

**The Challenges Ahead for Texas Nurse Educators**  
**Texas Team Education Committee**  
**Taskforce Findings and Recommendations**

**June 9, 2017**

## Introduction

### *Shortage of Nurses in the US*

For much of the last forty years, a chronic shortage of nurses has plagued the United States. Employers, educators, professional organizations and policy makers have repeatedly attempted to solve this problem with various levels of success. The strategies implemented between 2005 and 2010 did result in an increase in the production of nurses. According to Staiger, Auerbach, and Buerhaus (2012), the growth of the RN workforce during that period was the largest over a five year period in the last 4 decades. The National Center for Health Workforce Analysis within the Health Resources and Services Administration (2013) reported that approximately 2.8 million registered nurses had been produced in 2008-2013, an increase of 200,000 nurses from the previous HRSA report (AACN, 2015).

The Future of the Nursing Workforce: National- and State-Level Projections, 2012-2025 indicated that nationally, the change in RN supply between 2012 and 2025 will outpace demand, although the report noted substantial variation in the RN supply and demand at the state level. Disagreement about the accuracy of this projection does exist. Staiger, Auerbach, and Buerhaus (2012) suggested that as the economy improves, the shortage of nurses will return. They recommend that plans to counter the reemergence of a post-recession shortage are important to avoid its negative effects.

### *Shortage of Nurses in Texas*

Using HRSA projection models and Texas-specific data to estimate nurse supply and demand, the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies were able to more accurately model the future need for the nursing workforce in Texas. The results of this model were reported in the [Nurse Supply and Demand Projections, 2015-2030: Executive Summary](#). According to this report, in 2015, the supply of RNs in Texas will be 200,663 RN FTEs. Demand will be 215,636 FTE RNs, leaving a deficit of 14,973 RN FTEs. By 2030, the supply of RN FTEs is expected to grow by 35.4% to 271,667, while demand will grow by 53.8% to 331,638, leaving a deficit of **59,970 RN FTEs**. Based on these projections, **20% of the projected demand** for RNs in 2030 will not be met.

The looming nursing shortage presents a challenge in Texas and throughout the United States because of the need to address one of the most important factors influencing the nursing shortage: **a lack of appropriately credentialed faculty to teach the qualified students who apply to nursing programs**. The average age of the nursing faculty is currently 56.4 and the impending retirements that are expected from universities in the next 3-5 years will exacerbate this need (ACCN, 2015). Succession planning and strategies to grow the next generation of nursing faculty leaders is critical. Greater demands are being placed on nursing schools, not only to supply an adequate number of new nurses, but to also support nurses returning to school for more advanced degrees. The faculty shortage must be resolved in order to have

sufficient nurses to meet the current and future nursing needs of US and Texas citizens. This challenge is the subject of this white paper.

### ***National Shortage of Nurse-Educators***

The AACN's report on *2014-2015 Enrollment and Graduations in Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs in Nursing* reported that U.S. nursing schools turned away 68,938 qualified applicants from baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs in 2014. Almost two thirds of the nursing schools responding to the survey pointed to faculty shortages as a major reason for not accepting all qualified applicants into baccalaureate programs (<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/research-data>). In addition, a 2014 AACN Special Survey on Vacant Faculty Position found that 714 baccalaureate and/or higher education programs across the country identified 1,236 faculty vacancies for a national faculty vacancy rate of 6.9%. Most of these vacancies included positions that require or prefer a doctorate degree ([www.aacn.nche.edu/](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/)).

The 2015 NLN Faculty Census Survey found that there was a total number of faculty vacancies of 1,072 in all types of nursing schools. BSN and ADN nursing programs represented the largest percentage of the total vacancies (34% and 28% respectively), which is to be expected, since these two types of programs are most likely to have the greatest number of potential students. The NLN survey also asked deans and directors to indicate the maximum number of students that could have been admitted annually if all faculty vacancies were filled. The percentage of the maximum capacity that was actually admitted in 2015 was as follows:

<b>Type of Nursing Program</b>	<b>% of maximum capacity admitted to programs</b>
LVN/LPN	85
ADN	92
Diploma	93
BSN	73
RN to BSN	62
MSN	64
Doctoral	41

(NLN Faculty Census Survey, 2015)

The 2015 NLN Faculty Census also identifies the nursing specialty required for undergraduate positions where there are vacancies, as follows:

- Adult/Medical-Surgical: 38%
- Psychiatric/Mental Health: 16%
- Pediatrics: 12%
- Community Health/Public Health: 6%
- Critical Care: 4%

The following chart outlines the percentage of nursing education administrators who identified each of the identified reasons for being unable to hire sufficient nurse faculty.

