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## Chapter Four

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### **The 411 on Nursing Careers**

The vast number and variety of nursing career opportunities that exist in various types of healthcare and non-healthcare settings make this such an awesome field to be in. By far, one of the biggest misconceptions about the nursing profession is that if you are an LPN, you have to work in a nursing home; and if you are an RN, you have to work in a hospital's Medical-Surgical Unit. You certainly can work in those settings, and there will be a lot of opportunities available for those roles, but they are not the only options. This chapter will provide you with a list of nursing career opportunities for LPNs, RNs and APRNs. This is not an all-inclusive list, and I am certain that options will continue to change and evolve over the years. The salaries provided are based on the U.S. national averages at the time this book was written. Career websites such as [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com), [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com), and [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com) were utilized to help provide the most current salaries and job descriptions. Note that variations can occur depending on a number of factors, including but not limited to geographic location, years of experience, employment setting, and size of the organization.

## **LICENSED PRACTICAL/VOCATIONAL NURSE (LPN/LVN) CAREERS**

Average Salary: \$37,000-\$58,000 ([www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com))

### ***Long-Term Care LPN***

These nurses provide care to residents in settings such as long-term acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, rehabilitation facilities, nursing homes, and home healthcare agencies. Responsibilities include conducting health assessments, medication administration, wound care, administering tube feedings, and supervising nursing assistants.

### ***Clinic LPN***

These nurses provide care under supervision of RNs, physicians, or other healthcare providers. Responsibilities include obtaining the patient's health history, vital signs and assessment, administering injections, and documenting information into the patient's medical records. They may also assist with administering tests such as EKGs and spirometry tests, collecting specimens such as blood draws and urine tests, perform ear wax removals and any other duties they are trained to fulfill as delegated by a supervising healthcare provider. Settings include primary care clinics, pediatric clinics, specialty clinics, retail clinics, and urgent care clinics.

### ***Occupational Health Nurse***

Occupational health nurses provide care to patients with work-related illnesses and injuries and may also provide preventative healthcare services for a company's employees. Duties include conducting assessments, monitoring healthcare conditions, coordination of care for additional needed medical treatment, assisting with disease management, performing wellness services, and assisting with worker's compensation.

### ***Wellness Nurse/Health Coach***

Wellness nurses work one-on-one with clients to assist them in achieving an optimal state of health. They promote healthy lifestyle behaviors, assist with disease management, conduct preventative screenings, and encourage their patients to avoid tobacco, alcohol and drug abuse. They work in a variety of healthcare settings, including health insurance companies, clinics, and private institutions. Some may also work from home.

### ***Psychiatric/Behavioral Health Nurse***

Psychiatric nurses provide care to clients suffering from psychiatric or mental health conditions, or with other disabilities. Responsibilities include conducting routine diagnostic tests, routine health assessments, and administering medications. They may also participate in counseling and group therapy sessions. Settings include group homes, psychiatric hospitals, outpatient mental health treatment facilities, and prisons.

### ***Utilization Review Nurse***

Responsible for reviewing the medical care rendered to clients, the utilization review nurse determines if healthcare resources were utilized appropriately and whether clients received suitable treatment from their healthcare providers. Their duties also include reviewing health insurance claims and medical documentation, educating members and healthcare professionals, and performing preauthorization or precertification for services. They may work from home or in an office-based setting and are typically employed by health insurance companies.

### ***Informatics Nurse***

Experts in the information technology field as it relates to healthcare, informatics nurses provide support, education, and training to healthcare professionals for software applications and electronic medical record systems.

### ***Triage Nurse***

These nurses serve as the initial contact for patients who may require healthcare treatment or advice. Responsibilities include collecting detailed information about the patient's health problem and medical history, and conducting a brief initial assessment. They then decide on additional resources needed to assist the patient with his/her health problems and provide the necessary referrals for the appropriate level of care. Some nurses provide in-person triage in hospitals and other healthcare facilities, while others may be responsible for providing medical advice over the phone via a nurse help line. They may also be the initial point of contact in an emergency department or urgent care setting.

### ***Medical Support Specialist/Patient Service Liaison***

Medical support specialists work for biotechnology companies, pharmaceutical companies, or medical device/supply companies and provide education, monitoring, and record keeping on patients receiving specific treatments or therapies. They are responsible for monitoring patient progress and providing solutions to improve patient outcomes.

### ***School Nurse***

School nurses provide care to students, and sometimes to staff, in a school setting. Responsibilities include administering medications, conducting health assessments and screenings, and providing health education.

### ***Research Nurse***

These nurses work for healthcare organizations that conduct medical research, including clinics, hospitals, and pharmaceutical companies. It is their responsibility to assist with clinical trials by screening potential study participants. This may include, but is not limited to: obtaining informed consent, performing diagnostic tests, assessing and monitoring patients, educating patients, and collecting diagnostic data.

### ***Lactation Consultant***

Lactation consultants provide education and support to breastfeeding mothers. They may provide one-on-one education in a hospital or conduct educational courses. This role typically requires certification as an International

Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) in addition to nursing licensure.

### ***Home Health Nurse***

Home health nurses primarily provide nursing care to clients on a one-to-one assignment in the client's home. Responsibilities include completing a head-to-toe assessment, administering needed medications and treatments, assisting with position changes in bed, providing comfort interventions, monitoring vital signs, developing and implementing a plan of care, and documenting in the patient's medical record.

## **REGISTERED NURSE (RN) CAREERS**

Average Salary: \$59,000-\$137,000 ([www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com))

<b>Average Salary</b>	<b>Position</b>
\$ 59,000 - \$ 71,000	Staff nurse
\$ 88,000 - \$116,000	Director of Nursing
\$121,000 - \$159,000	Chief Nursing Officer/Executive (CNO)

Registered nurses are able to assume any of the roles listed above for LPNs; however, it is important to note that in some settings, companies are more likely to hire the LPN. This often occurs in a workplace where patient acuity is low, and in these situations, the level of education and skills that an RN possesses are not required. Thus, these organizations save money by choosing to employ LPNs, who command a much lower salary. Below, you will find a list of careers available primarily to registered nurses.