

SKILLED AND VOCATIONAL TRADES

BECOME A **LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE**

by Marne Ventura



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CONTENTS

AT A GLANCE	4
INTRODUCTION	6
WHY BECOME A LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE?	
CHAPTER ONE	12
WHAT DOES A LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE DO?	
CHAPTER TWO	22
WHAT TRAINING DO LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES NEED?	
CHAPTER THREE	34
WHAT IS LIFE LIKE AS A LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE?	
CHAPTER FOUR	46
WHAT IS THE FUTURE FOR LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES?	
Glossary	58
Source Notes	59
For Further Research	60
Index	62
Image Credits	63
About the Author	64

AT A GLANCE

- A licensed practical nurse (LPN) is a nurse who works under the direction of registered nurses (RNs), doctors, and other medical experts.
- LPNs give basic patient care. For example, they check vital signs such as heart rate, blood pressure, and temperature.
- LPNs talk to patients and their families. They relay information between the patient and the patient's medical team.
- LPNs bathe, dress, and feed patients who need help with these tasks.
- LPNs keep records of patients' health.
- LPNs work in nursing homes, hospitals, doctors' offices, and private homes.

WHAT IS THE FUTURE FOR LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES?

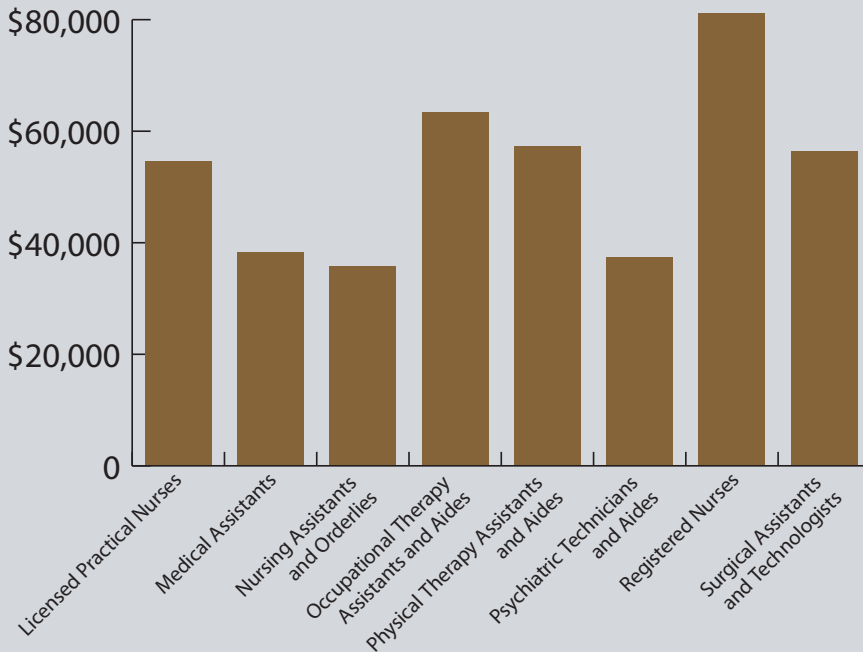
The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) tracks data about jobs. For example, it tracks the number of people in different jobs. It records how much money people earn. It predicts how many jobs will be available in future years.

In May 2022, the average yearly wage for an LPN in the United States was \$55,860. In the same year, the average yearly wage for all jobs in the United States

Many hospitals and clinics keep track of patient information with electronic charts.



SALARIES FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS



Source: “Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses,” Bureau of Labor Statistics, September 6, 2023. www.bls.gov.

Pay varies widely across the health care industry. The chart above shows the median salaries in 2022 according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

was \$61,900. The BLS predicts the need for LPNs will grow by 5 percent from 2021 to 2031. This is about as fast as the average for all jobs in the United States. The BLS

estimates that 58,800 LPNs will need to be hired each year between 2021 and 2031. More nurses will be needed as the population continues to increase.

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES

Scientists are finding new ways to help patients every day. New technology is changing the way medical experts do their jobs. As these technologies come to hospitals and clinics, LPNs will need to learn to do their work in new ways.

An IV pump is a device that drips medicine or nutrients into a patient's vein. New pumps can be programmed to give the perfect dose. This saves time for the nurse. The pump measures and adjusts the medicine or liquid automatically. LPNs can

This helps nurses keep a record of a patient's progress.

In the past, nurses wrote data about a patient on paper charts. Charts were kept in file folders stored in cabinets in a special records room. Electronic health records (EHRs) are replacing paper charts. Vitals and other data are entered into a computer.

Centralized Command Centers

Most hospitals and doctors' offices use centralized command centers. These are computer systems with information that doctors and nurses need. For example, LPNs can look on a computer to find which rooms are available. They can find schedules for doctors and patients. This allows the medical team to get the information they need quickly from different computers.

GLOSSARY

artery

one of the tubes made of stretchy muscle that carries blood from the heart to the body

chronically ill

an illness that continues over a long period of time

data

factual information such as measurements or statistics

diagnose

to identify a disease or health issue

gurney

a bed with wheels that is used in hospitals to move patients

infection

an illness caused by bacteria or a virus

insulin

a medication needed by some patients with diabetes

portable monitors

movable devices that keep track of some aspect of a patient's health

ventilator

a device that moves air in and out of a person's lungs

SOURCE NOTES

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INDEX

- American Red Cross, 32
- amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), 6
- Barton, Clara, 32
- blood pressure, 16, 18
- certified nurse assistants, 40
- charts, 20, 24, 28, 36, 37, 38, 41, 44, 52
- clinics, 30, 43–45, 49, 53, 56
- code blue, 41
- continuing education, 30, 33
- doctors, 9, 12, 15–16, 19, 27, 28, 41, 43, 45, 51, 52, 53, 56
- doctors' offices, 12, 30, 36, 52
- electronic health records, 52–53
- GEDs, 22
- health care facilities, 34
- health care safety, 28
- health management, 28
- HIPAA, 24
- hospitals, 12, 24, 30, 33, 34, 36, 40–43, 49, 52
- in-home health care, 6–9, 12, 30, 36
- IV certificates, 31, 50
- IV pumps, 49–50
- licensing, 28–29, 30
- LPN programs, 14, 22, 24
- National Council of State Boards of Nursing, 28
- Nightingale, Florence, 33
- nurse practitioners, 21
- nursing homes, 12, 29, 34, 36–40
- patient rights, 28
- Pinkerton, Michael, 14
- portable monitors, 50–51
- registered nurses, 15–16, 20, 21, 27, 28, 33, 40, 41, 42–43, 48
- smart beds, 51
- telehealth, 53–54
- training, 16, 21, 22–33
- vaccinations, 45
- vital signs, 16, 20, 27, 41, 44, 50, 51
- wages, 46, 48
- Watson, Jean, 14
- wearable devices, 51–52