

## 2013 AARC Survey of Respiratory Care Programs

At the direction of the AARC Board of Directors at the November 2012 meeting, a survey was generated and distributed to 423 identified program directors of CoARC approved respiratory care educational programs. The electronic survey was distributed by email via SurveyMonkey to the program directors. During the two-week survey period (2/21/13-3/8/13), 223 program directors responded to the survey (52.7% response rate). The questions and responses are detailed in this report.

1. *Please provide your demographic information.*

Program directors from 45 states with CoARC approved programs participated in the survey.

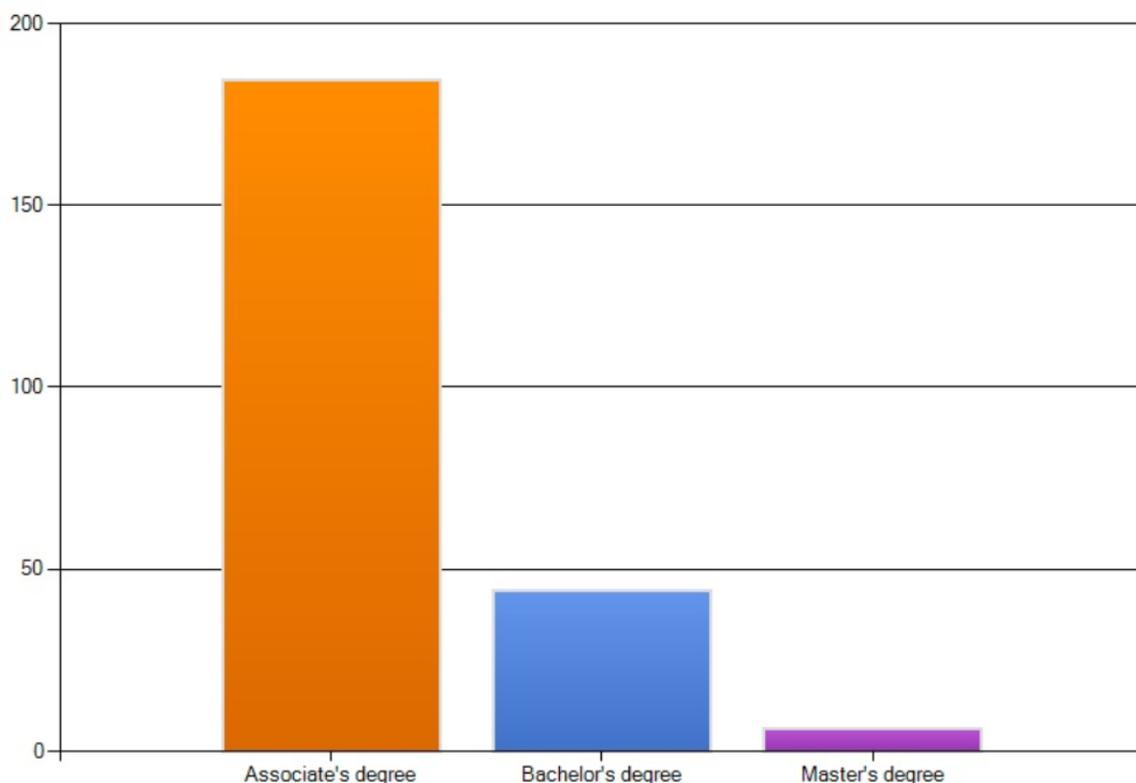
2. *What type of entry-to-practice respiratory therapy program is offered by your educational institution?* Participants had the opportunity to choose more than one option as some programs offer more than one option for earning a degree in respiratory therapy (i.e. students can choose between two different options to earn their first professional degree in respiratory therapy). A total of 222 responses were recorded for this question. Those responses revealed that the degrees offered by the participating programs included:

184 Associate's degrees

44 Bachelor's degrees

6 Master's degrees

**What type of entry-to-practice respiratory therapy program is offered by your educational institution? Please check all that apply.**



