

FACTORS IMPACTING WISCONSIN'S NURSING WORKFORCE SHORTAGE

The Wisconsin Nurses Association would like to increase legislators' awareness of the factors contributing to Wisconsin's nursing workforce shortage.

Registered Nurses are the largest number of health care providers in Wisconsin and are utilized in every health care related setting. Knowing the reasons for the departure of nurses is important to identifying solutions.

In May 2020, the Department of Workforce Development released the "Wisconsin Registered Nurse Supply and Demand Forecast Results Report." The report indicated that the supply of RNs will not keep up with demands and will impact health care delivery. The Wisconsin Center for Nursing released its 2020 RN Workforce Survey Report which indicated approximately 9 percent of RNs (or 8,100 of the over 90,000 licensed registered nurses in Wisconsin) providing direct care were planning to leave their positions in two years or less. The report also noted that by approximately 2030, Wisconsin will see 44 percent of RNs (approximately 36,000) providing direct care leaving their positions. Reasons given for leaving the bedside were need for "more or flexible" hours, improved health benefits, improved pay, and better work environment. (Source: Wisconsin Center for Nursing, wicenterfornursing.org).

WNA believes the number of nurses who have left the bedside 'in two years or less' has exceeded the reported 9 percent of nurses noted above. This is evidenced by the number of vacant positions, increased use of agency staff, closures of long-term care facilities and beds, patients waiting for beds in emergency rooms, and overcrowding in emergency departments. Through nurse-to-nurse interviews, surveys, and employer feedback, the following themes have emerged as reasons for the "mass resignation of nurses":

- Care demands exceed the physical capacities required to provide care.
- Pay discrepancies — travel nurse versus nurse employee pay.
- Lack of support for newly graduated nurses feel unsupported and are leaving.
- Lack of financial recognition for those nurses who provide care to COVID patients.
- Increased workplace violence.
- Gaps in supporting well-being.
- Concern regarding nurse-to-patient care assignments.

WNA feels that it is important to increase legislator awareness of the issues impacting nurse retention and recruitment for Wisconsin so that a broader and more meaningful conversation regarding possible policy remedies can take place.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WISCONSIN'S NURSE FACULTY SHORTAGE

Wisconsin will not have the RNs needed to meet the health care demands. To meet the demand for RNs, Wisconsin needs to increase the supply of nurse educators.

Request for 2023-2024 State Budget

ANEW and WNA are requesting the allocation of \$10 million, (\$5 million per year) in the 2023-2024 state budget to fund PhD, DNP, Master's in Nursing-Nurse Educator, Post-doctoral degree, post master's degree and loan repayment for new and continuing faculty. These budgeted dollars will support increasing the nurse educator workforce by an additional 250. This additional amount will help replace vacant positions and begin to expand the number of nursing faculty so the nursing programs can expand and increase the number of graduates to begin to help address the nurse workforce shortage.

Background

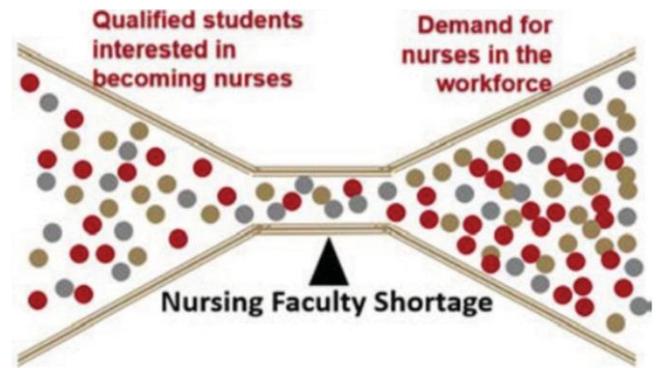
Registered nurses and licensed practical nurses comprise the largest group of Wisconsin's health care professional workforce. According to the report released by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, the demand for registered nurses is projected to continue growing through at least 2040.

Reason for the Demand

- By 2032 the population over 75 years old will grow by 75%; the population under 18 will grow by only 3.5%.

- Wisconsin's population older than 65 will double by 2030 and it is expected that the demand for health care services will increase by 30%.
- The average age of RNs in 2020 was 46.2 years, with approximately one third being 55 years and older. Thirty-eight percent of nurses indicated that they plan to stop providing direct patient care in 9 years or less. Data is pending to see if COVID impacted the decision of those RNs to leave the bedside earlier.
- The anticipated and unanticipated exit of nurses leaving the bedside is creating a greater need for more nursing graduates. The status of the supply of nursing faculty in 2020 depicts a mean age as 50.9 years. In addition, 32.6 percent indicated that they will remain in a nurse educator position for 5 years or less. Further data indicates that 55 percent plan to leave their current nursing educator employment in 9 years or less.

The image on the right depicts how the demands for RNs and the supply of individuals wanting to become a nurse is impacted by the lack of nurse faculty.



Challenges to retaining nurse educators.

- Compensation for a nurse educator position. (Wisconsin data shows that nurse educators with a master's degree in nursing earn twenty-five percent less than master's prepared nurse practitioners.)
- Managing the teaching loads and role expectations go beyond the classroom. It encompasses, skills labs and simulation, in-person clinicals at health care facilities, as well as scholarship, service, and maintaining practice and teaching competencies that support a well-educated nurse.

Barriers to recruiting RNs to become nurse educators.

- Cost of tuition and fees to obtain a graduate or post-graduate nursing degree.
- Family demands of both children and parents and other personal demands.
- Lost work time and benefits to complete a degree.

Solution

Continue allocation of state budget dollars of \$10 million, to financially support the individual nurse to obtain a graduate degree in nursing which will allow the nurse to teach in two year and four-year nursing programs in Wisconsin.

Background

The 2021-2022 Wisconsin's state budget allocated \$5 million to support nurses to complete a graduate level nursing degree for individuals wanting to be a nurse educator. The State of Wisconsin Higher Education and Aids Board (HEAB) is the agency responsible for the Nursing Education Loan Program. The program offers a 100 percent forgivable loan providing the recipient works three years as a nurse educator in any of Wisconsin's nursing schools. Loan amounts range from \$30,000 to \$50,000. The program was launched.

August 2022. This will support the addition of 130 new nurse educators. The response thus far has resulted in 42 awardees of a possible 130 and 19% of the funds committed as of September 27th.

References

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