



## **Action Now! for Nursing Education: the initiative to solve state nursing education challenges**

Several complex issues facing nursing are getting in the way of Washington State's ability to produce a nursing workforce needed by our growing communities: a nursing faculty shortage, nursing education funding that fails to keep pace, and a lack of quality practice experiences for all students. Coupled with that is a national call to advance nursing education so that nurses have access to baccalaureate and graduate education.

### **The Action Now steering committee**

In the summer of 2017, the Washington Center for Nursing (WCN), the Washington State Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (NCQAC), and the Council on Nursing Education in Washington State (CNEWS) banded together to form a statewide initiative called Action Now! to tackle these challenges and transform the state's nursing education system.

The Action Now! vision: Nursing Education: Securing the Future of a Healthier Washington.

The steering committee co leads: Sofia Aragon, (WCN), Sarah Bear, (CNEWS, replaced Annette Flanders, who retired) and Mindy Schaffner (NCQAC).

### **Original project goals**

- Provide opportunities for nurses to advance their education
- Establish sustainable financing for nursing programs
- Ensure quality practice experience for all nursing students
- Create a stronger and more diverse faculty and nursing leadership pool

The steering committee established four workgroups to meet their respective goals, with several steering committee members presiding at each workgroup. These groups have invited relevant stakeholders and meet regularly.

### **An emerging priority: ensure funding to recruit and retain nursing faculty**

After analyzing the work that has been accomplished, as well as where we want to be, the steering committee outlined a priority: while all goals are crucial, we will not be successful unless we first ensure a sufficient, robust, and diverse faculty pool.

We are asking now for funding to provide competitive salaries to recruit and retain nursing faculty. Increasing nurse educators' full-time salaries to be competitive with practice salaries will provide an important first step to recruit and retain a highly qualified diverse faculty pool and address shortages. This will require many stakeholders working together with state legislators to address this critical need. We have a crisis in nursing education, but with swift action we can assure that health needs of Washington State residents continue to be met. (See the enclosed draft brief to read more about this.)



## **Bringing the right stakeholders to the table**

To lend an industry and employer voice, the steering committee invited Sally Watkins (in her WCN board member capacity), a representative from the Washington State Hospital Association, and is exploring adding a NWone representative.

## **New WCN staff member to take on part of the Action Now! work**

As part of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant, WCN is in the process of recruiting for a staff person for one year. This staff person will help WCN have more capacity to do more program work for Action Now!

## **A summit to convene broader stakeholder group and present beginning solutions**

On October 18, the steering committee is planning to host a “Nursing Education Solutions Summit” at the DoubleTree Southcenter. It has been strategically scheduled during one day of the three-day CNEWS Fall 2018 Conference. Details are still being developed, but the goal is to ensure we have the right stakeholders and decisionmakers at the table, help them understand the issue, present viable solutions, and make sure everyone is energized and committed to finding a sustainable solution.

## **A Day at the State Capitol**

Details are still in development. The idea is to bring together partners for a day at the Capital to meet with legislators and the Governor’s office during the 2019 legislative session.

Stay tuned for more details.