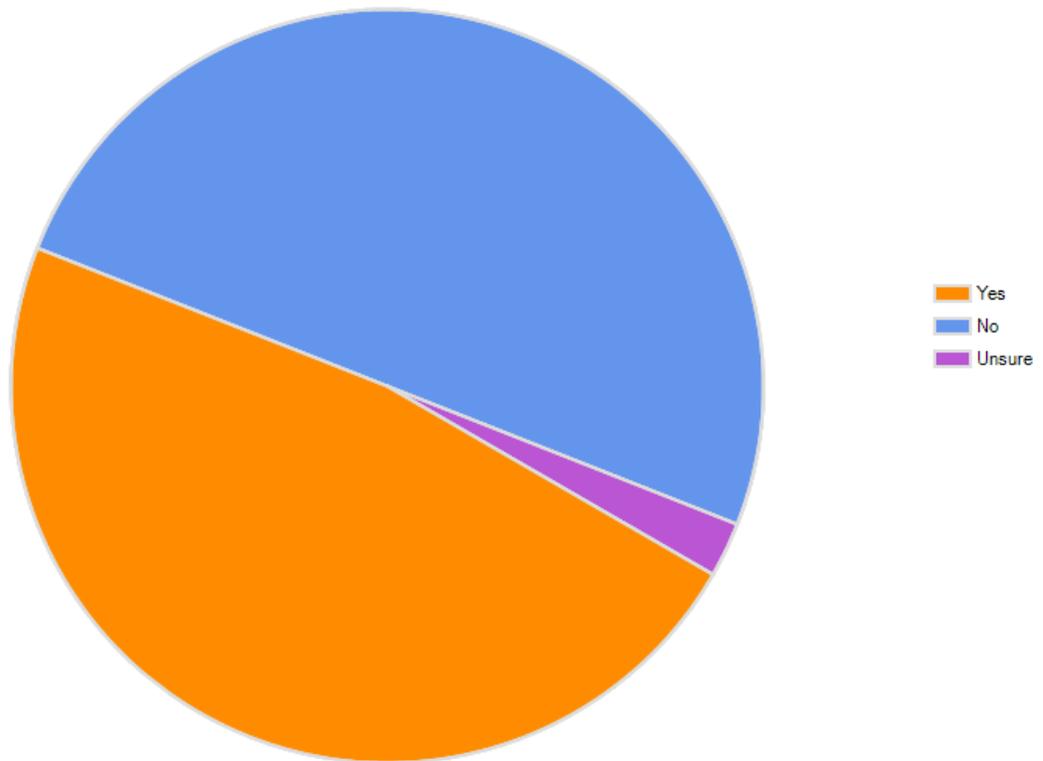
3. *Does your institution have an articulation agreement with another educational institution to allow respiratory therapists with an associate's degree to pursue a bachelor's degree?*  
This question was provided to establish the available resources currently in place among respiratory care programs. A total of 212 responses were recorded for this question. An articulation agreement is a document signed by two or more academic institutions that allows for transfer of a graduate's academic credits from one partner institution to another partner institution with the intent to complete a higher degree. The responses to this question demonstrate that almost 48% of respondents already have a mechanism in place to facilitate the furthering of the respiratory therapy education.

