

Creating a LPN-BSN Educational Pathway for Academic Progression

Feasibility Study

2015 Survey of Licensed Practical Nurses in NC

Background

In its 2010 *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health Report*, The Institute of Medicine issued a major challenge to increase the educational preparation of the nursing workforce in our country. This report set the national goal of having 80% of our workforce educated at or above the BSN level by 2020. North Carolina established a goal of reaching the 80% mark by 2025. With leadership from the Foundation for Nursing Excellence (FFNE) beginning in 2008, we established the RIBN (Regionally Increasing Baccalaureate Nurses) dual admission pathway between community colleges and universities for associate degree RNs to complete their BSN degree at the beginning of their careers. Today, there are over 32 associated degree nursing programs and 8 university BSN programs participating in this new educational pathway <http://www.ribn.org/ribn-map>.

In 2015, the State Board of Community Colleges and the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina system signed a uniform RN-BSN Articulation Agreement outlining the course requirements for graduates of any NC community college associate degree program that are required for admission to any of the UNC system RN-BSN programs. This Agreement standardizes curriculum requirements across the state and, thereby, decreases barriers to academic progression for ADN graduates beginning Fall 2015 <http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/news-center/news/state-board-community-colleges-unc-board-governors-sign-uniform-articulation>.

To date there has been no statewide effort to determine the feasibility of offering a more streamlined pathway for LPNs to progress toward a BSN degree in North Carolina. With over 20,000 LPNs in the state, and our most ethnically diverse group of nursing professionals, it is incumbent upon our state leaders to assess the need and framework for creating a LPN-BSN pathway. In Spring 2015, FFNE convened a small workgroup of academic leaders as well as representatives from the NC Area Health Education Centers program, the NC Board of Nursing and NC Community Colleges System office to gather information from a broad group of stakeholders to lead this feasibility study. With the primary group of stakeholders being the LPNs currently living and working in our state, the workgroup undertook a survey of these LPNs to gather data on their interest in pursuing further education as well as the barriers/deterrents that make such progression difficult for those wishing to advance their careers.

Survey Method and Results

A survey questionnaire was sent via email to those LPNs currently licensed in North Carolina and with email addresses on file with the NC Board of Nursing in April 2015 (>19,700). We received over 4100 responses for a 20% return rate. 95% of the respondents reported that they were practicing in NC. 75 % of those practicing in North Carolina reported being interested in pursuing further nursing education and over 500 LPNs reported being currently enrolled in a nursing education program. When asked specifically if they would be interested in a LPN-to-BSN educational program, 81 % reported “Yes”! However, even if interested in such a program, many obstacles to pursuing addition nursing education where noted in the responses with the most common obstacle being related to the cost of an educational program.

The following set of powerpoint slides contain further demographic information about those responding to the survey as well as responses to specific questions and the emerging themes related to both personal and nursing program-related obstacles that are seen as barriers to educational progression for LPNs. Certainly the data obtained from this survey provide valuable insights that must be considered if NC is to move forward with developing “viable” academic progression opportunities for LPNs to achieve a BSN or higher degree. A full report of the LPN-BSN Feasibility Workgroup will be published on this website by Fall 2016.

11.2015/PJ

Exploring Interest in LPN-BSN Educational Pathway

Results of 2015 Survey of LPNs in
NC

Increasing the Educational Preparation of the NC Nursing Workforce

- 2010 Institute of Medicine Future of Nursing Report Recommendation: *Increase proportion of BSN-prepared nurses to 80% by 2020*
- NC Academic Progression Initiatives:
 - Dual admission **RIBN Educational Pathway** between community colleges and universities (www.ribn.org)
 - Efforts to **increase diversity** of NC nursing workforce
 - Statewide Uniform **RN-BSN Articulation Agreement**
 - **LPN-BSN Feasibility Study** including survey of currently licensed LPNs

Changing Healthcare Environment

- Shift in payment system from fee for service to value-based reimbursement
- Focus on population health through preventive care, care coordination and collaboration within communities to improve health
- Changing roles and expanding demands for nursing workforce

LPN Workforce in NC

- Practice primarily in long term care and community-based settings
- Significantly more diverse than RN workforce
- Often overlooked as source for future RNs
- Experience many barriers to academic and career progression

Purpose of LPN Survey

- Better understand level of interest in career progression
- Gather input re barriers to furthering their education
- Use data to help determine need & structure for creating streamlined LPN-BSN pathway(s)

LPN Survey Results*

Demographics:

- 95% of respondents were practicing in NC
- 69% were over the age of 40
 - 23% were between the ages of 30 and 39
 - 9% were between the ages of 20 and 29
- 82% possessed LPN diploma as highest degree
 - 13% with associate degree
- Work settings:
 - 33% worked in long-term care
 - 15% in hospice/home care
 - 12% in solo/group practice
 - 10% ambulatory/outpatient care

*Preliminary Results

Are you currently enrolled in a nursing education program?

