

CHAPTER 2 - PREPARING FUTURE NURSES

Strategy 1

Expand early pathways to develop a nursing workforce that is representative of the population of North Carolina

Strategy 1.2 Employers of nurses should work with local public school units to develop nurse training Career and Technical Education programs in local high schools or increase capacity of existing programs.

Desired Result

More North Carolina high schoolers will be able to explore careers in nursing and complete preparatory programs prior to entering a post-secondary nursing degree program.

Why does the task force recommend this strategy?

Nurse education programs at the high school level provide an opportunity to introduce students to careers in nursing as they are thinking about their future careers and post-secondary education plans. These programs can connect students to local employers and help them gain credentials as Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs). Connections with employers and CNA credentials can be leveraged to explore opportunities for early employment and gain real-world experience in health care before or during enrollment in a nursing education program at the community college or university level.

Context

Local public school units (formerly called local education agencies) can offer a variety of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. The programs must follow the same rules as community colleges and proprietary schools offering similar courses of learning. CTE programs in health sciences must use a curriculum adapted from the North Carolina Division of Health Services Regulation. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) reviews high school programs yearly for adherence to standards. Funding for these programs is supported through federal Perkins Grants to the local level. Instructors for CTE programs must have a teaching license. This can present some challenges in recruiting teachers for CTE programs in nursing as the teaching licensure process can be lengthy and expensive.⁶

Over 2,000 North Carolina high school students earn their CNA credentials per year through CTE. To earn this credential, students complete the standard 40 hours of clinical experience and take the same exam as those from community college CNA programs.⁶

Employers interested in developing partnerships with local schools for CTE programs can contact the CTE Director or the CTE Advisory Board or Council of the local school system. According to state law, CTE Advisory Boards or Councils “serve local boards of education by identifying economic and workforce development trends related to the training and educational needs of the local community and advocating for strong, local career and technical education programs, including career pathway development that provides work-based learning opportunities for students and prepares students for post-secondary educational certifications and credentialing for high-demand careers.”⁷

In North Carolina, 2021-2022



547,176 secondary career and technical education (CTE) participants

39,058 (7%) were in health sciences with a **97%** Graduation Rate

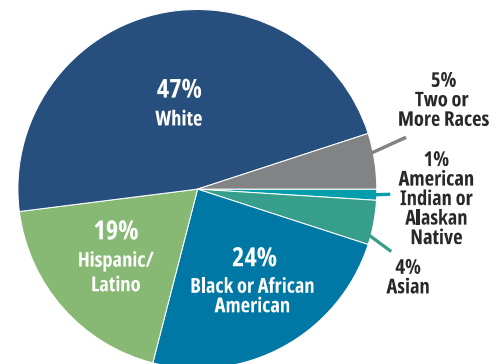
Students in North Carolina health sciences CTE in 2021-2022:

33% had economically disadvantaged families

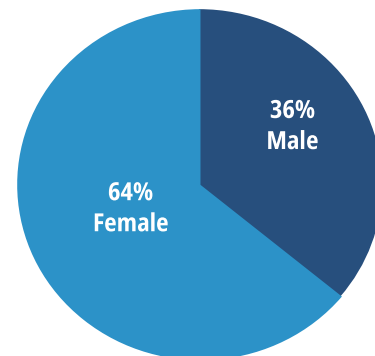
7% had a disability

5% were English learners

Race and Ethnicity



Gender



Source: Perkins Collaborative Resource Network. North Carolina State Enrollment Data. <https://cte.ed.gov/pcrn/profile/state/enrollment/2022/NC/participant/secondary/gender/allcareerclusters>



North Carolina Spotlight - Current and Developing Programs

Surry and Yadkin County Schools Partnership with Northern Regional Hospital A two-year grant from Strada Education Network's Employer and Community College Partnership Challenge is helping to develop health care career pathways for students in Surry and Yadkin County schools. A Healthcare Career Liaison and Health Science Student Success Advisor will work in middle and high schools to increase awareness of career pathways and provide classroom and laboratory instruction. "Northern Regional Hospital will provide clinical instruction and supervision for students during rotations, provide opportunities for internships and other professional development activities, and contribute to funding the liaison position after the grant period ends." Students at nine middle schools will have access to classroom presentations, field trips to Northern Regional Hospital and Surry Community College, a health care career camp, career fairs, and hands-on experiences through simulations. Students at 10 high schools will receive similar programming, as well as job shadowing experiences at the hospital.