101 Programs have at least one articulation agreement in place (47.6% of respondents)

106 Programs do not have an articulation agreement in place (50% of respondents)

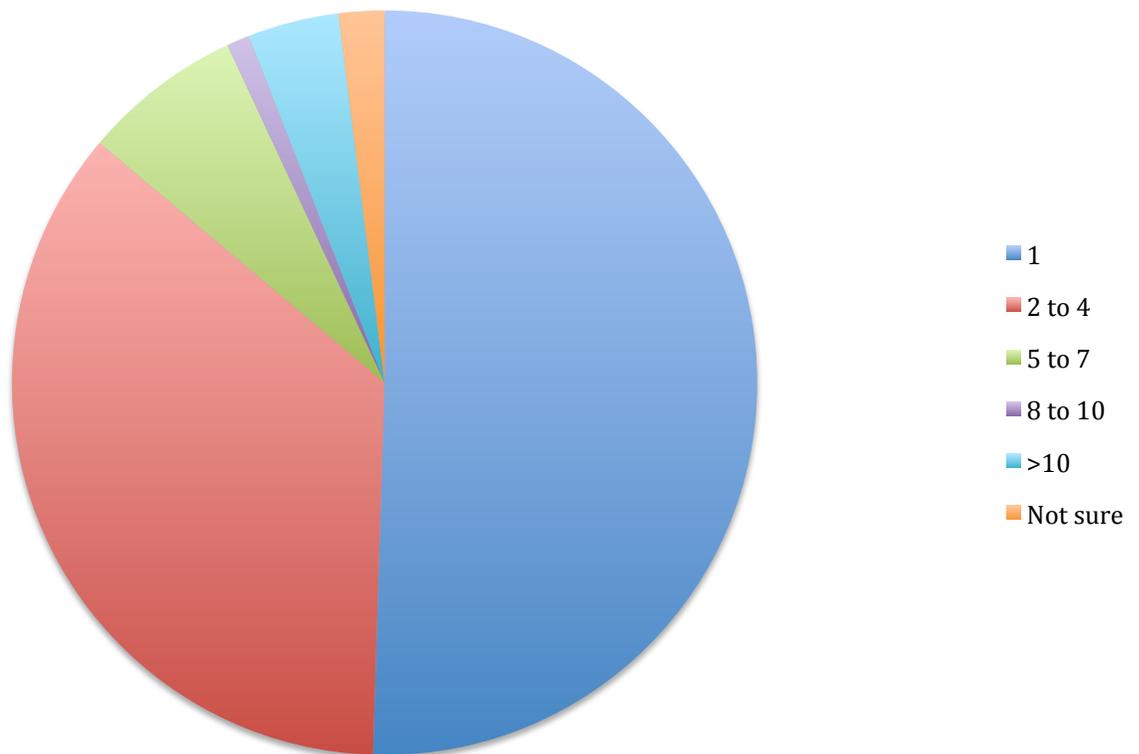
5 Respondents were unsure if their respective program(s) have an articulation agreement in place (2.4%)

**Does your institution have an articulation agreement with another educational institution to allow respiratory therapists with an associate's degree to pursue a bachelor's degree?**



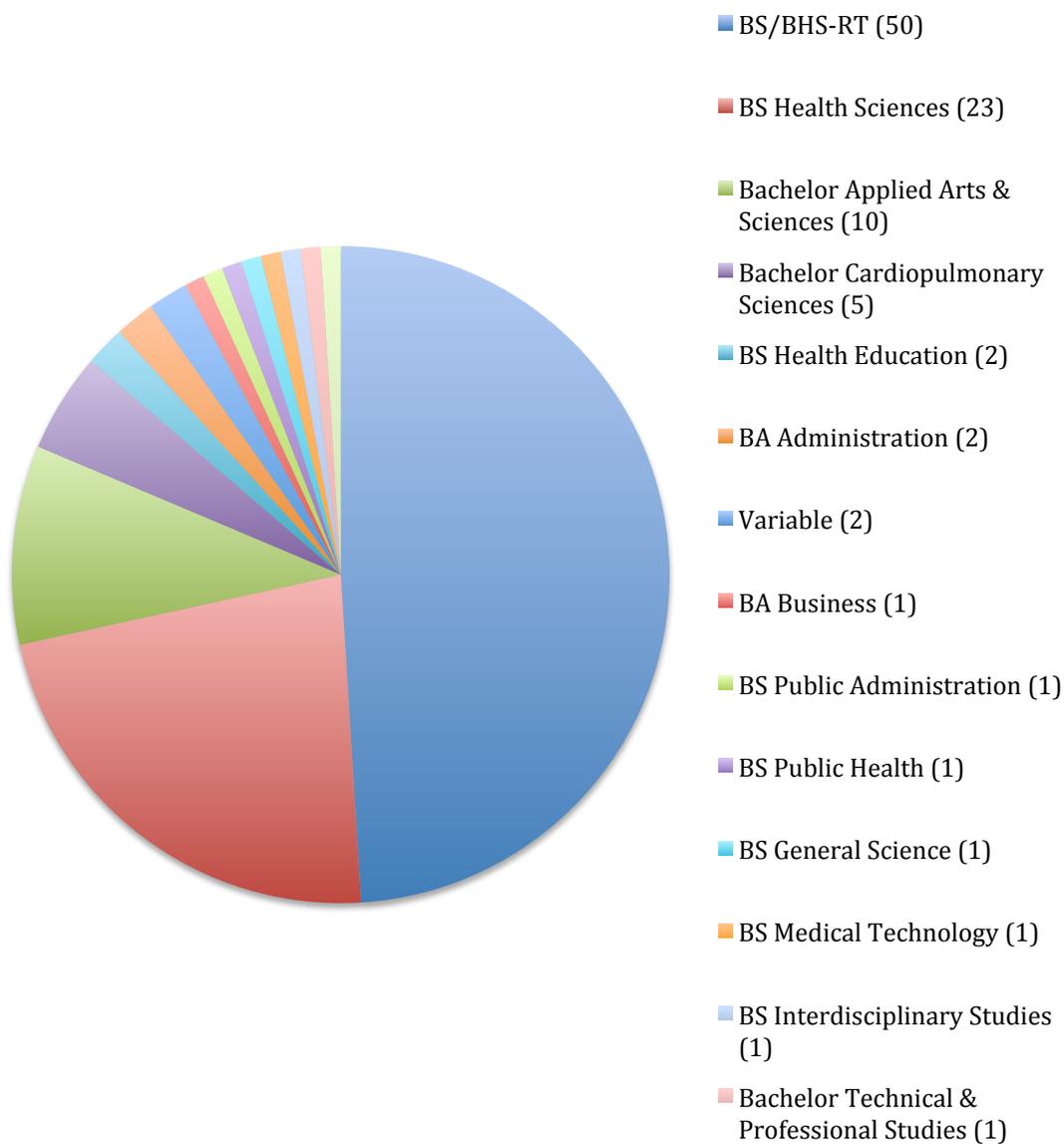
4. *If you answered yes to the previous question, how many articulation agreements does your educational institution currently have in place?* Of the 101 “yes” respondents to question #3, 101 responses were recorded for this question. The majority of the respondents reported that their institution was engaged in one articulation agreement but many responded that their institution engages in more than one articulation agreement. The assumption for this question is that the respondent’s institution is engaged in agreements with multiple academic institutions that would provide multiple options for graduates.

