The Role of Nursing Leadership in Ensuring Successful Academic Progression of Incumbent Nurses

Presented at the Annual Conference of the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers

Tina Lear, MHA & Carrie M. Oliveira, Ph.D.

June 23, 2020
Presentation Overview

• Academic progression update and NEPIN overview
• Incumbent SIG
• Data collection methods and findings
• Opportunities and challenges for innovation
2010 IOM/NAM Report

- Advancing education transformation
- Leveraging nursing leadership
- Removing barriers to practice and care
- Fostering interprofessional collaboration
- Promoting diversity
- Increasing workforce data
Academic Progression in Nursing (APIN)

- 9 States funded by RWJF
- Technical assistance provided nationally
- Outcomes
  - RNs with BSNs entering practice historical high
  - RN to BSN graduations increased 2 ½ times between 2010-2015
  - National % of RNs with BSN+ increased from 49% to 56% between 2010-2017
National Progress toward 80% BSN+

Campaign for Action, 2019
Progress toward 80%, 2010 vs. 2017
APIN Final Summary & Outcomes

- Partnerships
- Data
- Inconsistencies
- Regulations
- Financial Aid
NEPIN Expands on APIN’s Successes

• NEPIN’s Structure
  • National Program Director
  • Leadership Alliance
  • Advisory Alliance (SIGs)

• Goals for 2025
  • 1 million incumbent nurses
  • 90% of new ADN graduates to the BSN or higher
PURPOSE
Advance nurses to higher degrees.

MISSION
Foster collaboration to ensure that nurses have access to higher levels of education and achievement.

VISION
A nursing workforce that optimizes health equity for all Americans.
Incumbent RN Special Interest Group

Target: RNs already in the workforce whose highest education is an RN diploma or ADN.

Goal: Emphasize the contributions of incumbent nurses while making opportunities for educational advancement accessible.

Objectives:
- Identify environmental or personal barriers to progression.
- Equip nurse leaders with tactics to support progression.
Study: Focus Groups with Incumbent RNs

The Problem:
There is an ongoing challenge to achieve established benchmarks for BSN-educated nursing workforce.

The Project:
An exploratory, qualitative study of incumbent nurses.

The Goal:
Obtain in-depth understanding of the factors that impact incumbent RNs’ decision to pursue academic progression.
Why We Thought this Was Important

• We know that money is a factor.

• What else is there?

• We need tactical solutions to address non-financial problems.

This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA-NC
Sample groups and questions remained consistent across modes of data collection.
Who We Wanted to Talk To

- Completed a BSN+
- Currently Enrolled
- Considering but Not Committed to Enrolling
- Not Planning to Enroll

Different Groups = Different Insights

nepin
National Education Progression in Nursing
What We Wanted to Know

- Expectations
- Challenges
- Considerations
- Surprises

Enrollment Decision
Finding #1: Nurses Who Enroll Expect a Range of Professional and Personal Benefits

- Increased Knowledge
- Advanced Skills
- Professional Advancement
- Sense of Accomplishment
- Elevation of the Nursing Profession
- Ability to Affect Change
Finding #2: Time and Money Are Predominant Decision-Making Factors

**Time-Related Considerations**
- Full-time work + Full-time school
- Work-Life Balance
- Time Management Skills

**Financial Considerations**
- Overall Cost, Debt
- Financial Aid
- Expectation of Increased Pay
Finding #3: Barriers Aren’t All about Money

- **Academic**
  - Advising
  - Preceptors

- **Technological**
  - Computer Skills
  - Internet Access

- **Social Support**
  - At Work
  - At Home

- **Psycho-Emotional**
  - Transition from Expert to Student
  - Learning to be a Student
Finding #4: Some Surprises Were Pleasant, Others Definitely Were Not

Number of new opportunities
Ability to change other people’s mindset
Noticeable change to own thinking and process

Student debt burden
Financial return on investment was low
Lack of support for going on for MSN
Finding #5: Incentives Help and ROI Matters

- Tuition Support
- Flexible or Alternative Schedules
- Support with Choosing a Program, Financial Aid
- Better Career Counseling
- Pay Increases
How Nurse Leaders Can Support Progression

- Address Major Considerations
- Provide Informational Support & Advising
- Celebrate Achievements at Work
- Validate Experiential Expertise
- Focus ROI on Long-Term and Non-Financial Benefits
Next Steps for the SIG

- More data from nurses not planning to enroll
- Resources for nurses thinking of enrolling
- Recommendations for employers for how to support nurses who want to enroll
ABOUT THIS PROJECT
In its 2010 report, the IOM recommended that 80% of the nursing workforce be baccalaureate prepared by 2020. A highly educated workforce leads to quality patient care and better outcomes. This study identified the factors that influence working nurses’ decisions to pursue baccalaureate education in nursing.

Find this infographic online at https://nepincollaborative.org/incumbent-nurse-study-findings-infographic/
Keep in Touch

• NEPIN: https://nepincollaborative.org/

• Tina Lear, MHA
  • National Director, NEPIN
  • tina.lear@nepincollaborative.org

• Carrie M. Oliveira, Ph.D.
  • Associate Specialist for Workforce Research, Hawai‘i State Center for Nursing
  • carrieol@hawaii.edu