

OECD Health Statistics 2025

Definitions, Sources and Methods

Nurses licensed to practice

A **nurse licensed to practice** has completed a programme of nursing education and is qualified and authorised in his/her country to practice nursing. They include practising and other (non-practising) nurses.

Inclusion

- Professional nurses (see definition below)
- Associate professional nurses (see definition below)
- Nurses who provide services directly to patients
- Nurses for whom their nursing education is a prerequisite for the execution of the job
- Nurses for whom their nursing education is NOT a prerequisite for the execution of the job
- Nurses licensed to practice but who due to various reasons are not economically active (e.g. unemployed or retired)
- Nurses working abroad

Exclusion

- Healthcare assistants and personal care workers (nursing aids), who do not have any recognised qualification/certification in nursing

Note: The number should be at the end of the calendar year.

Sources and Methods

Australia

Source of data:

- 2013 onwards: **Department of Health** (DoH). NHWDS Nursing and Midwifery Practitioners Data. Data request. Also available at <http://hwd.health.gov.au/>. Data are as at the end of the re-registration period for the profession in the reference year.
- 2012: **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2013**. Nursing and midwifery workforce 2012. National health workforce series no. 6. Cat. No. HWL 52. Canberra: AIHW. Also available at www.aihw.gov.au.
- 2011: **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2012**. Nursing and midwifery workforce 2011. National health workforce series no. 2. Cat No HWL 48. Canberra: AIHW. Also available at www.aihw.gov.au.
- 2001-2009: **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2011**. Nursing and Midwifery Labour Force 2009. Bulletin no. 90. Cat No AUS 139. Canberra: AIHW (and previous issues). Also available at <http://www.aihw.gov.au>.
- 1995-1999: Revised additional material associated with **AIHW 2003**. Nursing labour force 2002. AIHW cat. no. HWL 29. Canberra: AIHW (Health Labour Force Series no. 29). These data are available at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=6442467553&tab=2>.

Coverage:

- From 2011, data regarding nurses licensed to practice are nurses who are registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA), in conjunction with the AHPRA, to practice in the nursing profession.

Deviation from the definition:

- Data for nurses include registered non-practicing nurses and midwives. These are counted separately from registered nurses (“professional nurses”) and enrolled nurses (“associate professional nurses”) as it cannot be determined if they are an enrolled nurse, registered nurse, or midwife. This explains the difference between total nurses licensed to practice and the sum of professional and associate professional nurses licensed to practice.

Break in time series:

- From 2011, data are based on information from the National Health Workforce Data Set (NHWDS). The NHWDS combines data from the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) with health workforce survey data collected at the time of annual registration renewal. Registration data prior to 2011 was based on data from the now superseded state and territory nursing and midwifery boards and councils. For more information see Appendix A of *Nursing and midwifery workforce 2011* at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=10737422167>. Comparison of 2011 and later data with 2009 and earlier data should be made with caution.

- From 2013 the NHWDS is held by the Department of Health and the data has minor differences from the previous AIHW holdings due to the method of imputation for survey non-response and enhanced geocoding methods.

Austria

Source of data: **Austrian National Public Health Institute (GÖG)**, Health Professions Registry.

Reference period: 31st December.

Coverage:

Included are all registered nurses:

- Practising nurses
- Professionally active nurses
- Registered nurses, who are not yet employed after training
- As a nurse registered jobseeker
- As a nurse registered volunteer
- As a nurse registered pensioner

Excluded are non-registered nurses.

Belgium

Source of data: **Service Public Fédéral Santé publique, sécurité de la chaîne alimentaire et environnement** (Federal Public Service (FPS) Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment), DG2 - Soins de santé primaire et gestion de crises (Directorate-General for Primary Health Care and Crisis Management). Cellule Planification des professionnels de santé ("Planning of Health Professionals" unit). Base de données fédérale des professionnels de soins de santé (Federal database of health care professionals).

Reference period: 31st December.

Coverage: Data cover all nurses licensed to practice.

Canada

Source of data: Health Workforce Database, **Canadian Institute for Health Information**.

Coverage:

All Nursing Data:

- RN data (1980-2001) includes all registrations, except duplicates, regardless of employment status.
- LPN data (1988-2001) and RPN (1990-2001) were from Health Workforce Database (previously Health Personnel Database).
- Data include all registrations, regardless of employment status.

