Advancing Academic Progression in Nursing Education: An Emerging Model is Identified and Refined

A select group of participants was invited by the Center to Champion Nursing in America (CCNA) on behalf of the Campaign for Action, to participate in an intense workshop on Jan. 21-23, 2015, in Houston, Texas. Representatives from all nine Academic Progression in Nursing (APIN) grantees were invited to attend the meeting, which had a set of ambitious objectives listed below.

By the end of this meeting participants were to have:
• Moved to the next level of strategic thinking and planning to accelerate advancement on academic progression goals through further development of an emerging model.
• Received assistance to scale and integrate individual projects into state-wide progress in education transformation projects by exploring a selected emerging model.
• Had exposure to exemplars focused on common issues, such as bachelor’s of science in nursing (BSN) Foundational Courses and data collection for evaluation.
• Clearly delineated strategies to increase diversity in student and faculty populations.

The emerging model, which was a major focus of discussion and refinement in the meeting, builds upon the shared curriculum/dual enrollment models that have been a focus of many of the APIN and state implementation projects (SIP) funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The difference in this emergent model is that there is no opt out after the completion of the associate degree in nursing (ADN) content to sit for the National Council Licensure Exam (NCLEX). At the conclusion of both the ADN and BSN course work, the student would then sit for the NCLEX. This is similar to the model being tested in New Mexico as part of their APIN grant. A review of the education models being tested in the APIN and SIP initiatives show that these models alone will not achieve the goal of 80 percent of the nursing workforce being educated at the baccalaureate or higher degree by 2020 put forth in the Institute of Medicine (IOM) report *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*. This emergent model also is being pilot tested in Minnesota and Kansas; representatives from both projects shared their progress with the attendees at the workshop. Excitement about this model is focused on how it builds on previous accomplishments, such as partnership and collaboration between ADN and BSN programs, and the use of the ideal BSN foundational courses (see the APIN column in the November 2014 issue of Voice of Nursing Leadership). The most exciting aspect is the potential increase in baccalaureate-prepared RNs that will help meet the 80 percent IOM recommendation and the ease of academic progression for the nursing student.

The key messages that arose from this meeting include:
• The call to action to meet the goals of the IOM *Future of Nursing* report.
• The future of the nursing profession depends on a higher educated workforce and there is an urgency to expedite BSN education, providing nurses a seat at the table through health care transformation.
• The RN licensure exam in this emerging model is taken after the BSN is awarded, respecting and valuing the progress we have made and building on the Foundational BSN Courses.
• Current programs and models will be in place while we explore this new model.
• Our current system is preparing nurses for the demands of yesterday and today, but we must prepare them for the future.
• It will be important for leaders in each state to contact their respective Board of Nursing to discuss Innovation and Education Model Rules.
• One option in this model is for both ADN and BSN to be awarded at the same time.
• Diversity can be the cornerstone of this emerging model, building on diverse student populations choosing community colleges as an entry point.
• This model makes sense to external audiences such as legislators and consumers.
• Students benefit from this affordable and accessible pathway leading directly to the BSN.
• When scaling up this model, important audiences are employers, students, health care systems, and consumers. The message to entities outside of nursing, such as health care systems and providers, are the hardest to craft.
• Health care is changing and the path is not defined, but we must take the lead and design nursing education for the future in all states, on all fronts, and for all systems.

The objectives and outcomes of this meeting, as well as continued recommendations for study and implementation, will be captured by CCNA and included in a concept paper that will be disseminated widely to increase input on refinement of this emergent model.

Academic Progression in Nursing (APIN) collaborates with state Action Coalitions and their partners to accelerate implementation of promising practices that will help states achieve our goals of seamless academic progression and increasing the number of nurses with a baccalaureate degree to 80 percent of the nursing workforce by 2020. Developing
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Innovative strategies with community colleges, universities and practice partners will ensure that the nursing workforce is prepared to deliver high quality patient care across all practice settings. APIN is a grant initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in partnership with the Tri-Council for Nursing and administered by the American Organization of Nurse Executives (AONE).

About the Author

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Managing Health Care Delivery at Harvard Business School

AONE is partnering with Harvard Business School for the 2015-2016 Managing Health Care Delivery (MHCD) program. This intensive learning experience is geared toward health care executives and deepens their understanding of organizational effectiveness. The strong international participation at MHCD offers a unique opportunity to understand health care and health care leadership through a global lens. Learn more at aone.org/hbs.

Certificate Program in Health Care Finance for Nurse Executives – Aug. 31-Sept. 1, Indianapolis

Nurse leaders will leave this two-day workshop with a better understanding of their organizations’ revenue cycles, how to work collaboratively with finance partners and up to 13.25 continuing nursing education contact hours. For more information, please visit www.aone.org/education.

Emerging Nurse Leader Institute – Sept. 9-11, Indianapolis

During the three-day interactive program, attendees will explore the basics of budgeting, quality and patient safety, conflict management and the tools necessary to make the transition to nursing leader. The ENLI program is intended for staff nurses, charge nurses and nurse coordinators looking to advance their careers. Visit the www.aone.org/enli and register today!

Attend AONE’s Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C.

AONE will host its first Advocacy Day June 3 in Washington, D.C. As Congress seeks to reauthorize Title VIII nursing workforce development programs, it is critical nurse leaders tell their legislators and congressional staff about the challenges facing their patients and local communities. Title VIII nursing workforce development programs provide needed scholarship and loan forgiveness programs that enable communities to retain health care providers. AONE Advocacy Day gives nurse leaders a united voice to tell Congress to fully fund nursing workforce development programs. Visit advocacy.aone.org for details about times, hotel accommodations and registration.