



# MASTER PLAN FOR NURSING EDUCATION: OVERVIEW

Washington Center for Nursing

March 2008



[www.wacenterfornursing.org](http://www.wacenterfornursing.org)

# Summary

Like other states, Washington State is experiencing a nursing shortage that will worsen in the next few decades. An aging population is increasing demand for health care at the same time that an aging nursing workforce is retiring in large numbers. The nursing profession is challenged to maintain its excellence in knowledge and skills in a rapidly changing healthcare system, to increase its racial and ethnic diversity to better reflect the population, and to enhance access to quality education across the state.

Comprehensive and innovative approaches to these challenges are critical. As the Washington Learns Commission noted, "...it is an economic necessity that we change our entire educational system from early learning through graduate school so that it is not merely basic, it is excellent" (Washington Learns Final Report, 2006, p4).

The Master Plan for Nursing Education has been in development over the past two years through dialogue among multiple stakeholders. The Department of Health contracted with the Washington Center for Nursing to develop an overall plan for nursing education in this state. The Master Plan proposes a set of overlapping strategies focusing on four areas: competency, supply, diversity, and access.

Taken together, the strategies provide a framework for comprehensive, innovative, and sustainable nursing education, so that Washington nurses and their patients will benefit from what Washington Learns calls "a world-class, learner-focused, seamless education system."

# 1 Continuing Competency

The first priority is ensuring the future competency of the nursing workforce. This includes making certain that students acquire the knowledge and develop the skills demanded of today's new nurses, enhancing the transition of new RNs from school into practice, and improving the partnerships between education and clinical practice.

## **WE PROPOSE:**

- Building an integrated network of nursing education opportunities across the state, through multiple pathways
  - Increasing capacity in all pre-licensure RN programs
  - Strengthening and expanding RN-BSN programs
  - Beginning in 2020, ensuring that all RN's newly licensed in Washington have or obtain a BSN or higher degree in nursing within 10 years of initial licensure
- Expanding support for nursing graduate education
- Advancing the quality of teaching with new approaches and technologies
- Improving the transition to professional practice through residency programs for new graduates



# Adequate Supply

The second priority of the Master Plan report is the overall supply of nurses. The two major barriers to expansion of nursing educational programs are the shortages of qualified faculty and of sites for clinical education. Other barriers to expansion include limited classroom space for prerequisite classes and inadequate administrative support.

## **WE PROPOSE:**

### **Faculty shortage:**

- Increasing faculty salaries and clarifying workload expectations
- Including teaching expertise in promotion and tenure decisions
- Enhancing compensation and involvement of part-time and clinical instructors
- Expanding funding for graduate nursing programs, especially those with educator preparation
- Expanding loan/scholarship packages to promote teaching
- Increasing joint appointments in practice and academia

### **Shortage of clinical sites:**

- Funding coordination of clinical placements across the state
- Funding coordination of high-fidelity simulation labs across the state
- Expanding utilization of nontraditional clinical sites
- Increasing collaboration between schools and clinical agencies

### **Other barriers:**

- Increasing funding for classrooms and lab space
- Adequate funding for administrative support staff and program-director leadership time



# A More Diverse Profession

The third priority of nursing educational planning concerns diversity – the extent to which the nursing workforce and faculty reflect the racial, ethnic, and cultural composition of the population of this state. We know that health outcomes are improved when the diversity of caregivers more closely matches that of patients, and that students from diverse populations are attracted to schools where faculty are diverse.

## **WE PROPOSE:**

- Identifying and promoting “best practices” in recruitment and retention programs for minority students, including:
  - Strategies to identify high-potential/high-risk individuals
  - Provision of “wrap-around” services, including financial aid, mentoring, social and academic support
  - Dedicated staff for outreach and service coordination
  - Improved recruitment and retention of minority nursing faculty
- Increasing financial support for students and for diversity programs
- Promoting leadership development for minority nursing faculty
- Initiating regular collection, analysis, and distribution of data on minority nurses in practice, administration, education, and research
- Creating alliances with K-12 educators, counselors, and parents



# Enhancing Access

The fourth priority is access: the geographic locations of nurses and nursing educational programs. All of the preceding issues, continuing competency, faculty and clinical-site shortages, and diversity have a distinctive shape and complexity in rural and underserved areas, and the solutions therefore require particular attention. Even in parts of western Washington, transportation issues and the location of nursing programs can reduce access to educational opportunities.

## **WE PROPOSE:**

- Analyzing educational access points to education and matching programs with students' needs
- Increasing the number of nursing educators based in rural and underserved communities
- Increasing financial aid to graduate students from rural and underserved areas
- Increasing distance-learning options, while integrating them with face-to-face methods
- Establishing rural residency programs for new graduates
- Fostering partnerships among nurses, public health, and rural healthcare organizations to improve communication with policy-makers



# Next Steps

A coordinated, comprehensive plan is necessary to address the complexities of current and future nursing shortages. A well-educated and ethnically diverse professional nursing community, appropriately distributed across the state, will be best prepared to provide the high-quality healthcare needed by the residents of Washington State, and to provide the professional education that students need.

The next steps to turn this plan into action include:

- Identify sequence of actions and priorities for implementation
- Identify funding needs and sources
- Create strategic partnerships in education, practice, and public and private educational institutions
- Develop proposals for legislative action where appropriate

***Note: This document provides an overview and summary of the major recommendations in the Master Plan.*** Please contact the Washington Center for Nursing for your own copy of the complete Plan.

***Please send comments and questions to:***

Linda Tieman, RN MN FACHE

Executive Director

Email: [tiemal@spu.edu](mailto:tiemal@spu.edu)

Washington Center for Nursing

3307 3rd Ave W, Suite 106

Seattle, WA 98119-1922

206-281-2978

[www.WACenterforNursing.org](http://www.WACenterforNursing.org)



# The Washington Center for Nursing Board of Directors

## **President:**

*Barbara E. Trehearne PhD RN*

Executive Director, Nursing Operations, Group Health Cooperative  
NWONE Position

## **Vice President:**

*Judith A. Huntington MN, RN*

Executive Director, Washington State Nurses' Association  
WSNA Position

## **Secretary/Treasurer:**

*Victoria Fletcher RN MSN CNM*

Ass't. Director, Clinician Services, Planned Parenthood of WWA  
ARNP Position

## **Directors:**

*Bobbie Berkowitz PhD RN FAAN*

Professor, University of Washington  
School of Nursing  
At-Large Position

*Marca Davies MS, RN*

Coordinator Peninsula College  
CNEWS Position

*Tim Davis RN BSN*

Staff Nurse, Skagit Valley Hospital  
WSNA Staff RN

*Kathryn Fletcher RN BSN*

Staff Nurse, Harborview Medical Center  
SEIU Staff RN

*Connie Huber RN MBA FACHE*

Assistant Administrator,  
Providence St. Peter Hospital  
NWONE Position

*Alma Martinez RN MSN*

Manager, Home Health Program,  
Prosser Memorial District Hospital  
At-Large Position

*Marilyn Savage RN*

President, USNU local 141 UFCW  
USNU Position

*Diane Sosne RN MSN*

President, SEIU-1199 NW  
SEIU Position

*Marni Storey RN MSN*

Communicable Disease Prevention & Control  
Manager, Clark County Health Department  
Public Health Position

*Anne Hirsch DNS, ARNP*

Senior Associate Dean, WSU, ICN, Spokane  
CNEWS Position

## **Executive Director:**

*Linda Tieman RN MN FACHE*

Washington Center for Nursing



[www.wacenterfornursing.org](http://www.wacenterfornursing.org)