RN, NP, LPN and RPN data (2002 to 2023):

Data include:

- Nurses with active-practising registration;
- Nurses employed and not employed in nursing at the time of annual registration;

- Data exclude:

- Secondary registrations. Refer to RN Data Dictionary and Processing Manual, under the Methodology tab, for information on the treatment of primary and secondary registrations. See <https://www.cihi.ca>.
- Canadian-born and/or Canadian-trained nurses living outside of Canada;
- Unregulated nurse aides and orderlies;
- Midwives not registered as RNs;
- Midwives registered as RNs working full-time (as midwives).

Break in time series: 1988, 1990, 2002, 2023.

1) registered psychiatric nurses were included for the first time in 1990; LPNs in 1988.

2) the methodology for counting RNs, LPNs and RPNs was harmonised for the first time in 2002.

Note: To better ensure timeliness, CIHI collects data prior to the end of the 12-month registration period in each jurisdiction. Therefore, the population of reference for the nursing data is all regulated nurses who submit an active practising registration in a Canadian province or territory in the first 6 months of the registration year. The 12-month registration period varies among the provinces and territories, as each jurisdiction is responsible for setting the start and end dates of its own registration period.

3) Starting in 2023, CIHI revised its methodology for imputing missing values in data for 2023 and subsequent years. This change may have an impact on the trends. As a result, comparisons with data for previous years should be made with caution.

Please note that statistics reported by CIHI may differ from those reported by others, even though the source of the data (i.e., annual registration forms) is the same. Differences may be attributed to differences in the population of reference, the collection period and/or CIHI's data exclusion criteria and editing and processing methodologies. For more information, refer to Nursing in Canada, 2023 — Methodology Notes on CIHI's website: <https://www.cihi.ca/sites/default/files/document/nursing-in-canada-2023-meth-notes-en.pdf>.

Chile

Source of data: **Ministry of Health** using as original source the National Registry of Individual Health Providers from the **Health Superintendence** (<http://www.superdesalud.cl/>), which was created by a law-ranking decree of November 2008, progressively installed since 2009, and is henceforth used. Its creation and maintenance are in charge of the Health Superintendence.

- The inscription in the Register has been progressive, and the changes that can be observed in the figures are principally due to its progressive extension. The prevision was that this effect remains at least until the end of 2013.

Coverage: Nationwide.

- Data include both public and private sectors' employed nurses.

- The increase in numbers of nurses is due both to the incorporation in the Registry of new nursing graduates and to the extensibility of the Registry.

Break in time series: In 2018, there was some adjustment in the database from the Superintendence de Salud.

Colombia

Data not available.

Costa Rica

Data not available.

Czechia

Source of data: **National Centre of Nursing and Other Health Professions**; Register of health care workers competent to pursue a health care profession without professional supervision. Since 2017, the certificate was cancelled.

Reference period: 31st December.

Coverage:

- Data refer to nurses competent to pursue a health care profession without professional supervision (number of registered persons with valid registration).
- Data comprise non-practising nurses and nurses working outside health care system also, unlike data on practising nurses.
- As of 1.9.2017, the certificates are not issued, and the validity of previously issued certificates is not extended.
- Data from 2017 are not available yet (data from a new register are still validated for completeness and accuracy).

Break in time series: 2016. In 2016, length of registration was changed by actual law. Hence the number of registrations also changed.

Denmark

Source of data: **The Danish Health Data Authority**, Registered Health Professionals, the Danish Register for Evaluation of Marginalisation, The Danish Civil Registration System.

Reference period: 31st December.

Coverage: 1980-2023

Break in time series: 2022 change in the data collection

Estonia

Source of data: Registry of Health Care Professionals, **Health Care Board**.

Reference period: January of the following year.

Coverage:

- The number of licensed nurses refers to overall potential, not persons by the last obtained specialty.

Finland

Source of data: **VALVIRA. National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health**. Register on Qualified Health Care Personnel.

Reference period: At the end of the calendar year.

Coverage: All individuals with a license to practise as a nurse. Nurses licensed to practice includes all licensed nurses, who are presumed to live in Finland. These include everyone with known permanent residency in Finland and non-Finnish nationals for whom there is no information on residency. Licensed nurses include most midwives and public health nurses as well as they automatically receive a license to practise as a nurse. As any acquired licenses do not expire, even upon retirement, this data includes only individuals under the age of 65 to better reflect the actually available work force.

Deviation from the definition:

Estimation method:

Break in time series:

France

Data not available.

Germany

Data not available.

