

# Hawai'i Nurse Transition to Practice: Informational Brief

## October 2025

Hawai'i State Center for Nursing | October 2025

### Introduction

Since 2012, Hawai'i has been a national leader in nurse transition-to-practice, launching the country's first statewide Nurse Residency Program in response to the Institute of Medicine's Future of Nursing recommendations. The Hawai'i Nurse Residency Program (HNRP) improves new graduate retention, reduces onboarding costs, and fosters collaboration across hospitals and academic programs. Building on this foundation, the Hawai'i Nurse Transition to Practice (HNTTP) Programs now provide a statewide framework that supports new graduates, develops preceptors, and expands specialty training.

National organizations have reinforced the importance of this work. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing emphasized the importance of robust academic-practice partnerships in developing nursing pipelines (AACN, 2016). The American Academy of Nursing recommended residency programs for all new graduate RNs in acute care (AAN, 2018), and the Future of Nursing 2020–2030 report called for integrating well-being, diversity, equity, and inclusion into transition-to-practice support (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2021). Hawai'i's HNTTP Programs continue to respond to these priorities by improving retention, strengthening specialty capacity, and addressing the state's unique workforce challenges.

### Workforce Context

Hawai'i's nursing workforce is a point of strength, with 97% of nurses employed in nursing roles and satisfaction rates above national averages (HSCN, 2025; HSCN, 2024). While the statewide supply of registered nurses is projected to remain adequate through 2037, the 2025 Hawai'i Nurse Workforce Projections report highlights opportunities for continued investment to mitigate potential regional and specialty shortages (HSCN, 2025). Specifically, the report notes ongoing shortages in Kaua'i, Hawai'i, and Maui counties, as well as a projected decline in the licensed practical nurse workforce (HSCN, 2025). The HNTTP Programs are uniquely positioned to address these long-term challenges through robust recruitment and retention programs, ensuring a resilient workforce for the future, particularly by strengthening capacity in our Neighbor Island communities (HSCN, 2025).

### Program Highlights & Key Metrics

In 2025, more than 410 nurses statewide participated in HNTTP training Programs. The largest share engaged in the Nurse Residency Program (HNRP) (242 participants), followed by the Preceptor Pathway (93 participants) and Transition-to-Specialty training (TTP) (75 participants). Participation spanned across all islands, with 21% of nurses from Neighbor Islands and 79% from O'ahu, demonstrating both broad reach and a continued focus on ensuring access for rural and underserved communities.

Figure 1: 2025 HNTTP Participation by Training Program

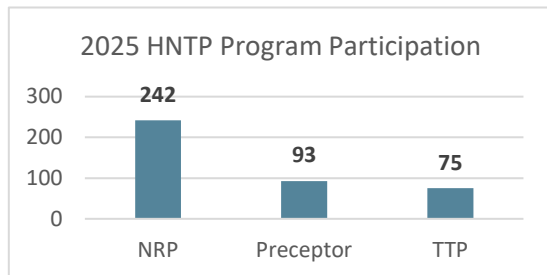
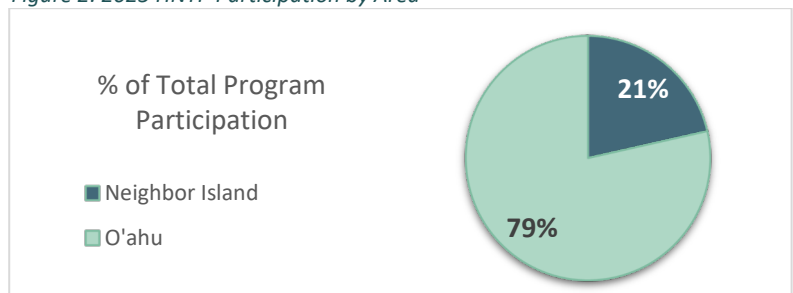


