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Survey of Vaccination Status July 1 – August 15th for Nursing Students, Faculty and New Graduates Reveals Unexpected Results

Brooklyn, NY 8/16/2021 – The National Student Nurses Association (NSNA) recently conducted a national survey of vaccination status of nursing students, faculty and deans/directors using their national databases of current student members and recent past students who are nurses in all 50 states, as well as a population of identified deans or directors and faculty from lists of accredited nursing programs. The project was launched on July 1st for faculty and deans/directors followed by July 15th for students with one reminder sent to all participants midway during the time-period. The study was closed on August 15th revealing unexpected results for the 6-week survey. This report focuses on the general findings of vaccine rates for students, faculty, and recent past students who are new graduates, along with dean/director estimates of vaccination rates in their schools.

Background. As the COVID-19 pandemic continued to challenge schools of nursing with their decisions related to pedagogical planning and policy for the upcoming academic year, information was limited for school administrators related student uptake of vaccines available to everyone over the age of 12 as well as faculty who would be teaching in classrooms and clinicals in the Fall 2021 semester. Numerous reports circulated that vaccine mandates, debates, and protests among healthcare workers unfortunately focused on nurses who object to vaccination (Zadrozny & Collins, August 11, 2021) ([As vaccine mandates spread, protests follow – some spurred by nurses \(nbcnews.com\)](#)) with reports suggesting that 1 out of 4 healthcare workers refusing vaccinations. In July, NSNA responded to the need for updated data on their student members and faculty to launch an IRB approved study in collaboration with the Center for Nursing Research and Evaluation (CNRE) at Molloy College. The survey was conducted by Marcia Gardner, Dean, and Veronica Feeg, CNRE Director, who solicited from participants responses about their vaccine acceptance, possible hesitancy or reasons related to vaccine denials. This brief summary captures the 6-week unexpected findings about vaccination rates. The full report is in development.

Methods. The surveys of parallel questions for current/past students and faculty were developed from the literature on vaccine hesitancy and vaccination public health science. It included the question: “Have you been vaccinated or are you planning to be vaccinated for COVID-19?” followed by a series of questions to elicit factors related to participants’ responses.

The survey was distributed via SurveyMonkey® beginning July 1, 2021 through August 15, 2021. The NSNA databases of current and recent past students’ email addresses served as the population from which the final sample of students and recent graduates was analyzed (n=7,558). A second database of faculty email addresses frequently used by NSNA to reach nationally accredited schools of nursing served as the sample (n=4,123) for the same questions. A similar third source of nursing school deans and directors was used to ask respondents to “estimate” the percentage of vaccinated students and faculty, with other related administrative questions for the future report (n=253). Over the study period, numerous mandates and intense media reports occurred that made the vaccination uptake variable during the month, with examples on Table 1.

July 20	Rutgers University message to students to comply with university mandate of COVID-19 vaccination, among first in the country, to provide proof by August 1 st .
July 22	New York City health workers will need vaccination or weekly COVID-19 testing.
July 23	Indiana District Court denies students’ challenge to Indiana University’s vaccine mandate.
July 26	The American Nurses Association (ANA) with 56 other medical groups endorse mandatory COVID-19 vaccines for all staff working in health and long-term care.
July 26	First federal agency – VA – requires vaccine for its 115,000 health care workers; California requires vaccine for municipal and state workers.
July 29	President Biden calls for vaccination of all civilian federal workers.
August 12	President Biden says he will approve Department of Defense recommendation to require vaccinations of all troops by mid-September.

Analyses. The analysis for this report is limited to the main questions and reported out to indicate that over this short period of 4 – 6 weeks, respondents who chose to answer the survey varied as might be a reflection of the widespread media attention, Delta variant news and policy timeline. The survey results showed more than expected were vaccinated or planned to be: 92.6% of faculty, 86% of current students, and 85% of past students who are new nurses reported that they have been or plan to be vaccinated. The results indicated that despite the public depiction of healthcare workers objecting to vaccination, the responses from current and past students as well as faculty show a more accepting rate of vaccinations that are even underestimated by the Deans and Directors response to the question “Approximately what percent of the FT nursing faculty (nursing students) are vaccinated for COVID-19?” (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Survey Reported Vaccinations for Students and Faculty with Deans Estimates