Reason for inability to hire	Percentage of agreement by Administrators
Not enough qualified candidates	37%
Not able to offer competitive salaries	33%
Faculty jobs less attractive than others	12%
Not enough budget lines	6%
Other difficulties	12%

(NLN Faculty Census report, 2015)

The concern regarding lack of competitive salaries is validated by the 2016-2017 CUPA Faculty Survey, which indicates that the median salary for nurse faculty in four year universities is \$66,000 annually.

### **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Call to Action**

In April, 2007, in *Charting Nursing's Future: The Nursing Faculty Shortage*, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation proposed a number of strategies to address the problem of a shortage of nurse educators previously obscured by concern over the shortage of nurses at the bedside.

The strategies included:

- Raising salaries or other reimbursement for Nurse Educators.
- Developing new pathways to becoming a nurse educator. These strategies may include bridge courses, such as RN to BSN/MSN or BSN to PhD/DNP programs and second degree tracts for pre-licensure programs.
- Using current nurse educators more effectively, through distance education or simulation, as well as partnering with clinical staff to support teaching.
- Increasing federal funding for nurse education.

The RWJF *Nursing Faculty Shortage* report also provides examples of public-private partnerships that have been developed to address the problem. Although these recommendations were published 10 years ago, they are still applicable today.

### **Texas Team's Recommendations to Improve the Shortage of Nurse Educators in Texas**

The lack of sufficient numbers of nurse educators on a state-by-state basis is a cause of concern for all who are interested in meeting the health care needs of US citizens. This concern in Texas drove the development of the conference, *Challenges for Texas Nurse Educators*, held on February 17, 2017. This conference was designed to 1) confirm that the shortages identified

in the literature accurately illustrate the current experience in Texas and 2) explore reasons for the insufficient number of nurse educators in Texas and strategies to resolve this issue. The conference was funded by the Texas Team: Advancing Health for Texas RWJF Coalition through shared funds with the National Student Nurses Association.

The participants of the workshop heard leaders from the National League of Nursing, American Association of Colleges of Nursing, Organization of Associate Degree Nursing, the American Organization of Nurse Executives, Texas Board of Nursing, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and then participated in group discussions to address the following challenge: **There is a direct relationship between the number of nurse educators employed in Texas and the number of undergraduate and graduate nursing students who can be prepared for the nursing educational work force. Currently, insufficient nurse educators are available to prepare nurses to meet the projected demand in Texas for nursing care in all setting where health care is provided.**

The results of these conversations were recorded during the workshop and later grouped into four themes: ***Facts, Awareness, Competencies, and Marketing***. Within each of these themes, the challenges were identified and potential solutions, generated. The following discussion explores the results of the conference in more detail. Although the fact-finding and discussion were specific to Texas nursing, health care, and higher education, *the authors believe that the recommendations integrated into this white paper may also be applicable in other regions of the country.*

## **FACTS**

1. A large percentage of current nurse educators in the Texas workforce are reaching retirement age. According to the 2016 Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Report, *Faculty Demographics in Professional Nursing Programs*, in 2015, there were a total of 235.5 FTE faculty vacancies in schools of nursing, 15.4% more than the 204 vacancies reported in 2014. Contributing to this problem, there were 341.0 FTE resignations and 64.0 FTE retirements during Academic Year (AY) 2014-2015, an increase of 22.4% in the number of FTE resignations from AY 2013-14 to AY 2014-2015 (TCNWS, 2016, para 4).

***Solution: Increase awareness by public, legislators, public officials, and other policy-makers of the severe nursing educator shortage.***

- Work with Texas Nurses Association, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, leaders in health care and higher education and other communities of interest to articulate the need to increase the number of qualified nurse educators to prepare nurses for Texas citizens.

2. A significant discrepancy in the salaries exists for nurse educators compared to nurses in other clinical or administrative positions holding comparable education/experience

and practicing in other clinical settings.

***Solution:* Develop and implement a strategic plan designed to increase salaries of nurse educators in higher education and highlight financial benefits currently available to Texas nurse educators.**

- Make current resources, such as the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Nurse Faculty Loan Repayment Assistance Program and Tax Exemption Program for Clinical Preceptors and their Children, readily available through a campaign of “Did You Know?”
- Engage Texas Nurses Association and other advocacy partners in focusing on a legislative approach to improve salaries in state agencies.
- Engage service partners and business supporters in developing creative ways to reach salary parity for nurse educators.

