Florida Nursing Statewide Strategic Plan

2017

Strategies to Successfully Provide Floridians
an Adequate, Qualified Nurse Workforce

FCN Florida
Center for Nursing

CELEBRATING **15** YEARS
2001 - 2016

INTRODUCTION

Assuming that healthcare reform is implemented as currently planned, **the Florida Center for Nursing (FCN) estimates that by 2025 Florida will have a shortage of at least 50,300 registered nurse (RN) FTEs (full-time equivalents), or 56,000 RNs and 12,500 licensed practical nurse (LPN) FTEs**. The economic recession delayed the emergence of a severe nursing shortage, as nurses have returned to work in response to a spouse's loss of work, increased their working hours from part-time to full-time, and delayed retirement to remain in the workforce. However, an **aging population needing more care**, an **aging nurse workforce** (44% of Florida's RNs are age 51 or older), an improving economy and the resultant **decreases in the number of hours nurses work, nurses beginning or restarting retirement**, and **increased access to care** from the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, **will combine to bring about a large nursing shortage in Florida**.

Essential to meeting the needs of all Floridians are continued commitment to nursing and purposeful interventions to strengthen the nurse workforce by key stakeholders.

As stipulated in Florida statute (464.0195), the Florida Center for Nursing (FCN) offers this statewide strategic plan in order to address nurse manpower issues in our state. The FCN Board of Directors has identified four primary areas in need of action:

FOUR PRIMARY AREAS IN NEED OF ACTION

1 EDUCATION
Relates to both the academic and health industry settings and opportunities for nurses to achieve education progression.

2 WORK ENVIRONMENT
Relates to the culture of the work place, retention issues, and supply and demand challenges faced by employers.

3 RESEARCH
Serves as the foundation on which actions are built and outcomes evaluated.

4 POLICY
Relates to the processes that will strategically guide planning to meet future needs.

The ability to provide a sound strategic plan to address Florida's nursing shortage is the result of the Florida Center for Nursing's commitment to its research agenda and understanding of relevant current and future issues to be faced.

ISSUES, SOLUTIONS & ACTION STEPS

1 EDUCATION

This focus area addresses education issues in both academic and industry settings and opportunities for nurses to achieve education progression.

———— Education Issues ————

Shifting Employment Patterns	• Decrease in the number of **nurses employed in hospitals** • Increase in need in **long-term care** and **home health care** delivery for RNs and LPNs.

Difficult to Fill Positions	• Need for nurses with **advanced education** and/or **specialized clinical experience**. • Need for appropriately educated nurses to move into faculty roles is essential.
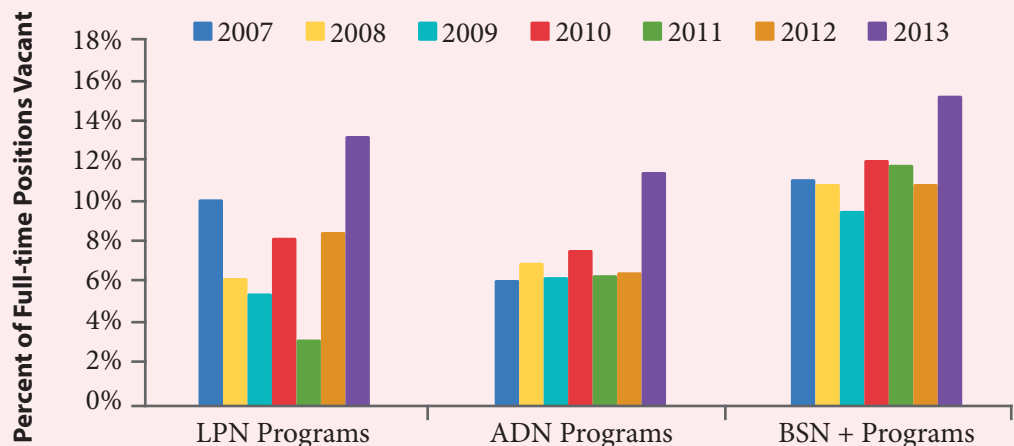
Inadequate Supply of Primary Care Providers to Meet the Increasing Demand	• Increase in the education system's capacity for Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners (ARNPs) who can assist in meeting this need is compromised by a variety of factors including **limited access to preceptors** for hands-on, clinical experience.

