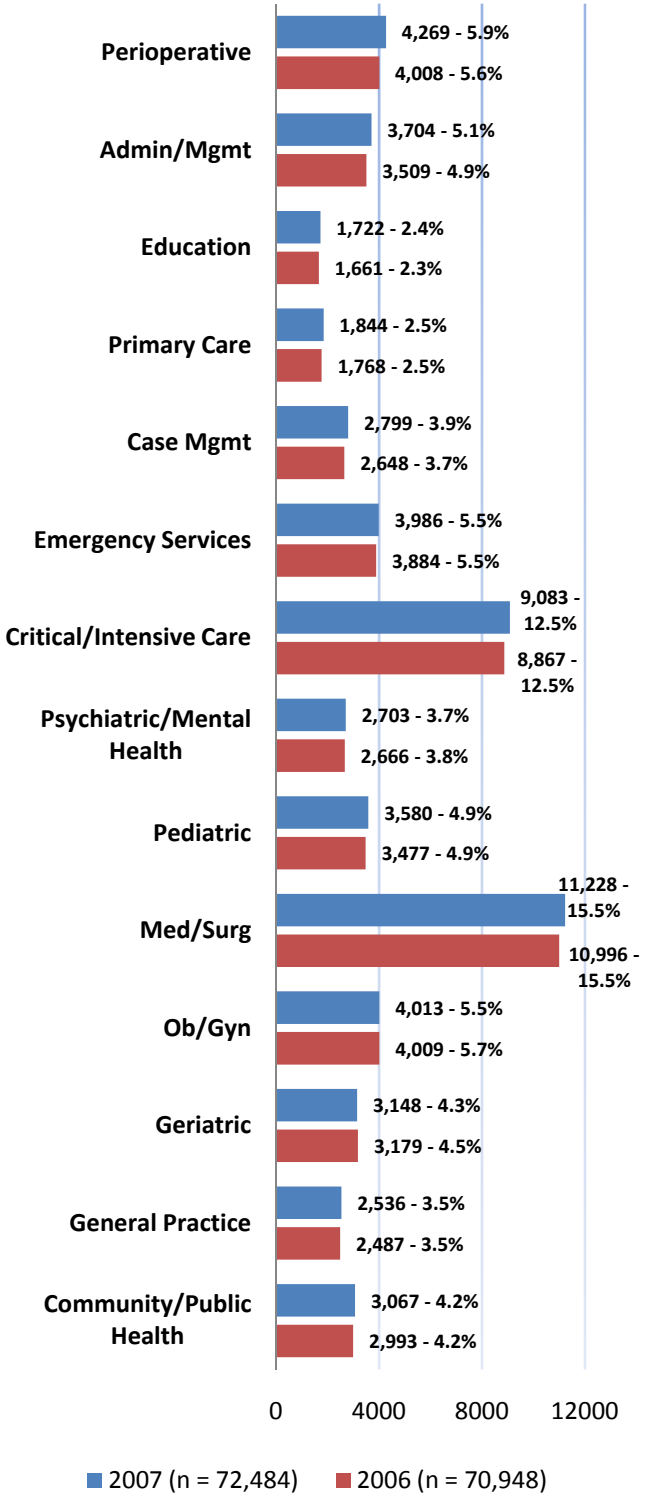
Chart 4. Distribution of Registered Nurses by Racial/Ethnic Background in Tennessee, 2006 & 2007



EMPLOYMENT SETTINGS

The largest employer of RNs are hospitals. In 2004, over 1.3 million RNs reported being employed at hospitals. In Tennessee, the largest RN employment setting reported was Med/Surg (15.5%), followed closed by Critical/ICU (12.5%) (See Chart 5). In 2004, only 63,000 nurses reported being in the education field nationally. Only 1,722 or 2.4% of the Tennessee RN workforce reported being employed in education.

Chart 5. Distribution of Registered Nurses by Employment Settings in Tennessee, 2006 & 2007



** Excludes "Other" (n=5,982) and "Not reported" (n=243) categories.

References:

1. US Department of Health and Human Services. *The Registered Nurse Population: Findings from the 2004 National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses*. Available at http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/healthworkforce/rnsurvey04/, Accessed June 2008.