

2005 AARC Human Resources Study Shows Significant Change Over Five Years

February 28, 2006

A new Human Resources Study is available from the AARC and results show significant changes not only in the number of respiratory therapists nationwide but also in salaries, vacancies, educational levels, demographics, credentialing, and other key areas of the profession.

Like its predecessor in 2000, the "Respiratory Therapist Human Resources Study–2005" gathered data using five different surveys of respiratory therapists and their employers. The employer surveys were completed by directors of respiratory therapy services in acute and long-term care hospitals, the top managers of durable medical equipment (DME) companies, and the directors of accredited respiratory therapy education programs. The Association also worked closely with industrial partners, hospital chains, state licensing boards, and AARC state societies in carrying out the survey.

Here are some of the major bullet points from the study:

- The total number of working therapists climbed 19 percent between 2000 and 2005, growing from 111,706 in 2000 to 132,651 in 2005.
- The profession is getting older. The mean age rose from 40 in 2000 to 44.59 in 2005.
- The mean hourly wage for RTs rose 38 percent, from \$19.62 in 2000 to \$27.03 in 2005.
- New graduates have seen their incomes go up as well, increasing by 24 percent, from \$16.15 in 2000 to \$19.97 today.
- The vacancy rate in hospitals grew from 5.96 percent in 2000 to 8.65 percent in 2005. This translates to approximately 11,695 vacant FTEs in 2005.
- Educational levels are rising. The percentage of RTs with baccalaureate degrees or higher jumped from 30.4 percent in 2000 to 45.4 percent in 2005.
- Based on the years of remaining service reported by respondents, respiratory care will lose nearly half of its current program directors within the next 10 years, along with about one-third of its directors of clinical education and other faculty.

The 2005 AARC Human Resources Study is available for purchase at: [click this link](#)