Greece

Source of data: **Hellenic Statistical Authority (EL.STAT)-Annual Hospital Census** and **Hellenic Regulatory Body of Nurses (ENNE)** - data drawn from their membership registry.

Reference period: 31st December

Coverage: All professional nurses. The enrolment of all nurses is compulsory.

Deviation from the definition: No

Break in time series: The data has been available only for 2023.

Hungary

Source of data:

- From 2013 until 2014: **Office of Health Care Authorisation and Administrative Procedures** (EEKH in Hungarian) <http://www.eekh.hu/>, Basic register.

- From 2015 to 2016, **Health Registration and Training Center** (ENKK in Hungarian) <http://www.enkk.hu/>, Basic register.

- From 2017, **National Healthcare Service Center** (ÁEEK in Hungarian) <http://www.enkk.hu/>, Basic register.

- From 2021, **National Directorate General for Hospitals** (OKFŐ in Hungarian) <http://www.okfo.gov.hu/>, Basic register.

Reference period: 31st December.

Coverage: Head count data from the Basic register (licensed to practice).

Break in time series:

- From reference year 2017: With regards to the training requirements laid down in Directive 2005/36/EC, nurses were regrouped:

- professional nurses: only nurses which have an education in compliance with the EC Directive on professional qualifications (e.g. minimum 3 years for a general nurse) and specialist nurses with an equivalent education (or longer) or nurses with a qualification (general nurse and general assistant) by which they can benefit from the acquired rights in compliance with the EC Directive and
- Nurses who do not meet the requirements of the Directive 2005/36/EC were moved to the Associate professional nurse category.
- Ambulance nurses are excluded from the group of Nurses.

Note: The data source of nurses licensed to practice is the Basic (Diploma) Register, not the Operational Registry.

The basic register is a national register that includes all professionals having a healthcare qualification obtained in Hungary or obtained abroad and recognised in Hungary, regardless of whether they have a valid operational registration to pursue healthcare activities or not. There are two cases of the deletion from the register: if the professional dies or if the diploma turns out to be false.

Iceland

Source of data:

2016 and onwards: **The Directorate of Health**, Register of Licenced Health Care Professionals.

Until 2015: **The Directorate of Health**, Register of professional nurses.

Reference period: 31st December.

Coverage:

- Includes (from 2016) all professional nurses and associate professional nurses with a license (all ages regardless of employment status, employment location (inside or outside of the country) or nationality).

- Before 2016, only data for professional nurses are available.

Deviation from the definition:

Estimation method:

Break in time series: Break in series in 2016 is due to change in data source. The data source is the Register of Licenced Health Care Professionals instead of the Register of Nurses, which no longer exists.

Ireland

Source of data: **Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland - An Bord Altranais** (<https://www.nmbi.ie/Home>).

Reference period: Figures refer to as at end of December.

Coverage:

- Information provided refers to the total number of registered nurses on the Board's register as at end of December of the reference year. This does not necessarily mean that each nurse is active in the field of nursing.
- Data contains midwives who also have dual nursing registration.

Israel

Source of data: The data are based on the Nurses License Registry maintained by the Nursing Division and the Health Information Division in the **Ministry of Health**, for which the demographic information is periodically updated from the Population Registry at the Ministry of Interior.

Reference period: End of the year.

Coverage: Data are for all licensed nurses. The number of midwives is not included in the number of nurses.

Note: The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Italy

Source of data:

- Until 2020: **FNOPI** (National Institute keeping the register of nurses). <http://www.fnopi.it>.
- Since 2021: **ISTAT** Integrated Data System on Health Personnel.

Reference period: 31st December.

Coverage: All professional nurses licensed to practice. In the Italian regulatory system, the category "Associate professional nurses" does not exist.

Deviation from the definition: None.

Estimation method: None.

Break in time series: 2021: due to changes in data source.

Japan

Data not available.

Korea

Source of data:

Professional nurses:

- **Ministry of Health and Welfare**, Yearbook of Health and Welfare Statistics.

Associate professional nurses:

- Until 2013: **Registration data from local governments**, unpublished data.
- From 2014: **Ministry of Health and Welfare**, Division of Health Personnel Policy. Unpublished data.

Latvia

Source of data: **Health Inspectorate of Latvia**; Register of Medical Practitioners and Medical Support Staff.

Reference period: 31 December.

Coverage:

There has been an improvement in the quality of the Register of Medical Practitioners and Medical Support Staff data in 2018. The data before 2018, not comparable, are not shown.

