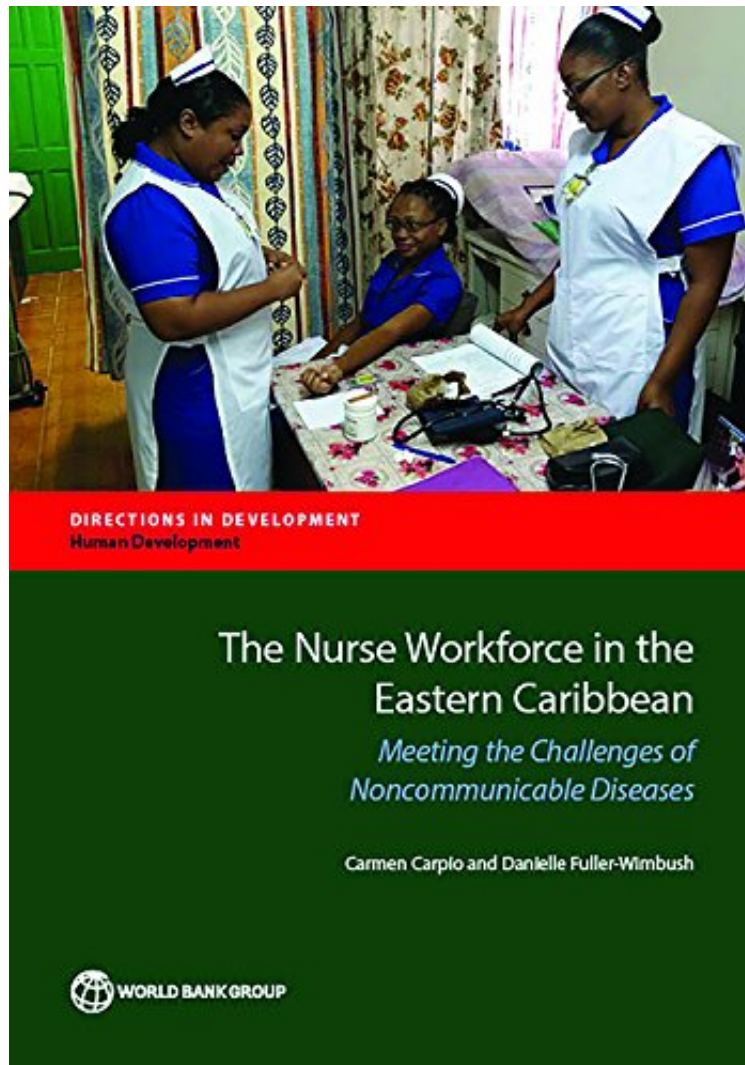


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## The Nurse Workforce in the Eastern Caribbean: Meeting the Challenges of Noncommunicable Diseases (Directions in Development;Directions in Development - Human Development)

*Carmen Carpio, Danielle Fuller-Wimbush*  
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The health workforce must be able to cope with shifts in the pattern of causes of death and disease that are being seen worldwide; particularly with the rise in noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). This requires health personnel to have a set of skills and competencies that can adapt to meet the population's growing and changing health needs. This report examines the status of the nurse workforce in the Eastern Caribbean, assessing how best to strengthen its capacity to respond to the growing burden of NCDs. The report is based on four Eastern Caribbean case studies conducted in Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The case studies showed that, although overall nurse staffing levels seem to be sufficient across the four countries in terms of numbers, there are nurse shortages at hospitals and health clinics, as well as in the availability of specialists. Better management of the nurse workforce is needed to ensure adequate coverage at the hospitals and clinics is maintained. In terms of specialists, while the quality of education is generally reported to be good, there are barriers to accessing specialized training which include the high-cost of seeking specialized training due to non-existing or very limited local options and the lack of built-in incentives for completing additional education. To help address the capacity constraints faced by the nurse workforce in the Eastern Caribbean to respond to NCDs, the report generated knowledge in support of two critical areas: (i) provide an understanding of the educational and training opportunities available to nurses to strengthen their capacity to meet the NCD challenges, and (ii) assess whether there is a supportive policy environment in place for nurses to play a role in addressing NCDs. As part of the study, a toolkit was developed, which can be used to strengthen the capacity for HRH planning and management with respect to NCDs.