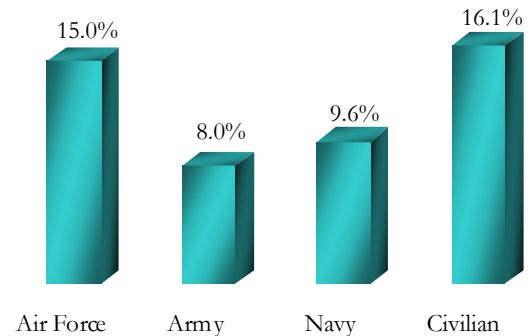


First noted in 1998, our nation continues to face a nursing shortage unprecedented in its depth and duration. Unfortunately, the shortage is expected to worsen in the coming years. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that more than 1.2 million new and replacement Registered Nurses (RNs) will be needed by 2014.

Yet, the nursing shortage is not only affecting civilian healthcare facilities. The ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have made the need for qualified nurses in military healthcare facilities more crucial. Much like the civilian sector, the military is also facing difficulties in recruiting and retaining nurses. Neither the Army nor the Air Force has met its active service nurse recruitment goals since the 1990s. In 2006, the Air Force, Army, and Navy experienced overall nurse vacancy rates of 15 percent, 8 percent, and 9.6 percent respectively. In order to address the current shortage, all branches of the military are offering incentives that encourage RNs to join the Armed Services. However, the ability to increase the supply of nurses in both the civilian and military sector has been inhibited by the inability to increase student capacity in nursing schools.

At a time when there is such a tremendous need for RNs, schools of nursing are forced to turn away thousands of qualified applicants each year. According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's 2007-2008 annual survey, U.S. nursing schools turned away 40,285 qualified applicants from baccalaureate and graduate programs in 2007. The number one reason cited for not accepting all qualified applicants was faculty shortages.

**Vacancy Rates for Armed Services  
and Civilian Nurses**



Armed Services Nurse Vacancy Rate: Electronic Mail  
Communications from the Branches of the Armed Services  
Civilian Nurse Vacancy Rate: Bernard Hodes Group, 2005

## **The Troops to Nurse Teachers Act of 2008**

The TNT Act of 2008 (S. 2705 and H.R. 5878) offers one solution to address this shortage. Modeled after the successful 1994 Department of Defense (DOD) program called Troops to Teachers, the goal of the four-pronged program is to increase the number of nurse faculty members so schools of nursing may expand enrollments and alleviate the ongoing shortage.

### **Fellowship Program**

- **Option 1:** Commissioned officers with a graduate degree in nursing, serving as a nurse officer in a branch of the Armed Forces would be permitted to serve a two-year tour of duty as a full-time faculty member at an accredited school of nursing. In exchange for this non-salaried instructor, the school agrees to provide ROTC type scholarships for nursing students who will complete a degree in nursing.
- **Option 2:** Commissioned officers with a graduate degree in nursing, serving as a nurse officer in a branch of the Armed Forces would be permitted to serve a two-year tour of duty as a full-time faculty member at an accredited school of nursing. In exchange for this tour of duty, the nurse will pledge to serve an additional four years in the military.

### **Scholarship Program**

- Commissioned officers who have served at least 20 years of active duty as a nurse and are eligible for retirement would be qualified for a scholarship to attend an accredited school of nursing with the intent of becoming nurse faculty members. These individuals would undertake activities deemed appropriate by the Secretary of Defense to encourage current and prospective nurses to pursue a career in the Nurse Corps.

### **Transitional Assistance Program**

- Commissioned officers of the Nurse Corps who have served at least 20 years and who are already qualified to teach, would be provided assistance to expedite their transition into faculty positions. This includes career placement assistance, transitional stipends, and continuing education.

## Retired Nurse Officer Program

- Retired Nurse Corps officers appointed as a full-time faculty at an accredited school of nursing would receive: their full retired pay, a salary commensurate with that received by similarly situated faculty members at the same college or university, and a stipend from their service department at DOD equal to the difference between their faculty salary and what they would receive as pay if they were on active duty.

## TNT Support

The TNT program has been supported by the Nurse Corps from the Air Force, Army, and Navy, as well as the Secretary of Defense. The following nursing and health care organizations are also supporters of the program:

American Academy of Nurse Practitioners	Infusion Nurses Society
American Academy of Nursing	National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
American Association of Colleges of Nursing	National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
American Association of Critical-Care Nurses	National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists	National Black Nurses Association
American Association of Occupational Health Nurses	National Conference of Gerontological Nurse Practitioners
American College of Nurse Practitioners	National Council of State Boards of Nursing
American Nephrology Nurses' Association	National Gerontological Nursing Association
American Nurses Association	National League for Nursing
American Organization of Nurse Executives	National Nursing Centers Consortium
American Radiological Nurses Association	National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses	Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses	Oncology Nursing Society
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses	Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates
Association of State and Territorial Directors of Nursing	The Public Health Nursing Section of the American Public Health Association
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses	Wound Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society
Dermatology Nurses' Association	
Emergency Nurses Association	

Senator Durbin introduced the TNT Act on March 5, 2008 for himself, Senators James Inhofe (R-OK), Barack Obama (D-IL), Joseph Lieberman (I-CT), Joseph Biden (D-DE), Jack Reed (D-RI) Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Susan Collins (R-ME), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Elizabeth Dole (R-NC), and Daniel Inouye (D-HI). Since then Senators Hillary Clinton (D-NY), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Evan Bayh (D-IN), Claire McCaskill (D-MO), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) have become cosponsors. On April 23, 2008, House Nursing Caucus Chairs, Representatives Lois Capps, RN (D-CA) and Steven LaTourette (R-OH) introduced the bill. Current House cosponsors include Representatives Henry Waxman (D-CA), Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), Charles Rangel (D-NY), Michael Castle (R-DE), and Tom Latham (R-IA).

## TNT Legislative History

On June 15, 2006, Senator's Durbin's original TNT amendment passed the Senate by a voice vote. The Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee provided \$500,000 for the TNT Program on August 3, 2006.

On September 17, 2007, the TNT program was included in the Senate 2008 DOD Authorization bill as part of the Manager's Package. The Senate provided \$3 million for the TNT amendment, which passed by voice vote and was included in the FY 2008 Senate Defense Appropriations bill on October 3, 2007.

On October 10, 2007, House Nursing Caucus co-chairs, Representatives Lois Capps (D-CA) and Steve LaTourette (R-OH), sent a "Dear Colleague" letter to House Armed Service Committee Chairman Ike Skelton (D-MO) and Ranking Member Duncan Hunter (R-CA) emphasizing their support of the TNT program and the need to include the language in the final FY 2008 DOD Authorization bill. However, since 2006, the TNT program has not remained in the final DOD Authorization bills despite the strong support from the Senate, nursing champions in the House, the nursing community, and the Military Nurse Corps.

For more information, contact the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, One Dupont Circle, Suite 530, Washington, DC 20036

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