



UPDATE ON THE MASTER PLAN FOR NURSING EDUCATION IN WASHINGTON STATE - NOVEMBER 2009

Q. What is the Master Plan for Nursing Education?

A. The Master Plan, developed by the Washington Center for Nursing, is a comprehensive approach to ensuring that we have enough nurses with the appropriate education to care for the population of our state. It reflects input from many interested parties across the state, including industry, education, labor, management, and both state and national professional nursing organizations. The Council of Nurse Educators of Washington State (CNEWS) led the foundational design and research work, and has continued the implementation planning this year, with many other stakeholders.

Q. Why do we need this?

A. We currently have a shortage of nurses and Nurse Educators that is projected to worsen if we do nothing. Our healthcare system is increasingly more complex; our population is aging and becoming culturally more diverse. Nurses must provide quality care for patients and families in every healthcare setting. We need innovative nursing education that is accessible, understandable, and aligned for mobility for students. We need a nursing workforce that reflects the cultural diversity of our state. We must expand our educational capacity so that more students can be admitted, graduate, and become staff nurses in different settings, nurse educators, advanced practitioners, researchers, managers and leaders.

Q. What's in the Master Plan?

A. The Plan recommends priorities, strategies and initiatives to ensure practice competency, increased supply, increased diversity, and improved access to education. It is aligned with the Higher Education Coordinating Board's Master Plan for Education in the state. Transforming our educational system is an important part of the nursing workforce equation; on the other side, employers are working to ensure that the work environment attracts and retains nurses in practice.

Q. How does the faculty shortage affect the ability of schools to expand enrollment?

A. Washington Nursing schools accept only around 50% of the qualified applicants (those who have satisfactorily completed all pre-requisite classes) because they do not have enough qualified faculty to expand our educational capacity. The Master Plan outlines steps to attract and retain qualified faculty so that schools can accept qualified applicants. Increasing faculty compensation is also necessary; last year we saw a 40% increase in Washington in the numbers of people who declined or left teaching roles because of low salaries.

Q. How will the schools change?

A. We need a system that is easy to understand, affordable, and of high quality. We need graduates who have the knowledge and skills to meet the evolving needs of the people of Washington. Innovative approaches to expand access include more distance learning, coordination of simulation labs, financial support for students who are underserved, and tutoring for students who have academic challenges. Increased funding is critical to schools' expanding enrollment and preparing new clinicians for future practice.



Q. What was recommended about the BSN and why?

A. CNEWS, the organization representing all nursing education programs in Washington State, has recommended that beginning in 2020, all **newly licensed RNs** in Washington State have or acquire a Bachelor's degree in nursing **within 10 years of licensure**. **This recommendation will not affect nurses currently practicing at that time.**

The reasons for this recommendation include the fact that many RN roles now require a Bachelor's degree or higher, as nurses' roles expand; we anticipate that requirement to become more common. Many national nursing organizations have also recommended that the proportion of RNs with a BSN or higher degree be significantly increased.

Q. What's happening now with the Master Plan and implementation?

A. Implementation planning groups have been working throughout the year, identifying priorities, strategies, outcomes, and resources needed for each. We are seeking feedback from stakeholders across the state now. The final plan is due to the State Secretary of Health by the end of this year.

Q. What are the proposed priorities for implementation?

A. Implement strategies that alleviate the nursing faculty shortage by addressing faculty preparation, workload and compensation.

Expand the dialogue between nursing education and practice to develop innovative curriculum models and teaching strategies.

Promote the introduction of formal, structured transition to practice programs for new nurses in all practice settings

Ensure that increasing ethnic and racial diversity in nursing education is a consistent thread throughout the implementation of all areas of work

Q. Where can I find the full text of the Master Plan?

A. <http://www.wcnursing.org/master-plan-for-nursing-education>

Q. How can I be heard?

A. Call or email the Washington Center for Nursing, or any board member (see below).

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www.WACenterforNursing.org for more information

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