3. The culture of academia is foreign to practicing nurses and may be difficult to navigate without appropriate preparation. As nurses transition from clinical practice into academia, they must negotiate this change in culture. In the last several years, an increase in the number of doctorally prepared nurses in Texas has occurred. For example, in 2015, 1,527 (0.7%) RNs held doctorates, up from 1,108 (0.6%) in 2013 and 853 (0.5%), in 2011. The statewide increase in doctorally-prepared faculty is driven by the increase in Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP) programs in the state. (TCNWS, 2015). However, rank and tenure policies in some universities may create barriers for hiring/promoting DNPs.

***Solution:* Develop and implement strategies to educate potential nurse educators regarding a) the benefits of choosing an educator role and b) processes required for success in academia.**

- Make current resources to support nurse educators readily available through a campaign of “Did You Know?”
- Ask for grant funds to develop a commercial-length video of the benefits of being a nurse educator, through the voice of young faculty.
- Ask Texas Nurses Association for space in their publications or website to profile nurse educators’ stories.
- Clarify for students in DNP programs the requirements for tenure and promotion in various universities before they graduate.
- Advocate for tenure and promotion guidelines that support the competencies of nurses with a practice doctorate.

4. Lack of clarity regarding specific Texas policies and rules and regulations, as well as professional accreditation standards that may make it difficult to provide nursing education effectively. The policies that are particularly problematic include:

- Faculty-student ratio requirements in clinical experiences
- Requirement of some core courses , especially Advanced Pharmacology, for Nurse Educators

- Prohibition against sharing of faculty across institutions

***Solution:* Work with the Texas Board of Nursing, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and specific accreditation organizations to advocate for positions that enhance the education and work-life of nurse educators.**

## **AWARENESS**

1 Nurses may not be aware of the benefits of a career as a nurse educator and resources available to assist in developing related competencies.

***Solution:* Increase nurses' awareness of the benefits of a career as a nurse educator and resources to support this career trajectory.**

- Work with Texas Nurses Association, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, leaders in health care and higher education and other communities of interest to articulate the need to increase the number of qualified nurse educators in Texas. Include the message that nursing education in a specific specialty, with its own set of competencies.
- Advocate for a reduced tuition rate for graduate students declaring a nurse educator major.
- Work with Texas Nurses Association, Texas Organization of Associate Degree Nurses (TOADN) and Texas Organization of Baccalaureate or Graduate Nursing Educators (TOBGNE) to develop a public awareness campaign to highlight the looming shortage of nurse educators.
- Publicize the resources (e.g. grants) that may support faculty and students to become a nurse educator.
- Work with communities of interest to expand available resources to support a nurse educator' career path.

## **COMPETENCIES**

1. Limited formal opportunities for nurse educators exist to develop competencies required for career advancement in nursing education.

- A limited number of programs are available to develop competences to become Deans, Directors, or Chairs.
- Lack of clarity regarding ways to leverage nurse certification and other experiences in academia.
- Practicing nurses with appropriate credentials/experience to serve as full or part-time faculty may not have the necessary nurse educator competencies to fully succeed in the role and may not be aware that these competencies are necessary.

**Solutions: Develop innovative formal and informal programs to develop advanced competencies for nurse educators.**

2. Limited effort to integrate Interprofessional education (IPE) into the nursing students' experience exists, although providing some interdisciplinary classes could integrate efficiencies into nursing education.

**Solutions: Encourage nursing programs to partner with other disciplines to offer IPE courses in graduate education.** This recommendation is consistent with a recommendation from the Jonas Macy Foundation report, *Registered Nurses: Partners in Transforming Primary Care*, which suggests that nursing education should use an interprofessional approach for some graduate courses.

- Work with accreditation bodies to develop consensus that interprofessional education can be supported as part of the development of a nurse educator.
- Work with schools with limited access to IPE opportunities to use virtual reality as a means to work with the interprofessional team.  
Encourage spread of models in Texas and beyond that effectively implement IPE activities.

## **MARKETING (ENGAGING COMMUNITY PARTNERS)**

1. A lack of focused effort between nursing service and education to address the shortage of nurse educators is evident.

**Solution: Work with communities of interest, to develop collaborative strategies to address the shortage of nurse educators.**

- Work with Texas Organization of Nurse Executives (TONE), Texas Hospital Association (THA), Texas Deans and Directors, and the Texas Association of Business to develop policies that support innovative strategies to recruit and retain nurse educators.