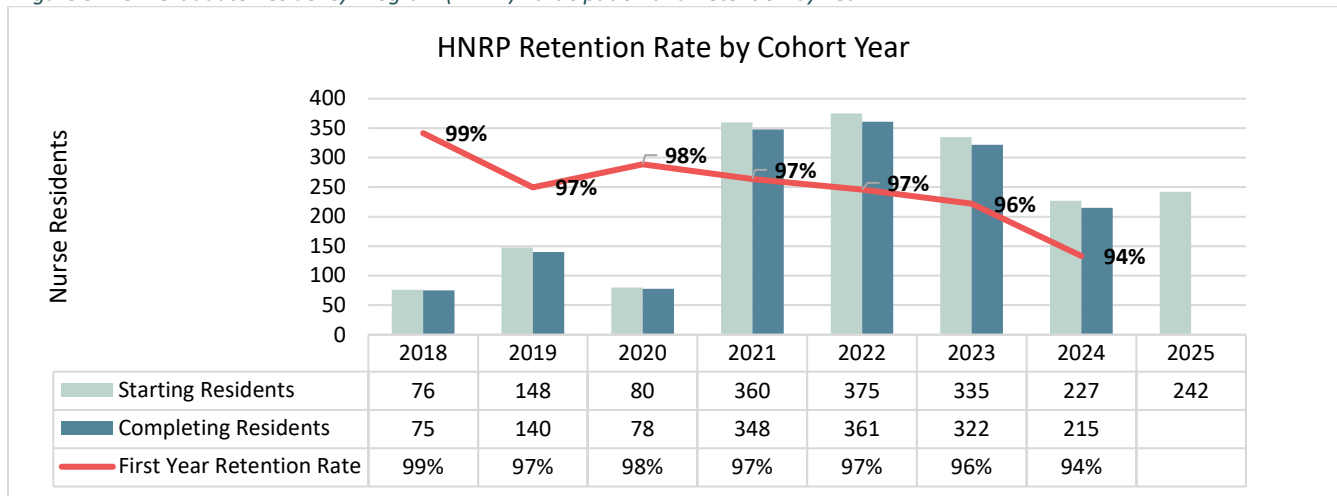
Figure 2: 2025 HNTTP Participation by Area



## Nurse Residency Program

- Scale:** Since inception, the program has supported more than 2,560 new graduate nurses, with 2,171 successfully completing the residency. In 2025, 242 new residents participated statewide. The geographic distribution of these residents (21% from the Neighbor Islands and 79% from O'ahu) is consistent with the overall geographic distribution of all Hntp program participants for the year. The decline in enrollments observed in 2024 likely reflects a market-driven stabilization following intense, post-pandemic hiring, as staffing shortfalls normalize and longer-term staffing models take effect.

Figure 3: New Graduate Residency Program (HNRP) Participation and Retention by Year



- Retention:** Since 2012, the program has maintained an average first-year retention rate of 96.7% significantly exceeding the national average of 81% (NSI, 2024). The recent decline in retention in 2024 is being reviewed for contributing factors, including the impact of broader workforce disruptions and the surge in increased availability of specialty training pathways.

## Preceptor Pathway

- Capacity Building:** The employer-led, evidence-based Preceptor Pathway has trained 1,210 nurses to act as preceptors since 2021. These individuals mentor and guide new graduates and early-career nurses in clinical settings. By strengthening teaching capacity within healthcare organizations, the program expands the pool of trained mentors available to support nursing students during their clinical education.

Table 1: Preceptor Pathway Program Participation by Year compared to RN Population

Preceptor Pathway Program Participation	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total	% of Total	Licensed Registered Nursing Population (HSCN, 2024)	% of Total RN Population
Neighbor Island Participants	210	18	126	126	23	503	42%	4376	27%
O'ahu	51	266	160	160	70	707	58%	14,498	88%
<i>Totals</i>	261	284	286	286	93	1210	100%	16,454	100%

- Regional Impact:** The Preceptor Pathway is particularly impactful in rural communities. Neighbor Island participation is 42% of the cumulative total. This engagement is disproportionately higher than their 27% share of the statewide RN workforce (HSCN, 2025). This demonstrates the program's impact in enhancing training opportunities in underserved areas.

## Transition-to-Specialty Training

- Impact:** Since 2023, over 1,360 nurses have participated in specialty training. These courses address high-need areas, including critical care, perinatal, and perioperative nursing.