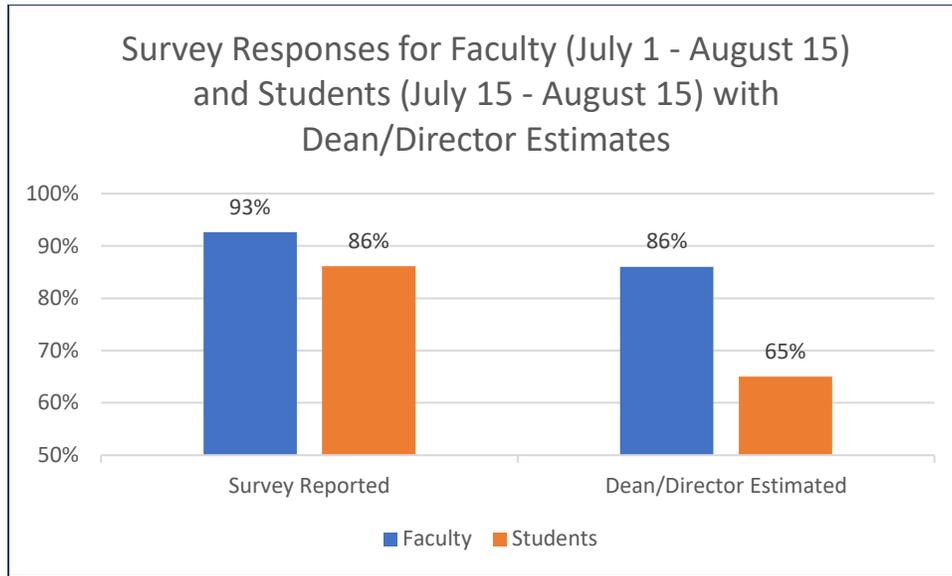
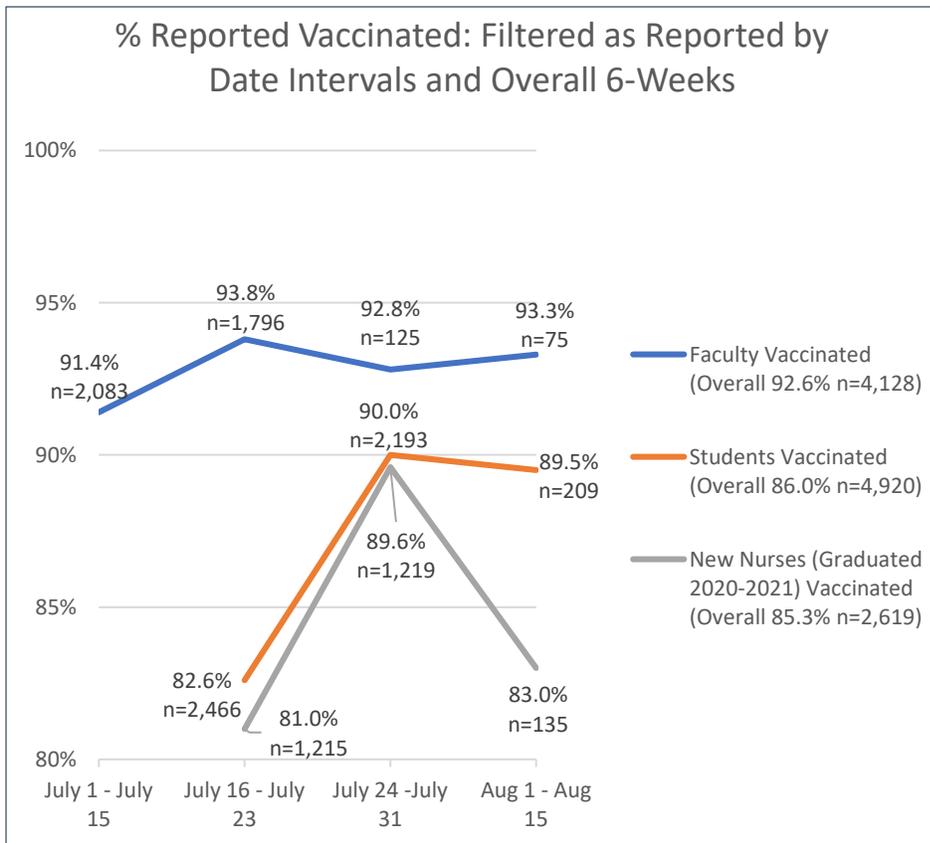