- 16% (n=515) were currently enrolled in a nursing program
 - 85% in ADN
 - 13% in BSN
 - 3% in graduate nursing program

Are you interested in pursuing further nursing education?

- **75% were interested in higher education**
 - 19% had goal of ADN
 - 42% had a goal of BSN
 - 12% master's in nursing
 - 4% doctorate
 - **58% had a goal of BSN or higher**

If not interested, please explain . . . qualitative themes

- Personal
 - Age
 - Family responsibilities
 - Children
 - Health
 - Lack of financial support
 - Lack of time
 - No interest
 - Like my current job/content
 - Other interests (health care management, etc.)

Obstacles to pursuing additional nursing education (select all)

- Cost of educational program: 71%
- Family responsibilities: 46%
- Time: 44%
- Format of educational programs: 34%
- Location of available programs: 34%
- Family support: 9%
- Lack of Employer support: 16%
- Travel: 11%

Qualitative Themes re obstacles to pursuing BSN

– Personal

- Demographics
- Family
- Finances
- Satisfaction

– Program

- Policies
- Flexibility
- Types

– Employment/Organizational

Personal Issues. . .

- Age
 - Retirement
- Family
 - Spend more time with family
 - Aging parents
- Finances
 - Too costly
 - Head of household, have to work

Personal: Other

- School is too stressful
- No time
- No interest – inclusive of
 - Like current role; no desire to change
 - Dissatisfaction with nursing

Employment: Happy/Content

- “I am employed in an office setting that does not utilize registered nurses. I am very happy in this location and do not wish to change jobs.”
- “I’m happy where I am in the OR, tech position”

Dissatisfaction with nursing/health care

- “I don't like how Nursing is evolving. It's become more about how much an employer can squeeze out of an employee, often to the detriment of the patient, and it ends up burning the nurse out and they leave the profession (I can attest to this personally).”
- “I am just not interested in anything in the medical field.”
- “Leaving work force”
- “I'm not sure I want to be a nurse any longer. I want to be the COO of a large healthcare system with a guaranteed golden parachute and lifetime tenure.”

Educational Program Obstacles

In their own words.....

Program Obstacles: Policies

Coursework

- “Expired coursework: “Completed prerequisites for a program 40 miles away, was top in my pharmacology class and when I applied to the program the director said Math 70 was expired and I needed to test out or retake it and that passing the pharmacology class top student did not make a difference. My advisor did not understand reasoning either.”
- “After a certain amount of years the classes you took to be a LPN are no longer any good. This doesn't make sense, anatomy, psychology, microbiology, and biology doesn't change. It's like starting from scratch for nurses like me with 20+ years”
- “Tried the regents and failed practices X 2; let time lapse”

Program Obstacles: Capacity

- “Number of students taken per semester for bridge programs”
- “Limited availability of programs”
- “Red tape”
- “Way too expensive”

Program Obstacles: Types

- “There needs to be more programs for LPN to BSN. Most of the programs are for RN to BSN.”
- “I want to pursue my BSN but it's difficult to go from LPN to BSN. Also, advanced placement at community college level is a joke and a headache for LPNs.”

Program Obstacles: Flexibility

- “Most classes needed for [LPN to ADN] offered during the day. It's a conflict if you have to work especially working during the day. Online classes offered but usually they are out of state and only some states are honored through them”
- “Clinical rotations for an RN program in this area are not considerate of a full time work schedule”
- “Very few LPN to RN evening/online courses available”
- “Would love to become an RN, but need some sort of online or evening program. After 16 years of nursing I should be able to continue with just nursing classes and not have to go back for math, English etc.”
- “Lack of online opportunities”

Program Obstacles: Transition Difficult

- “It's not easy to get into the advanced placement ADN classes”
- “The process of transition to RN is too difficult”

Would you be interested in a LPN-to-BSN Program?

81% said YES!

Would your employer provide educational assistance for you to pursue?

Yes:	29%
No:	34%
Don't know	37%

About your employer . . .

- Does your employer prefer to hire RNs for positions that were previously held by LPNs?
 - Yes: **39%**
 - No: 31%
 - Don't know: 31%
- Does your employer prefer to hire BSNs rather than ADNs?
 - Yes: **24%**
 - No: 34%
 - Don't know: 42%

Does your employer have salary differentials for . . .

- LPN vs. RN
 - YES **82%**
- ADN vs. BSN
 - YES **40%**

Results Challenge NC to Act!

- Significant interest by respondents in furthering their nursing education/career
- But...multiple personal and program-related barriers exist

What next?

- NC is well-positioned to facilitate LPN-BSN education building upon:
 - Standardized LPN Concept-based Curriculum in CCs
 - RN-BSN Articulation Agreement
 - RIBN model for dual admission/seamless progression
- Develop and pilot more streamlined LPN-BSN pathways
- Involve employers as partners

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www.ribn.org