

## Effective Outreach Strategies for Introducing Middle School Students to Careers in Nursing

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Effective ways of introducing nursing to middle school students as a career should include in-person, hands-on, fun, and physically engaging activities.
- Parents and guardians of middle school students impact their child's decision to pursue healthcare as a profession significantly. Including parent education and engagement is crucial to the success of any program that aims to introduce middle school students to nursing.
- If programs can accurately share positive examples of a nurse's role in a variety of environments (e.g., school nurse, public health nurse, IT nurse, etc.) along with some of the real challenges present in these roles, it can eliminate misconceptions and allow for students to retain an authentic interest in nursing as a career.
- From ages 14-18, students develop ideas about work that mesh with their existing self-concept. Knowing when students retain information during their growth can allow nursing programs to affect changes in perceptions and attitudes that will influence their considerations for nursing as a career.
- There is a lack of diversity in the nursing workforce, amplifying the need to implement programs that intentionally reach underrepresented groups to diversify the nursing workforce.
- To succeed in encouraging young students to continue their pursuit into healthcare, it is crucial to also assist students in social networking, enhancing interpersonal, and test-taking skills and academic preparedness.
- Providing middle schoolers with face-to-face communication opportunities with healthcare professionals can provide the necessary framework for encouraging engagement that sparks interest in nursing.

### CONSIDERATIONS IN DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS

- Program design should be developed in partnership with nursing education, industry, middle schools, Area Health Education Centers, nursing professionals, and diverse community members.
- Program pilots should include rural communities as well as urban ones.
- Any program developed should focus on reaching diverse populations.

### NEXT STEPS-DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on recommendations and information in the Effective Outreach Strategies for Introducing Middle School Students to Careers in Nursing report, in 2022, WCN will convene a committee of stakeholders to review the report and create recommendations for a plan to educate middle school students about careers in nursing. The committee will include the WCN Diversity Advisory Committee and other nurses and partners in diversity, school nurses, public health nursing, nursing education programs, Area Health Education Centers, K-12, and additional industry partners.

WCN will submit a report to the DOH on the committee's outreach plan recommendations by December 31, 2022