Regionally Increasing Baccalaureate Nurses (RIBN) Project

BACKGROUND

North Carolina is facing a nursing workforce shortage, both in numbers of nurses and level of preparation, that will eventually impact all citizens of the state. In 2006, the NC Center for Nursing RN Supply and Demand forecasting model projected that without significant intervention, by 2020 there will be a potential shortage of 32,000 registered nurses in North Carolina. In addition to increasing numbers of nurses, the 2004 NC IOM Nursing Workforce Report and the 2010 Institute of Medicine Report on the Future of Nursing recommend that the proportion of baccalaureate-prepared nurses (BSN) be increased to 60% and 80% respectively by 2020.

Demand for an increase in the educational preparation of nurses is being driven by a number of forces including: the severity of illness of patients; the complexity of the health care delivery system requiring higher levels of critical thinking, problem solving, and patient management skills; recent research that relate improved patient outcomes to nurses educated at the BSN level; and an increase in positions requiring a BSN or Master’s degree such as clinical leaders, patient care managers and administrators, public health nursing, school nurses and advanced practice nursing roles, in addition to the critical need for nursing faculty.

Currently 65% of new nursing graduates are being educated in Associates Degree (ADN) programs. In a 2006 longitudinal study conducted in NC only 15% of ADN nurses ever completed a bachelor’s degree and only 3% completed a master’s in nursing degree. In 2010, 15.7% of ADN nurses living in NC had completed a BSN or higher nursing degree. A master’s degree in nursing is considered the minimum requirement for nursing faculty and 80% of the nurses in North Carolina who hold master’s degrees began their nursing education at the BSN level.

Implementation of a successful educational partnership between community colleges (CC) and universities that dually enrolls students in a seamless four-year nursing curriculum will provide one option to meet the goal of significantly increasing the proportion of BSN-prepared nurses in North Carolina.

WNC RIBN PROJECT

In 2008, Asheville Buncombe Technical Community College (AB Tech), Western Carolina University (WCU) and the Foundation for Nursing Excellence (FFNE) began the RIBN journey. With advice from a national team of experts, sharing strategies for curriculum and faculty development as well as evaluation tools with partners in metropolitan NYC, the WNC RIBN team adapted the Oregon Consortium for Nursing Education (OCNE) model for dually admitting qualified students into a seamless four-year educational track. The first cohort of students began the WNC RIBN educational track Fall Semester 2010 with the goal of achieving their BSN degree in 2014.
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STUDENTS IN THE RIBN TRACK

> Are dually admitted to both the community college and the university;
> Complete the first three years home-based at the CC with general study courses the first year and then nursing courses the second and third years, while also taking a university course per semester;
> Receive their ADN at the end of the third year, successfully pass the NCLEX-RN to be eligible to practice as a RN and matriculate into the fourth year of the program; and
> Complete the fourth year, with particular emphasis on gerontological and community health nursing, use of evidenced-based nursing knowledge, and leadership development, at the university level to achieve the BSN degree.

EXPANDING RIBN STATEWIDE

The Foundation for Nursing Excellence is supporting the expansion of the RIBN model in five additional regions across North Carolina with the goal of each region admitting its first cohort of RIBN students in Fall 2012.

These regional RIBN partnerships include:

**Charlotte** – UNC Charlotte, Gaston College, Central Piedmont CC, and Carolinas College of Health Sciences

**Eastern North Carolina** – East Carolina University, Lenoir CC, Beaufort County CC, Roanoke-Chowan CC, and Pitt County CC

**Hickory** – Lenoir-Rhyne University, Caldwell CCTI, Catawba Valley CC, Western Piedmont CC, Wilkes CC and Mitchell CC

**Wilmington** – UNC Wilmington and Cape Fear CC

Longer range plans are to continue replication of the RIBN educational model in other regions of the state, thereby creating a new pathway for increasing the number of BSN-prepared nurses in North Carolina.

To learn more about the RIBN project and to access the project materials please visit our website at [www.ffne.org](http://www.ffne.org).

Nurses are important
Contribute to the Foundation for Nursing Excellence today by clicking on [www.ffne.org](http://www.ffne.org).

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