Break in time series: 2022.

- 2022: Changes in legislation on education for nurses.

Lithuania

Source of data:

- Up to 2006: State Health Care Accreditation Agency under the Ministry of Health, Register of licenses.
- Since 2011: **Health Information Centre of Institute of Hygiene**, data is calculated from Compulsory Health Insurance Fund information system (subsystem METAS). Report “Health Statistics of Lithuania”, available from <https://www.hi.lt/sveikatos-statistikos-leidiniai/#--lietuvos-sveikatos-statistika>. Available on Official Statistics Portal of Statistics Lithuania <http://osp.stat.gov.lt/en>.

Reference period: 31st December.

Coverage: The number of nurses licensed to practice includes all nurses having valid license at the end of the year.

Break in time series:

- 2011: Data source changed.
- 2016: In 2016-2018 valid licenses with expired data of updating of license is treated like not valid license.
- 2019: Change of data calculation method: licence expiration date is not checked if licence is treated as valid.

Luxembourg

Source of data: **Ministère de la Santé**. Register of doctors and health professionals.

Reference period: 31st December.

Mexico

Data not available.

Netherlands

Source of data: Data based on **BIG register** (register of (para)medical professions) and **SSB database** (micro-integrated database of **Statistics Netherlands** with data from municipal register, tax register, social security, business register).

Reference period: The last Friday before Christmas.

Break in time series:

- 2019, 2023: Re-registration effect. Since 2014, midwives, nurses and physiotherapists are obliged to re-register. The requirement is that they have been practising in the past 5 years.
- 2014. As of 2014, midwives, nurses and physiotherapists are obliged to re-register. The requirement is that they have been practising in the past 5 years. As a result, the figures are significantly lower than before.

New Zealand

Source of data: **Nursing Council of New Zealand**.

Reference period: Data relate to 31st March of the year following the year indicated in the series, i.e. 2010 data refer to 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010, etc.

Coverage:

- Head count data.
- Registered Nurses and Enrolled Nurses figures have been used to provide the breakdown into Professional Nurses and Associate Professional Nurses.
- Nurse Practitioners are included in the Registered Nurse category (the term “nurse practitioner” refers to expert nurses who work within a specific area of practice incorporating advanced knowledge and skills and are registered in that scope of practice).
- Registered nurses include all nurses who are listed on the Nursing Register. Nurses can be included if they are NZ graduates or if they graduated overseas and meet the requirements of the Nursing Council of NZ.
- Three years of study are required to qualify as a registered nurse.
- Enrolled nurses in New Zealand are regulated and their programme is 18 months.

- This indicator is comprised of all nurses who met the Council's statutory declaration requirements to practice (i.e. are capable of legally practising as a nurse), and who were issued with an Annual Practising Certificate regardless of whether they were working in nursing in New Zealand or not. It does not include those that replied to the survey but were not issued an Annual Practising Certificate.

Break in time series: 2011.

- Data up to and including 2010 are based on the number of practising certificates issued (a nurse can have more than one in a year). The 2011 figures (2010/11 year ending 31 March 2011) and onwards are based on the number of practising nurses holding an annual practising certificate.

Norway

Source of data: **Statistics Norway**; Statistics on health-care personnel. Administrative registers. See http://www.ssb.no/hesospers_en/.

Reference period: 3rd week of November.

Coverage: The figures provided cover all registered nurses.

Break in time series: 2015.

- As from 2015, the register-based employment statistics will be based on a new data source for employees. Until the end of 2014, the main data source was The Central Register on Employers and Employees (EE register), produced by the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organisation (NAV). In 2015, this reporting to NAV was coordinated with the reporting of earnings and personnel data to the Tax Administration and Statistics Norway. This common reporting system is called "a-ordningen" (the a-system).

Poland

Source of data: **Ministry of Health. Register of nurses and midwives of the Main Polish Chamber of Nurses and Midwives, Statistics Poland.**

Reference period: 31st December.

Coverage: From 2019 onwards – nurses living in Poland.

Portugal

Data not available.

Slovak Republic

Data not available.

Slovenia

Data not available.

Spain

Source of data: **National Statistics Institute (INE)**, from the **Register of Nurses Council**.

https://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/es/operacion.htm?c=Estadistica_C&cid=1254736176781&menu=ultiDatos&idp=1254735573175.

Reference period: Data as of December 31.