Licensure Exam Passage Rates Below the Required Legislative Standard	• In 2016, **approximately 42%** of Florida nursing programs did not meet the standard. • Most of the 127 programs were new and unaccredited – **63%** were **associate degree**, **27%** were **licensed practical degree**, and **10%** were **baccalaureate degree**.

———— Education Solutions ————

1 **Produce an adequate supply of new nurses**, promote educational advancement, and offer models of incumbent worker education and training to meet the diverse needs of Florida's health industry.

2 **Attract youth into the field**, in part by adoption of evolving technology and learning methods and the use of simulation technology to enhance clinical training while providing a completely safe environment for learning.

3 **Nurses enter graduate education programs** with the trajectory of becoming nurse faculty.

4 **Faculty salaries** are competitive in the market.

5 **Academia and industry collaborate** on creative solutions to faculty shortage and improved access to clinical experiences.

6 **Enforced compliance** with Florida's licensure exam pass rate standard to assure an acceptable return on the state's investment of education dollars and an adequate supply of new nurses entering the workforce.

Incumbent Worker Training

- Develop models of incumbent worker education and training to meet the diverse needs of Florida's health industry. For example, select a cohort of medical-surgical nurses to complete a program preparing them to work in an Operating Room or Critical Care or Trauma setting. This also opens opportunities for hiring newly graduated nurses.

Advancement of Education/Career Pathway

- Promote and facilitate educational advancement of all nurses by increasing the number of baccalaureate prepared registered nurses, ARNP's working in primary care master's and doctoral prepared nurses qualified to teach, and doctoral prepared nurses to conduct research.
- Develop academic pathways to facilitate transition from nursing assistant to licensed practical nurse to registered nurse to advanced practice nurse and into roles for doctoral nurses.
- Develop career pathways in employment settings consistent with, and to reap the benefit of, each nurse's education, expertise, and experience.

Achievement of Quality Measures

- For pre-licensure baccalaureate programs achieve, or be on the path to achieve, national accreditation
- Maximize student enrollments and retention
- Implement actions to achieve compliance with licensure exam pass rate standard
- Demonstrate return on the state's investment with a high rate of new graduate employment in Florida

Affordable and Accessible

- Provide affordable and accessible educational opportunities to individuals interested in a career in academic nursing.
- Offer scholarships to incentivize nurses to enter graduate education with the goal of teaching in college and university settings. Such incentives may include stipends to offset the significant reduction in income experienced by nurses working full-time returning to the role of student.

Current and Future Technology Education

- Enhance production of new nurses with new methods of education, clinical and didactic, developed to accommodate the style of younger generations, address the critical shortage of clinical capacity, and prepare newly licensed LPNs and RNs to work in non-traditional settings.

2 WORK ENVIRONMENT

This focus addresses the culture of the work place, retention issues, and supply and demand challenges faced by employers in all settings where nurses are employed. Multiple workforce trends are evident in Florida related to the shifting workforce and population demographics as well as the effect of an improving economic climate in the state.

Work Environment Issues

Emerging Pattern of Nurse Work Habits

- Supply of nurses in the state **has steadily risen** with an increase from December 2007 to December 2015 of nearly 49,500 RNs.
- Accordingly, the **number of licensees actually working in nursing** has also increased.
- Increase in **workforce participation** was expected during the recession, as nurses who worked part-time or had left the field returned to work and others delayed retirement.
- Conversely, as Florida experiences economic recovery, an **increasing pattern of loss of nurses** is emerging. Analysis of licensure data from the past two renewal cycles revealed that 3,339 more nurses left the potential workforce in the most recent cycle (2014-2015) than in the prior cycle (2012-2013).