## References

Bodenheimer, T., Mason, D. (2016) Registered Nurses: Partners in Transforming Primary Care. The Jonas Macy Foundation. Atlanta, Georgia.

[http://macyfoundation.org/publications/publication/conference-summary-registered-nurses-partners-in-transforming-primary-care.](http://macyfoundation.org/publications/publication/conference-summary-registered-nurses-partners-in-transforming-primary-care)

Fauteux, N. (2007) the Nursing Shortage. Charting Nursing's Future. *Spann Communications Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*. <http://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2007/04/the-nursing-faculty-shortage.html>)

National League for Nursing. Highlights from the 2015 NLN Faculty Census Survey of Schools of Nursing. [http://www.nln.org/advocacy-public-policy/issues/faculty-shortage/nln-annual-survey-of-schools-of-nursing"](http://www.nln.org/advocacy-public-policy/issues/faculty-shortage/nln-annual-survey-of-schools-of-nursing)

National League for Nursing NLN Nurse Educator Shortage Fact Sheet. [http://www.nln.org/docs/default-source/advocacy-public-policy/nurse-faculty-shortage-fact-sheet-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=0.](http://www.nln.org/docs/default-source/advocacy-public-policy/nurse-faculty-shortage-fact-sheet-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=0)

Rosseter, R. Fact Sheet: Creating a More Highly Qualified Nursing Workforce. Updated. March 15, 2016. [http://www.aacn.nche.edu/media-relations/fact-sheets/nursing-faculty-shortage.](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/media-relations/fact-sheets/nursing-faculty-shortage)

Staiger, D., Auerbach, D., Buerhaus, P. (2012) Registered Nurse Labor Supply and the Recession—Are We in a Bubble? *New England Journal of Medicine*. April. 366: 1463-1465. [http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1200641"](http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1200641)

\_\_\_\_\_ (2014) the Future of the Nursing Workforce: National- and State-Level US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Service Administration, Bureau of Health Workforce-National Center for Health Workforce Analysis. August. <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bhw/nchwa/projections/nursingprojections.pdf>

## Resources for Nurse Educators

### Did You Know?

NLN Foundation has a nursing education scholarship annually,  
<http://www.nln.org/foundation/overview/foundation-programs/foundation-for-nursing-education-scholarship-awards>

THECB has a Nursing Faculty loan repayment assistance program for nurse educators who are teaching full time? <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/6797.PDF>

THECB has a program of tuition exemption for children of nurse educators in participating universities? <http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/financialaid/tofa2.cfm?ID=390>

HRSA has a fund for nurse educator loan payment?  
<https://bhw.hrsa.gov/fundingopportunities/?id=bd03570b-3eb6-4a77-a1e3-4326ce292907>

Did you know the THECB has a fund for preceptors to receive \$ 500.00 tuition assistance for themselves or their children each semester or term in participating universities?  
<http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/financialaid/tofa2.cfm?ID=546>

Did you know there is a certification for Nurse Educators through the National League of Nursing and a prep class for the CNE designation? <http://www.nln.org/professional-development-programs/Certification-for-Nurse-Educators>

Taskforce Membership

Patricia Allen, Ed.D., RN, CNE, ANEF, FAAN  
Professor  
Texas Tech University HSC, School of Nursing  
Lubbock, Texas

Susan Sportsman, Ph.D, RN, FAAN  
Thought Leader  
Elsevier Corporation  
Dallas, Texas

Joyce Batcheller DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN  
Nurse Executive Advisor, Leadership  
The Center for the Advancement  
of Healthcare Professionals  
AMN Healthcare  
Dallas, Texas

Carol Boswell, Ed.D., RN, CNE, ANEF, FAAN  
Professor  
Texas Tech University HSC, School of Nursing  
Odessa, Texas

Sharon Cannon, Ed.D., RN, ANEF  
Regional Dean and Professor  
Texas Tech University HSC, School of Nursing  
Odessa, Texas

Michael Evans, Ph.D., FAAN  
Professor and Dean  
Texas Tech University HSC, School of Nursing  
Lubbock, Texas

Marvella Starlin, MSN, RN  
Director of Nursing Education  
Cisco College  
Abilene, Texas

Jayson T. Valerio DNP, RN  
Interim Dean  
Nursing & Allied Health Division  
South Texas College  
McAllen, Texas

