



Strategy 2

Increase nursing program collaboration, sharing of best practices, and connections with employers

Strategy 2.1 The Center on the Workforce for Health should convene a collaborative of North Carolina community college and university nursing programs to share academic best practices in addressing issues such as nurse faculty and student needs, pathway program support, and partnerships with local employers of nurses.

Strategy 2.2 University and community college nursing programs should commit to actively participating in the collaborative recommended in Strategy 2.1 with the goal of learning and sharing best practices and lessons learned to support nursing student success.

Desired Result

North Carolina's nursing education programs will be meaningfully connected, allowing them to share lessons learned from successes and challenges in implementing strategies, programs, and partnerships intended to improve the educational environment and student experience.

Why does the task force recommend this strategy?

Different nursing education programs are often tackling similar challenges. There is not a dedicated convening for community college and university programs to share what they have learned from their efforts to implement strategies, programs, and partnerships to address topics such as faculty shortages, admissions, partnerships with employers, and economic or academic supports for students. A dedicated convener could help programs share what is working for them and learn about solutions that are working for others. This can help to address the cycle of "reinventing the wheel" that can occur as siloed groups work to address similar problems.

Context

North Carolina has 147 pre-licensure nursing education programs, including 37 Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs, 61 Associate Degree in Nursing/Associate of Science Degree in Nursing (ADN/ASN) programs, and 49 Practical Nursing (PN) programs.¹³ These programs are working to meet the challenges of nursing faculty shortages, creating more inclusive educational environments, supporting the needs of students to improve graduation rates, and developing partnerships with employers and other community partners.

Existing Collaborations and Resources to Build From Center on the Workforce for Health

The NC Center on the Workforce for Health is a new collaborative effort by NC AHEC, NCIOM, and the Sheps Center Program on Health Workforce Research and Policy. It aims to provide a forum for health employers, workers, educators, regulators, policymakers, and others throughout North Carolina to convene around health workforce issues, discuss challenges and opportunities, share best practices and lessons learned, identify potential solutions and metrics for success, and monitor progress toward addressing these challenges. Although the Center is still under development, nursing workforce has been identified as a priority area of study and action.

North Carolina Council of Higher Education in Nursing

The North Carolina Council of Higher Education in Nursing (NCCHEN) is a group of in-state universities and colleges with nursing programs. It seeks to improve the nursing profession by "advancing the quality of baccalaureate and graduate programs in nursing."¹⁴ Representatives from participating programs meet a few times a year.

"We have a special responsibility because we're putting out the future nurses, and frankly we have all the same challenges. It really doesn't matter how big your program is or how small it is, the challenges are very, very similar."

- Dr. Marion Broome, former dean of Duke University's School of Nursing, 2019 NCCHEN spring meeting <https://www.uncg.edu/featured/coffee-and-collaboration-and-nursing-deans-throughout-the-region/>

North Carolina Associate Degree Nursing Council

The North Carolina Associate Degree Nursing Council "was formed to promote professionalism, education, and innovation in the field of health education practitioners in North Carolina."¹⁵ It advocates for associate degree nursing education and practice by facilitating recruitment of nursing faculty, developing partnerships, and collaborating with organizations to meet community needs, among other efforts.

North Carolina Nurses Association - Nursing Education and Professional Development Council

The Nursing Education and Professional Development Council is a group within the North Carolina Nurses Association (NCNA) that is meant to "support both academic nursing educators and nursing professional development (NPD) practitioners.... and allow[s] nursing academicians and NPD practitioners to come together to learn more about each other's roles, help come up with creative solutions to the issues faced in nursing academia and in healthcare systems, and reinforce/reinvent efforts to best prepare nurses (new graduates and advanced practice nurses) for their roles at the bedside."¹⁶

CHAPTER 2 - PREPARING FUTURE NURSES

North Carolina Board of Nursing

The North Carolina Board of Nursing (NCBON) can play a role in facilitating conversations with nursing education programs and/or showcasing exemplars in best practice through their Annual Education Summit. The summit has featured presentations on some of the topics noted in this strategy (e.g., academic-practice partnerships, student nurses and the Americans with Disabilities Act, and best practices in assessing clinical competency). The NCBON intends to continue to provide offerings that speak to the needs of relevant parties including information around holistic admissions, open education resources, and academic progression models (e.g., Regionally Increasing Baccalaureate Nurses (RIBN) programs).¹³

Collaborative Activities

The NCIOM Task Force on the Future of the Nursing Workforce considered many potential activities for the collaborative, including:

- Sharing best practices, such as implementation of success coaches to support students, supporting retired nurses in delivering skills-based education or tutoring, bolstering existing student support centers and programs, and launching peer-to-peer support programming.
- Identifying opportunities to streamline application processes across multiple schools of nursing.
- Identifying opportunities to strengthen and further disseminate pathway programs and educational progression programs to ensure availability throughout the state.
- Housing or supporting a clearinghouse of grant and other funding opportunities.
- Engaging in discussions with employers to learn about challenges for new graduates they hire and opportunities to improve preparation for the practice environment.
- Maintaining connections with statewide efforts to address nursing workforce needs through educational initiatives (e.g., Caregiving Workforce Strategic Leadership Council).

Collaboratives In Other States

Indiana – The Council of Indiana Nursing Deans and Directors is a leadership group of nursing school deans and Chief Nursing Officers. Coordinated by Indiana Center for Nursing, this group collaborates on initiatives, policy, and legislative action related to nursing in Indiana. The council meets at least twice a year and seeks to promote “excellence in Indiana nursing education, and safety and quality of patient care by:

- increasing nursing education’s responsiveness to the health and healthcare needs of Indiana citizens
- sharing and promoting best practices in nursing education
- providing a forum for collaboration and meaningful discussion about nursing education.”

Source: Indiana Center for Nursing, Education—Council of Indiana Nursing Deans and Directors (CINDD). <https://ic4n.org/strategic-initiatives/council-of-indiana-nursing-deans-and-directors/>

Colorado – The Colorado Center for Nursing Excellence convenes the Alliance for Clinical Education, a collaborative of representatives from health care organizations, educational institutions, and regulatory agencies in the state. The group “meets quarterly as a forum to share ideas, information and make recommendations surrounding best practices, community standards, and regulatory compliance, in an effort to provide optimum clinical student learning experiences.”

Source: Colorado Center for Nursing Excellence, Alliance for Clinical Education (ACE). <https://www.coloradonursingcenter.org/alliance-for-clinical-education/>

KEY RESOURCE NEEDS



The North Carolina General Assembly, health care philanthropies, and major employers of nurses can identify funding resources to support and sustain the administrative needs of the group recommended in this strategy.