Coverage:

- The data on professional nurses licensed to practice are taken from the Register of the Nurses Council. The category 'associate professional nurses' (ISCO-08 code 3221) does not exist in Spain.

- Data include solely nurses licensed to practice, not midwives. The data for nurses with a degree in the speciality of midwifery may be underestimated, as it is not legally obligatory to be registered in this speciality in order to practise it.

Sweden

Source of data: **National Board of Health and Welfare**, LOVA-register.

Reference period: 1st November.

Coverage:

- Non-retired personnel.
- Full coverage for licensed practising nurses.

Switzerland

Data not available.

Türkiye

Data not available.

Source of data:

Reference period:

Coverage:

Deviation from the definition:

Estimation method:

Break in time series:

United Kingdom

Source of data: **Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)**, United Kingdom.

Reference period: As of 31 December. 2021 data includes 9 months to 30th September 2021. This can be updated to include full calendar year later in 2022.

Coverage: Data include all nurses eligible to practice in the UK.

United States

Source of data: **National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN)**. Copyright by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc. All rights reserved.

The full title of the database: Nurse Licensee Volume and NCLEX Examination Statistics (several years).

1987-2016: The National Nursing Database: A profile of nursing licensure in the U.S. (2019 to present) -

<https://www.ncsbn.org/national-nursing-database.htm>.

Coverage:

- Nationwide.
- Number of registered nurses (RN), and licensed practical/vocational nurses (LPN/VNs) holding an active license within a US jurisdiction available for employment for as December for each respective year.
- Data include territories such as American Samoa. But exclude data from Puerto Rico.

Deviation from the definition: Exclude nurses working abroad.

Estimation method: Nurses with active licensure to perform nursing care in the United States.

Break in time series: No breaks in time series.

Further information:

- 1996 represents data for 1995-1996.
- Data is compiled by NCSBN Nursys, which is an electronic information system where nursing regulatory bodies enter licensure data on a frequent basis. Nursys is the only USA national database for verification of nurse licensure, discipline and practice privileges for RNs, LPN/VNs.
- NCSBN Nursys reports that due to an unknown number of individuals holding active licenses in more than one jurisdiction, the total number of active licenses nationwide may be higher than the total number of nurses. More information at <https://www.ncsbn.org/>.

NON-OECD ECONOMIES

Bulgaria

Data not available.

Croatia

Source of data: **Croatian Nursing Council.**

Reference period: Status on December 31st.

Cyprus

Source of data:

2000-2004: **Public medical institutions.**

From 2005: Nursing Services (Ministry of Health) as regards the Public Sector, **Inspectors of Private Medical Institutions** (Ministry of Health)

Reference period: 31st December.

Coverage: The figures referring to years 2000-2005 have been estimated since no actual data are available for this period for the private sector. From 2006 onwards the reported numbers are actual.

Numbers referring to Public Sector are actual for all years and have been obtained from administrative sources provided by the public medical institutions, whereas the numbers referring to the private sector from 2006 onwards have been obtained from administrative sources of the Inspectors of Private Medical Institutions (Ministry of Health).

Deviation from the definition:

Assumed that in the Private Sector, there are no nurses holding administrative positions. All nurses have been considered as practising nurses.

For 2005, the number of associate professional nurses refers only to the public sector, no data available for the private sector.

In Cyprus, retired nurses usually do not renew their “licence to practice”, since in order to do so, they would need certificates for their participation in seminars, etc. Hence, it has been assumed that the retired nurses are not licensed to practice, so the number of “nurses licensed to practise” is equal to the number of “professionally active nurses”.

Estimation method: Not applicable, actual data used.

Break in time series:

2005: due to a change in the data source.

2020: Up to 2019, midwives of the public sector were included. Also, health care personnel without qualifications of the private sector were also included in the associate professional nurses. From 2020 onwards, the midwives have been excluded from the number of practising nurses and the health care personnel without qualifications have been excluded from the associate professional nurses.

Romania

Source of data: **Order of Nurses, Midwives and Medical Assistants in Romania.**

Reference period: data as of 31st December.

Coverage: The data cover public and private sector.

Estimation method: 2019 data for professional nurses was estimated based on the previous data series. The reason for the estimation was that ONMMAR data register underwent a revision, and the 2019 data is not available.

Note: The increase in the number of professional nurses licensed to practice is due to the increase access for associate professional nurses to continue their studies in order to equivalent with a higher level of education.

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<https://www.oecd.org/en/data/datasets/oecd-health-statistics.html>