Source: Surry Community College. Surry community college receives grant to strengthen employer partnership with Northern Regional Hospital and connect learners with opportunities. November 28, 2022. <https://surry.edu/news/surry-community-college-receives-grant-to-strengthen-employer-partnership-with-northern-regional-hospital-and-connect-learners-with-opportunities>

New Hanover Community Endowment

The New Hanover Community Endowment has provided a grant of over \$22 million to Cape Fear Community College, New Hanover County Schools, the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, and the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce. In part, the grant will help to develop a high school program for students interested in careers in health care. The funding will help to increase CTE enrollment in New Hanover schools by 40%. A key objective of this effort is to "significantly increase the number of students admitted into and graduating from nursing programs at Cape Fear Community College and the University of North Carolina Wilmington, with an emphasis on retaining graduates in the region."

Source: University of North Carolina Wilmington. UNCW receives grant funding for groundbreaking healthcare workforce partnerships. December 18, 2023. <https://uncw.edu/news/2023/12/uncw-receives-grant-for-groundbreaking-healthcare-workforce-partnerships>

Bloomberg Grant for Durham and Charlotte schools

Durham Public Schools and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools have been awarded grants by Bloomberg Philanthropies to develop programs that "offer students robust academic programming, specialized health care classes, work-based learning at the partner health system and the opportunity to earn industry-valued credentials and certifications...." As part of this initiative, all health system partners have committed to providing job opportunities for students who successfully complete the graduation requirements of their respective programs." In Durham, the partnership is between Duke Health, Durham Technical Community College, and Durham Public Schools, with the program opening at the Durham Technical Community College campus in fall 2025 for 100 ninth-grade students. Students will be able to graduate with "one or more credentials required to fill positions such as certified nursing assistant...."

Source: Bloomberg Philanthropies. Bloomberg Philanthropies launches first-of-its-kind innovative healthcare-focused high schools in 10 urban and rural communities across the country. January 17, 2024. <https://www.bloomberg.org/press/bloomberg-philanthropies-launches-first-of-its-kind-innovative-healthcare-focused-high-schools-in-10-urban-and-rural-communities-across-the-country/>; Hui TK. Durham and Charlotte get grants to create high schools focusing on healthcare jobs. News & Observer. January 17, 2024. <https://www.newsobserver.com/article284342429.html>

High School Program to Earn LPN Diploma

The North Carolina Board of Nursing (NCBON) is working with the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) to develop an LPN education program for high schoolers. The program will help high school students complete an LPN diploma and provide eligibility to begin working as an LPN after high school graduation. LPN curriculum approved by the NCBON for the NCCCS will be used for the program. One aim of the program is to give students with limited financial resources the ability to obtain an initial nursing license and create a pathway for LPNs to complete their RN degree while still working with the support of an employer. The program is under development and will be piloted in a rural county in the western region of North Carolina.

Source: Personal communication with NCBON Chief Executive Officer, Crystal Tillman. March 27, 2024.

KEY RESOURCE NEEDS



- The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) can provide training on development of health science education programs, possibly through the Health Talent Alliance, to help educate employers on opportunities for supporting the initiation of CTE programs. Additional resources could allow prioritization of schools that serve a diverse and/or rural student population.
- The North Carolina Division of Health Service Regulation can examine where it can offer flexibility in regulations or enforcement to enable more nursing education partnerships in nursing facilities. Some nursing facilities lose the ability to be clinical sites due to enforcement actions, even if the enforcement concern is not related to clinical care.



- Trade associations for employers of nurses should help raise awareness of these types of programs among members.
- DPI and school districts with CTE programs in health science education should identify opportunities to raise awareness of these programs among high school teachers, administrators, counselors, and families.