Figure 2. Fluctuations in Responses as Reported by Time Periods



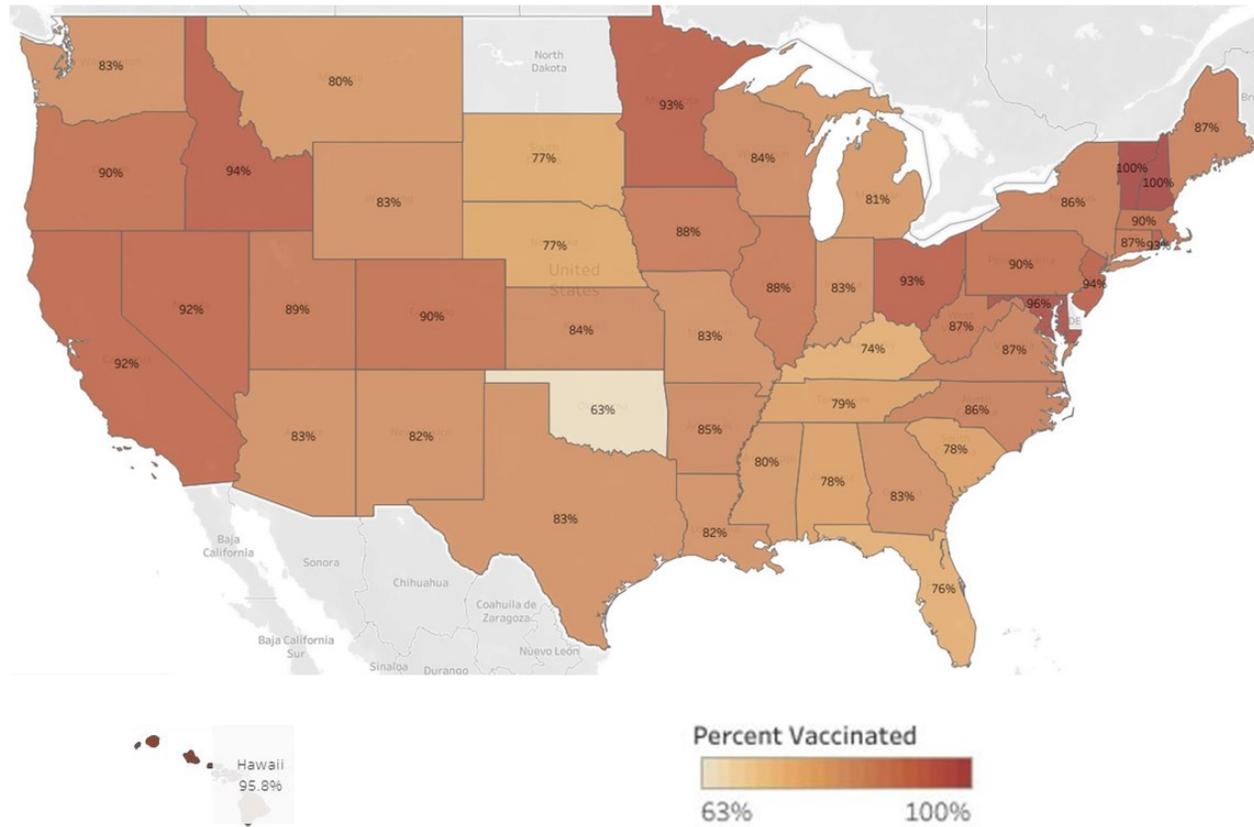
The survey results appeared to fluctuate over the weeks that respondents chose to answer and following the one reminder sent during the period. Analyzing by the date intervals, the findings suggested that how respondents chose to answer the survey may be a function of what was publicly debated as policies changed all summer long, particularly between June and August. These intervals were analyzed over the time periods as indicated in Figure 2

with the overall results for the 6-week study for faculty, current students, and recent past students who are nurses.