Aging Nursing Workforce and Population	• **Aging nurse workforce** continues to point toward a future critical occurrence of a large group of experienced nurses retiring. ◦ Almost **17% of working RNs are over age 61** with a total of 40% over age 50. These clinicians will presumably be reducing their hours of work or retiring within the next 5 to 10 years. • At the same time Florida's aging population **needs more nursing care**.

Increase in Vacancies	• Recent studies identified that compared to 2013 data,
	  ◦ **For RNs** the number of separations has increased in hospitals and skilled nursing facilities while it decreased in home health, public health, and hospice.
	  ◦ **For LPNs** the number of separations has increased in all industries surveyed – hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health, public health, and hospices.
	• The 2015 **overall need for nurses increased**, in part, due to the addition of new positions in response to increasing demand.
	• Rate of turnover for nurses has either stayed the same or increased in the past two years. The most significant change was a **100% turnover rate for LPNs** in skilled nursing facilities.

Absence of Qualified Candidates	• **Clinical exposure and faculty influence** reinforce the outdated adage that new graduates should start working in a hospital setting. • When asked if they would hire new graduates, **more than 45%** of responding psychiatric hospitals, public health departments, skilled nursing facilities, and hospitals said "yes". • 75% of the difficult to fill RN positions **require advanced education and/or experience**. • Skilled nursing, home health, and hospice reported **difficulty hiring LPNs**. • In the absence of qualified candidates, employers are providing specialized knowledge and training through **extended orientations** or **residency programs**.
Multi-Generational Workforce	• Accommodating the **traits and interests of millennials** who work to live, unlike the baby boomer generation who live to work. • With extended life expectancies, **people are working longer** resulting in a workforce composed of four generations; each bringing its own work ethic.
Nurses' Inability to Practice to the Full Extent of Their Training and Expertise	• Understaffing • Absence of **decision-making opportunities** while RN's comprise the majority of the healthcare provider workforce

Work Environment Solutions

1 **Partnerships between industry and academia** should be forged to address:

- School to work transition shortcomings through residency programs.

- Preparation of members of the existing nurse workforce to transition into the difficult to fill roles requiring advanced education and/or experience.

2 **Improve retention** of all nurses and address work environment challenges faced by older nurses in an effort to extend their work life.

3 **Promote** an environment compatible with the work styles of all generations.

4 **Establish a culture of inclusivity** promoted by leadership at all levels, inviting input and participation from all care providers.

Work Environment Action Steps

Work Culture

- Promote the inclusion of nurses in governance and decision-making.
- Promote a positive culture in the work place that recognizes the value of diversity.
- Promote a commitment to life-long learning.
- Utilize nurses to the fullest extent of their education and experience.

Retention

- Develop strategies to minimize nursing workforce turnover.
- Implement strategies to retain new graduates in the nursing workforce.
- Implement strategies to accommodate the effects of aging on the nurse workforce.
- Encourage and accommodate senior nurses considering retirement, due to shift length and/or physical requirements, to transition to new roles or work settings compatible with their personal needs thus retaining them in the workforce.

Supply and Demand

- Support production of new nurses by providing clinical education opportunities, joint appointments of faculty and shared resources.
- Develop models of incumbent worker education and training to meet the diverse hiring needs of Florida's health industry.
- Provide incentives for employees to seek advanced education or training.

New Care Delivery Models

- Explore models that maximize efficiency while maintaining or improving quality. Successful models will improve staff satisfaction and reduce turnover while being cost effective. They will reflect approaches that are smarter, faster, better – essential to success in a values-based reimbursement environment.

