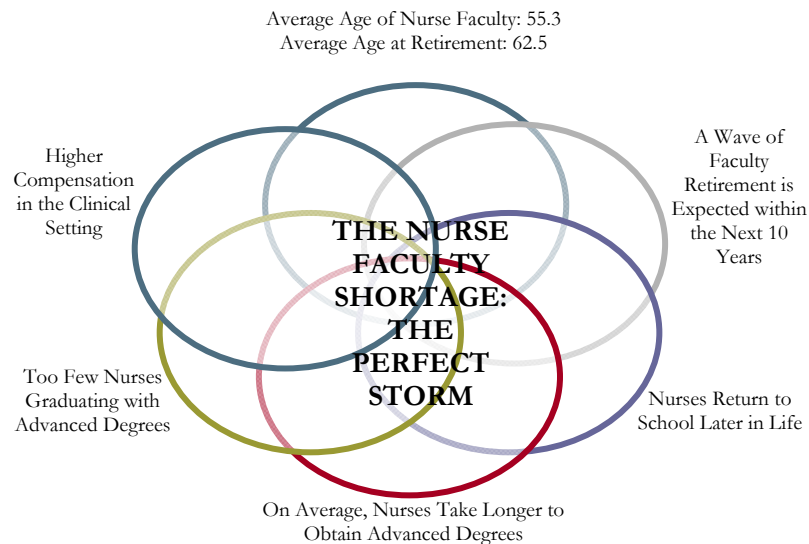


First noted in 1998, our nation continues to face a nursing shortage unprecedented in its depth and duration. Unfortunately, the shortage is expected to worsen in the coming years. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that more than one million new and replacement nurses will be needed by 2016.

One of the most acute aspects of the nursing shortage is the shortage of qualified nursing faculty. At a time when there is a tremendous need for registered nurses (RNs), schools of nursing are forced to turn away thousands of qualified applicants annually. According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's (AACN) latest annual survey, U.S. nursing schools turned away 49,948 qualified applicants from baccalaureate and graduate programs in 2008. The number one reason cited for not accepting all qualified applicants was faculty shortages. Without an adequate supply of faculty for our nation's nursing schools, it will be impossible to increase the supply of RNs.

As the faculty workforce ages, many of our present nurse educators will soon retire. Meanwhile, nurses cite several financial barriers preventing them from pursuing the advanced levels of education required to be a nurse educator. Graduate education is costly and faculty salaries are at least 15% lower than those in professional practice.



Prepared by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2009

The Nurses' Higher Education and Loan Repayment (HEAL) Act

The Nurses' HEAL Act (H.R. 1460) offers one solution to address the faculty shortage. By amending Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act, the legislation would provide current students and graduates of nursing master's and doctoral programs with reimbursement for student loans. If selected to participate in this program, these nurses would be required to teach for four years in an accredited school of nursing. Additionally, the program would fully reimburse the educational loans of nurses who are pursuing or have completed a doctoral degree. The greatest demand for nurse faculty is for those nurses who are doctorally prepared.

Student Benefit

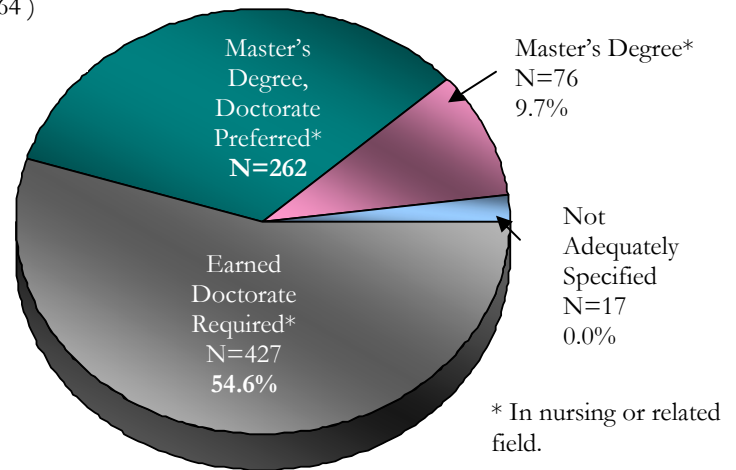
Students would benefit from the financial support, which would allow them to pursue higher degrees of education full-time. For those nurses seeking a doctoral degree, the up to \$80,000 in loan reimbursement will offset the considerable cost of education. According to AACN, the average nursing student carries a loan debt \$30,375 from baccalaureate studies alone. Students with a master's in nursing report an average debt load of \$44,393 from their graduate studies. The student debt average for nurses with both undergraduate and graduate degrees is \$64,077.

Nursing School Benefit

The four-year commitment to teaching will benefit our nation's schools of nursing as well by guaranteeing these nurses teach for an extended period of time. Because the Nurses' HEAL Act reimburses students who have already completed their master's or doctoral degree, the program could quickly aid in filling some of the estimated 814 faculty vacancies at schools of nursing offering baccalaureate and advanced degrees reported in the AACN annual survey. Moreover, the bill would provide full reimbursement for doctoral students. According to AACN's 2008 Faculty Survey, 54.6% of vacant faculty positions require a doctoral degree.

Degree Requirements for Vacant Faculty Positions for Academic Year 2008-2009

Degree Requirements
(Valid N=764)



National Support for the Nurses' HEAL Act

The Nurses' Higher Education and Loan Repayment program has been supported by the following organizations:

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| American Academy of Nursing | National Association of Neonatal Nurses |
| 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 Coalition of Ethnic Minority Nurse Associations |
| American College of Nurse Practitioners | National Council of State Boards of Nursing |
| American Nurses Association | National Nursing Centers Consortium |
| American Organization of Nurse Executives | National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties |
| American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses | National Student Nurses' Association, Inc. |
| Association of Community Health Nursing Educators | Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs |
| Association of State & Territorial Directors of Nursing | Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association |
| Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses | Quad Council of Public Health Nursing Organizations |
| Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association | Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates |
| Infusion Nurses Society | Visiting Nurse Associations of America |
| National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists | Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society |
| National Association of Hispanic Nurses | |
| National Association of Neonatal Nurse Practitioners | |

Legislative History for the Nurses' HEAL Act

On March 12, 2009, Representative Tom Latham (R-IA) and Representatives Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) introduced H.R. 1460. To date, the bill has bi-partisan support and is co-sponsored by 26 Representatives.

On May 12, 2009, Senator Evan Byah (D-IN) and Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) introduced the Nurses' HEAL Act (S. 1022). The bill is co-sponsored by Senators Mark Begich (D-AK), Roland Burris (D-IL), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Daniel Inouye (D-HI), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Carl Levin (D-MI), Joseph Lieberman (I-CT), Benjamin Nelson (D-NE), Mark Warner (D-VA), and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI).

Recommendation: AACN recommends the 111th Congress pass the Nurses' HEAL Act.

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Updated June 2, 2009