Figure 3. State by State Comparisons

State by State		
All Students and New Graduates		
(n=7,501)		
TOTAL	85.9%	7501
States	High to Low	Sample Size
NH	100%	17
VT	100%	41
MD	96%	85
HI	96%	24
NJ	94%	204
ID	94%	32
RI	93%	15
OH	93%	144
MN	93%	143
NV	92%	66
CA	92%	868
PA	90%	602
MA	90%	132
OR	90%	175
CO	90%	105
UT	89%	190
IA	88%	149
IL	88%	164
CT	87%	142
WV	87%	63
ME	87%	23
VA	87%	219
NC	86%	87
NY	86%	556
AR	85%	146
WI	84%	89
KS	84%	74
AZ	83%	103
TX	83%	484
MO	83%	162
WA	83%	30
WY	83%	12
GA	83%	157
IN	83%	183
LA	82%	163
NM	82%	33
MI	81%	395
MS	80%	71
MT	80%	15
TN	79%	92
SC	78%	153
AL	78%	88
NE	77%	53
SD	77%	56
FL	76%	569
KY	74%	86
OK	63%	41
ND	Error in Sample	
DC	Insufficient Sample	
DE	Insufficient Sample	
PR	Insufficient Sample	
AK	Insufficient Sample	

STATE BY STATE VACCINATION RATES FOR ALL STUDENTS AND NEW GRADUATES (2020-2021) (July 1 – August 15) (n=7,501)



Finally, the responses of all students, current and past (new nurses), were analyzed state by state to indicate regional differences in vaccination rates (Figure 3). Four states and Puerto Rico were dropped from the analysis for responses less than 10, but most of the responses from the other 46 states vaccination rates provide insight on areas of the country during this time period that mirrored the state public vaccination rates to some extent. These results can offer us insights into this roller-coaster period of time when the reporting of vaccination rates fluctuates by the day.

Limitations. While sample sizes were robust, it is important to be clear about the limitations of the survey and the populations of students and faculty database sources. The list for students and recent graduates (new nurses) are limited to the membership of the NSNA of currently more than 60,000 members. The faculty and dean/director lists were drawn from publicly available website emails and compiled for NSNA in its work with schools of nursing nationally. The response rate of those who chose to participate was less than 10%, as is common with online surveys even with a reminder, but can only be estimated due to the multiple addresses in the sources and/or inactive or erroneous listings. Some of the state samples were sometimes small, which is a reflection of the number of schools and student NSNA memberships in those states. Nonetheless, the demographics of respondents match what is expected in the national population of nursing students and faculty that suggests the survey representativeness. But most importantly, the decision of participants to respond can only be viewed in relation to the questions asked, and vaccination hesitancy is a provocative subject that might be fostering differences in the respondents willingness to answer “yes” or “no” as indicated by the fluctuations in the time intervals.

Conclusions. What can be known from these results is that nursing students, present and recent past who are working in health care, appear to be vaccinated at a higher rate than the media suggests. The map reflects reports of state-by-state vaccine uptake for nursing students that may be a reflection of their individual state policies. Less than 8% of faculty and 15% of nursing students and new graduates are unvaccinated, according to these findings, and a deeper look into their reported reasons may give more insights about the general vaccine fear mongers, those who are waiting for full authorization, and those who are on the fence until it is mandated. These school and state policy decisions across the country are changing day-by-day with the new semester on the horizon and the delta variant surge plaguing our hospitals.

The full report of the study is in development and will be made available when the analyses are complete. Any questions about the survey results can be directed to Veronica Feeg, Director of the Center for Nursing Research and Evaluation (CNRE) at Molloy College (vfeeg@molloy.edu).

NSNA is a membership organization representing over 60,000 students in Associate Degree, Diploma, Baccalaureate, and direct-entry Master’s degree programs, as well as RNs in BSN completion programs. NSNA is a collaborating partner with the Molloy College Center for Nursing Research. Visit www.nсна.org for more information.