**# of agreements**



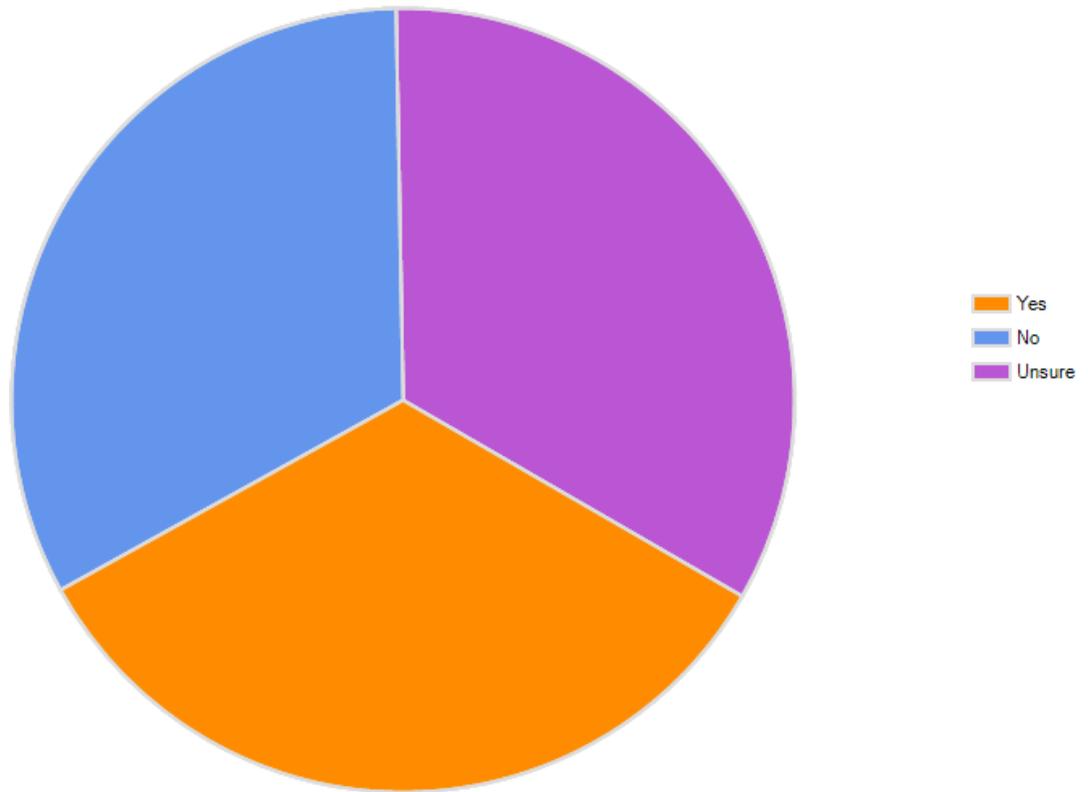
5. *If your institution does participate in an articulation agreement as described above, in what major is the bachelor degree?* Of the 101 “yes” respondents to question #3, 101 responses were recorded for this question. The intent to asking this question was to discern what emphasis area the academic institution promotes and what degree options are available for respiratory therapy graduates. The responses to this question are significantly variable but almost half of the responses indicated a bachelor of science/ bachelor of health science degree with an emphasis in respiratory care. Specific degree options are provided in the graph below.