3 RESEARCH

This focus addresses the significance of research in assuring an adequate, qualified nurse workforce. It is the foundation on which actions are built and outcomes evaluated. Research relates to the collection of nurse workforce data, analysis of trends, identification of implications for the future, and evaluation of program effectiveness.

Research Issues

Need for Fiscal Support of Research Programs

- **Need for fiscal support of research programs** that, at a minimum, provide data collection, analysis, and reporting which serves as a valuable source of information for use by legislators, academics, industry representatives, nurse executives, workforce policy drivers, and other stakeholders.
  - As a state entity presents an **unbiased perspective** and has **access to data** collected by other agencies resulting in a thorough analysis and increased credibility that may not be available to an independent entity or one supported by a proprietary organization.
  - In 2016 alone, the nursing programs at Florida's colleges and universities brought more than **$10,000,000 in federal grants** into the state **utilizing FCN data** to support their applications. The breadth, depth, and quality of state specific data can only improve the likelihood of a successful grant application.
- **Need for fiscal support of research programs** that:
  - Test new models of care delivery to **maximize outcomes and cost-effectiveness** while maintaining a positive work environment.
  - Evaluate the impact of **emerging and evolving roles** within the health industry.

Research Solutions

1. **Adequately fund** a consistent, long-term data collection, analysis, and reporting system.

2. **Participation and completion** of survey instruments by clinician, health industry, and education partners.

3. **Competitive grant programs** to explore new approaches, technologies, and roles in the delivery of health care in Florida.

Analysis of Workforce Trends

- Fund the FCN's ongoing data collection, analysis, and reporting system.

Data Driven Decision Making

- Fund the FCN's mandate to monitor the quality and impact of new programs and existing programs to determine whether or not the value proposition has been met.
- Fund competitive grant program to:
  - Identify new healthcare delivery models
  - Identify and research emerging and evolving healthcare trends and occupations

4 POLICY

This focus relates to the process that strategically guides planning to meet Florida's future health needs through evidence based decision making, engaging nurses in the discussion, appointing nurses to leadership opportunities, and promoting interprofessional collaboration.

Policy Issues

Scarcity of resources

- Scarcity of resources, **both fiscal and human**, to assure that all Floridians have access to quality health care.

Implementaion of the Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act

- **Constant turmoil in adopting a health care delivery system** that is affordable and accessible while maintaining quality, cost-effective outcomes.

Struggle in Achieving Collaborative Partnerships

- Evidence of continuing **struggles in achieving truly collaborative partnerships** among and between health professions.

Policy Solutions

1. **Existing information and data** is used for strategic health workforce planning, policy development, and funding decisions.

2. **Demonstration projects** provide basis for identifying new and/or modified health care delivery systems.

3. **Broad representation of health professionals** are engaged in the decision-making process as a collaborative approach in problem solving adds to the strength of the results.

Policy Action Steps

Leadership

- Promote inclusion of nurse leaders in health policy discussion and planning.
- Appoint nurses to serve in leadership positions that set policy for health care in Florida.
- Implement programs of leadership development for nurses and support new and existing leadership programs.

Strategic Planning to Meet Future Needs

- Support research effort and analysis of workforce trends to assure adequacy of supply of all types of nurses while maximizing use of limited fiscal resources.
- Use trend analyses and projections of nurse supply and demand in Florida to inform decision making in health policy and resource allocations.

Strategic Collaboration/ Cooperation

- Require interagency collaboration to improve efficiency and reduce redundancy.
- Encourage collaboration among public and private leadership in planning and decision making.

IMPLICATION

The Florida Legislature established the Florida Center for Nursing to address issues related to the nursing shortage in Florida, in part by developing a **strategic statewide plan for nursing manpower** in this state. To achieve this mandate, the Center **needs fiscal resources and the authority to collect appropriate data.** Florida's legislature must put in place a **sustainable funding mechanism** for the Center to accomplish its statutory mandate.

The shared goal is to address nurse workforce issues for the health of all Floridians.

FCN — Florida **Center for Nursing**

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