Transition to Specialty Program Participants	2023	2024	2025	All Years
Neighbor Islands	158	261	355	774
O'ahu	61	498	36	595
<i>Totals</i>	219	759	391	1369

- **Course Participation in high-need areas (2023–2025):**
  - *Critical Care*: 70 participants, 19% from Neighbor Islands.
  - *Perinatal*: 39 participants, 64% from Neighbor Islands.
  - *Perioperative*: 25 participants, 17% from Neighbor Islands.
- **Sustainability:** After external grant funding ended in 2024, the Center maintained training for nearly 400 nurses in 2025, demonstrating strong demand and program adaptability.

## Collaborative Partnerships

The HNTP Programs are a collaborative effort, with 16 acute and non-acute care partners across the state participating to strengthen Hawai'i's nursing workforce (HSCN, 2025). This employer-led approach ensures that the training and development provided are directly aligned with the needs of Hawai'i's healthcare landscape.

## Overall Impact

The HNTP Programs demonstrate that strategic investment in nurse transition, mentorship, and specialty training is a highly effective way to strengthen Hawai'i's nursing workforce for the future (HSCN, 2025). With over 5,000 participants since inception, these programs are a cornerstone of workforce development and retention for Hawai'i.

## Funding and Sustainability

Specialty program funding concluded in 2024. The Department of Health's opioid training grant continues to sustain high participation in residency (HNTP) and preceptor programs. The Center remains committed to identifying new funding sources to support specialty training and ensure ongoing statewide access.

- **Higher Rural Engagement:** During the 2023–2024 grant-funded period, Neighbor Island nurses made up 35% of residency participants and 43% of preceptor participants, compared to their 27% share of the workforce. HNTP programs improve recruitment and retention efforts, particularly for the most remote areas of Hawai'i.
- **Preceptor Program Focus:** The Preceptor Pathway is particularly impactful in rural communities and statewide. Neighbor Island participants representing 42% of the total participation since 2021. In 2025, 47% of nurses reported precepting a student or nurse in the past two years (HSCN, 2025a).
- **Retention and Cost Savings:** HNTP's 97% retention rate is far above national norms. In contrast, RN turnover costs \$56,000–\$61,000 per nurse; each 1% change in turnover impacts hospital budgets by \$260,000–\$289,000 (NSI, 2024). These retention outcomes represent measurable financial savings.

## References

- American Academy of Nursing. (2018). *Statement on residency programs for all new graduate RNs in acute care*. <https://www.aannet.org/initiatives/policy-papers/statement-on-residency-programs>
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2016). *Academic-practice partnerships: A tool for building the nursing workforce*. <https://www.aacnursing.org/News-Information/Fact-Sheets/Academic-Practice-Partnerships>
- Goode, C. J., Lynn, M., McElroy, D., & Sullivan-Marx, E. M. (2018). Requiring a nurse residency for newly licensed registered nurses. *Nursing Outlook*, 66(4), 329–331. <https://www.nursingoutlook.org>
- Hawai'i State Center for Nursing. (2024). *2023 Hawai'i Nursing Workforce Supply: Statewide report*. <https://www.hawaii-center-for-nursing.org>
- Hawai'i State Center for Nursing. (2025). *Hawai'i Nurse Workforce Projections, 2022–2037*. Prepared by GlobalData Plc. <https://www.hawaii-center-for-nursing.org>
- Hawai'i State Center for Nursing. (2025b). *2025 Hawai'i Nursing Workforce Supply Statewide Data Tables by License*. <https://www.hawaii-center-for-nursing.org>
- Healthcare Association of Hawai'i. (2024). *Hawai'i Healthcare Workforce Initiative 2024 Report*. <https://www.hah.org>
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2021). *The future of nursing 2020–2030: Charting a path to achieve health equity*. The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25982>
- NSI Nursing Solutions. (2024). *2024 NSI National Health Care Retention & RN Staffing Report*. <https://www.nsinursingsolutions.com>

More Information and Past Briefs are available at: [Historical Information Briefs](#) and [Hawai'i Transition to Practice Programs](#).

Alternate forms of this document are available by contacting [HSCFN@hawaii.edu](mailto:HSCFN@hawaii.edu).  
Hawai'i State Center for Nursing. <https://www.hawaii-center-for-nursing.org/>