## Bachelor Degree Majors



6. *If your educational institution does not currently participate in an articulation agreement as described above, does your institution plan to develop such an agreement?* There were 116 responses recorded for this question. There were several comments and responses recorded for those programs that already offer a bachelor's degree or currently participate in an articulation agreement. This question sought to discover which programs were currently in negotiations to develop articulation agreements to facilitate higher education opportunities for their programs' graduates. Just over 33% of respondents identified that negotiations were in progress at the time of the survey.

**If your educational institution does not currently participate in an articulation agreement as described above, does your institution plan to develop such an agreement in the future?**



7. *If your educational institution currently participates in or is currently developing an articulation agreement as described above, what, if any, barriers have your institution encountered?* This question was designed to determine what barriers the program might encounter and to stimulate discussion to determine how to overcome these barriers. Of the survey participants, 93 responded to this question. Below are the themes that were identified in the 93 responses.
- a. The bachelor degree options available do not fit the students' self-identified needs.
  - b. The tuition cost associated with earning a bachelor degree is too high.
  - c. The location of the bachelor degree program is too far away to be feasible for earning a higher degree.
  - d. The communication between the associate degree program and bachelor degree program is ineffective and difficult to navigate in developing an agreement.
  - e. Clinical access for those students pursuing a higher degree level is difficult to obtain.
  - f. Academic council policy is prohibitive or difficult to navigate in developing an agreement.
  - g. The agreement process takes a very long time to complete.
  - h. The time requirement imposed on the student completing a bachelor degree is too demanding for working respiratory therapist.
  - i. The quality of the available bachelor program is poor or questionable.
  - j. The numbers of courses that will transfer to the bachelor program are minimal, resulting a greater number of credits required to graduate.
  - k. The types of courses that will transfer to the bachelor program are minimal, resulting in students re-taking subject matter.
  - l. Program administration/faculty have minimal time available to initiate, negotiate, and complete articulation agreements.
  - m. The state legislature does not provide an environment conducive to developing agreements.
  - n. The general education course difference between AAS and AS makes it difficult to develop an all-encompassing agreement (AAS graduates need to take more general education courses to qualify for BS degree).
  - o. Lack of in-state bachelor degree options for articulation agreements.
  - p. A lack of interest or willingness of the bachelor program to participate in an articulation agreement.
  - q. Nationally accredited program courses (typically proprietary or for-profit organizations) are not accepted by regionally accredited institutions (typically state-sponsored organizations).
  - r. Lack of salary incentive for respiratory therapists to have degrees higher than the associate degree.
  - s. Frequent changes in prerequisite courses and credit transfers.
  - t. Programs are not provided with funding for the articulation agreement process.
  - u. Managers do not place a value on the bachelor degree (lack of expectation for a higher degree in the respiratory care community).
  - v. Lack of interest from the graduate to pursue a higher degree