Introduction

The demand for health services managers is projected to grow by 18% in the next decade (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). AUPHA certified undergraduate programs are a critical source of talent to fill the expanding need for health services managers. Although a few recent studies report on alumni survey findings, there is limited discussion in the literature about employment trends over time of graduates of bachelor’s degree programs in health services administration.

Purpose

To identify trends in graduate education, employment, and industry needs identified by graduates of one baccalaureate program in health services administration between 2004-2018.

Methods

Online alumni surveys were conducted in 2012 and again in 2018 in one undergraduate health services administration (HSA) program. The 2012 alumni survey included graduates from the period of 2004-2011 (n=153) while the 2018 survey included graduates between 2012-2018 (n=146). Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to assess differences in education and employment between the two survey samples. Qualitative responses were also examined to explore thematic differences of programmatic and industry needs as identified by alumni.

Results

Graduate degree completion was higher among the alumni surveyed in 2018 versus in 2012 (26% vs 17%, \(\chi^2 = 4.0, p<0.05\)). Although full-time employment rates were similar, the most recent cohort of alumni were less likely to be working in HSA or a related area versus the earlier cohort (68% vs 78%, \(\chi^2= 5.76, p<0.05\)). Among those working in the field, important differences were also noted in organizational setting (Figure 1). Fewer graduates over time are working in traditional health care settings like hospital/health systems with an increase seen in other health care employers such as vendors, recruiting, and government contracting. Qualitative responses of programmatic and industry needs identified by alumni reflect similar themes by cohort including the increasing importance of data analytics and healthcare information technology.

Implications

The results of two alumni surveys spanning a period of 14 years highlight interesting trends in the employment of baccalaureate health administration graduates. Specifically, there appears to be an increase in graduate education and employment in a wider array of organizational settings in the health care sector. These findings have important implications to inform programmatic and curricular development to prepare undergraduates for these trends in the field of health care management.