



## RECOMMENDATION #2

**Enhance the educational and career advancement of nurses through all stages of their careers, particularly those serving in practice environments experiencing persistent shortage (e.g., hospital, long-term care, underserved, and rural settings).**

Nurses need and want a continuum of professional development, or “a life-long process of active participation by nurses in learning activities that assist in developing and maintaining their continuing competence, enhancing their professional practice and supporting achievement of their career goals”.<sup>2</sup> As nurses progress through their career, they have different needs to support their professional practice along this continuum.

New nurses need intentional and comprehensive orientation to the culture and practices of their work environment as they begin their careers. Without adequate support during this transition period, new nurses experience high levels of stress and burnout that can lead to increased rates of attrition during their first year of employment. This impacts individual nurses, health care teams, employers, and ultimately the patients they are caring for.

Mid-career nurses may consider furthering their education or may be interested in transitioning to different practice environments or specialties. Allowing flexibility and providing supports for exploring these options shows respect for the unique strengths and goals of nurses as individuals and recognizes the value of the nursing perspective across all health care delivery settings.

In later stages of their careers, nurses have immense experience and wisdom. They can use this wealth of knowledge to help train, mentor, and lead new and mid-career nurses, health care teams, and organizations more broadly.

The Task Force on the Future of the Nursing Workforce recommends the following strategies to enhance the educational and career advancement of nurses through all stages of their careers:

**Strategy 6** – Strengthen transition to practice and early career development for nursing students and new graduates across all care delivery settings (Page 56)

**Strategy 7** – Identify opportunities for nurses to participate in educational advancement, leadership, mentoring, and preceptorship (Page 57)

**Strategy 8** – Strengthen opportunities and incentives for later-career nurses to participate in mentor and preceptor roles (Page 59)

***“Opportunities for career development have been recognized to resonate with nurses’ experience of a meaningful working life and to be one of the key factors in workforce retention. However, factors supporting career development, such as clear progression routes and advocacy by leadership, have often been found lacking.”***

-Kallio H, et al. Registered nurses’ perceptions of their career—An interview study. *J Nurs Manag.* 2022 Oct; 30(7): 3378–3385. doi: 10.1111/jonm.13796