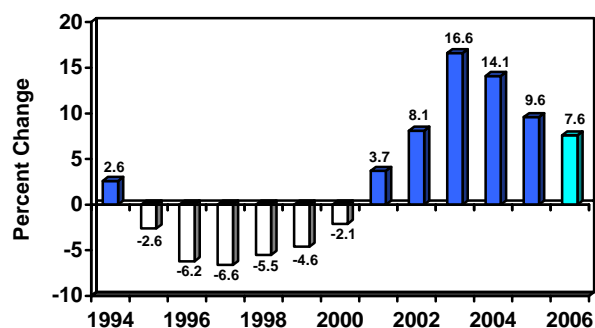


Past Efforts to Resolve the Nursing Shortage

First noted in 1998, our nation continues to face a nursing shortage unprecedented in its depth and duration. Unfortunately, it is expected to worsen in the coming years. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that more than 1.2 million new and replacement nurses will be needed by 2014. In addition, the American Hospital Association (AHA) reported in April 2006 that U.S. hospitals need approximately 118,000 Registered Nurses (RNs) to fill vacant positions nationwide. This is just 2,000 fewer vacant RN positions than AHA reported in 2001. Over the past few years, the federal government has intervened by increasing funding and programmatic authority for the Nursing Workforce Development programs under Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 296 et seq.). These programs and additional funds have helped expand the nursing education pipeline; but it is just not enough.

Data on Enrollments and Graduations

Despite increasing graduations by 18% from 2005 to 2006 in entry-level baccalaureate nursing programs; this is far from the April 2006 Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) projection that nursing schools must increase the number of graduates by 90% in order to adequately address the nursing shortage. Yet, even with these documented increases in enrollments and graduations, schools of nursing still turned away 42,866 qualified applications to baccalaureate and graduate programs in 2006.



Percent Change in Enrollments in Entry-Level Baccalaureate Nursing Programs: 1994-2006

Over the last nine years, the bottleneck in the nursing shortage has become more apparent as constraints in nursing education programs have intensified. Stakeholders have expanded their strategies to include not only federal efforts, but also state initiatives, and public-private partnerships. Though well-intentioned, these past approaches have not provided an adequately funded long-term vision to expand the nursing workforce. Our nation must start this process by addressing the *nurse faculty shortage*.

Understanding the Nurse Faculty Shortage

According to AACN's report on *2006-2007 Enrollment and Graduations*, U.S. nursing schools turned away thousands of qualified applicants due to an insufficient number of faculty, clinical sites, classroom space, clinical preceptors, and budget constraints. Almost three quarters (71%) of the nursing schools responding to the survey pointed to faculty shortages as a reason for not accepting all qualified applicants into nursing programs. A *Special Survey on Vacant Faculty Positions* released by AACN in July 2006, reported a total of 637 faculty vacancies (8% vacancy rate) were identified at 329 nursing schools with baccalaureate and/or graduate programs across the country (almost 2 vacancies at each school of nursing). A number of contributing factors cited below are at the root of the problem.

Faculty Age

Faculty age continues to climb, narrowing the number of productive years nurse educators can teach. AACN's report on *2006-2007 Salaries of Instructional and Administrative Nursing Faculty*, the average ages of doctorally-prepared nurse faculty holding the ranks of professor, associate professor, and assistant professor were 58.6, 55.8, and 51.6 years, respectively. For master's degree-prepared nurse faculty, the average ages for professors, associate professors, and assistant professors were 56.5, 54.8, and 50.1 years, respectively.

Faculty Retirement

A wave of faculty retirements is expected across the U.S. over the next decade. Based on a study published in the March/April 2002 issue of *Nursing Outlook* titled *The Shortage of Doctorally Prepared Nursing Faculty: A Dire Situation*, the average age of nurse faculty at retirement is 62.5 years. With the average age of doctorally-prepared

faculty currently 55 years, a wave of retirements is expected within the next ten years. In fact, the authors project that between 200 and 300 doctorally-prepared faculty will be eligible for retirement each year from 2003 through 2012, and between 220-280 master's- prepared nurse faculty will be eligible for retirement between 2012 and 2018.

Faculty Compensation

Higher compensation in clinical and private-sector settings is luring current and potential nurse educators away from teaching. According to the 2006 salary survey by *The Nurse Practitioner*, the average salary of a master's prepared nurse practitioner is \$72,480. By contrast, AACN recently reported that master's prepared faculty earned an annual average salary of \$63,880.

Pool of Potential Educators

Master's and doctoral programs in nursing are not producing a large enough pool of potential nurse educators to meet the demand. AACN reveals that in 2006 graduations from doctoral nursing programs were up by only 1.4% from the 2005-2006 academic year. Further, an AACN study on employment plans found that almost a quarter of all graduates from doctoral nursing programs do not plan to work in academic settings.

Providing Solutions: A Focus on Nurse Faculty

A number of federal initiatives are currently being undertaken to support the nursing and nurse faculty shortage. These specific efforts offer a practical solution to increasing the number of nurse faculty and in turn, increase the pool of RNs.

Increase FY 2008 Appropriations for Nursing Education and Workforce Programs to \$200 million. Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs provide the largest source of federal funding for nursing education. In FY 2005, Nursing Workforce Development programs provided loan, scholarship, and programmatic support to 52,759 student nurses and nurses. These programs are essential in not only educating nurses, but more critically in funding the education of additional nurse faculty. In FY 2008, emphasize increasing funding for graduate education through the Advanced Education Nursing Grants (Sec. 811) and bolstering funds for the Nurse Faculty Loan Program (Sec. 846A).

Support the Nursing Education, Expansion, and Development (NEED) Act of 2007. (H.R. 772 and S. 446). The NEED Act, introduced by Reps. Nita Lowey (D-NY), Peter King (R-NY), and Lois Capps, RN (D-CA) and Sens. Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) would provide capitation or formula grants based on enrollment in schools of nursing. Funds may be used for hiring or retaining current faculty, purchasing educational equipment, enhancing clinical laboratories, repairing and expanding infrastructure, and recruiting students.

Designate nursing for the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) program in the Higher Education Act. In FY 2006, nursing was recognized as an "area of national need" under the GAANN program authorized by the *Higher Education Act (HEA)*. This program provides fellowships in areas of national need to assist graduate students with excellent academic records who demonstrate financial need and plan to pursue the highest degree available in their course of study.

Support a Troops to Nurse Teachers Initiative. Sen. Durbin (D-IL) championed an amendment that was adopted as part of the FY 2007 Senate Defense Authorization Act (S. 2766) that would establish a "Troops to Nurse Teachers (TNT) Pilot Program" to offer incentives to registered nurses who have separated from the military to become nurse educators. While the TNT Program was dropped from the final conference agreement on the FY 2007 Defense Authorization bill (H.R. 5631), Sen. Durbin remains committed to advancing a similar initiative in 2007.

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