

Arizona Governor's Task Force on the Nursing Shortage  
Statewide Strategic Plan for Nursing in the State of Arizona

2004

Acknowledgements

Members of the professional nursing community and key stakeholders who served as members of the Governor's Task Force on the Nursing Shortage prepared this report. Dan Anderson of the Arizona Board of Regents provided data on the economic impact of Arizona's healthcare industry.

Introduction

The state of Arizona is facing a shortage of registered nurses (RNs) that is reaching a crisis of critical proportion. In 2001, in recognition of this crisis, Governor Hull appointed the Governor's Task Force on the Nursing Shortage. Now, under the leadership and administration of Governor Janet Napolitano, the Task Force has been charged with the development of a statewide strategic plan targeting the multiple and complex factors involved with the shortage of RNs.

Background

Since the turn of the century, the country and state have experienced repetitive and cyclical nursing workforce shortages. The conventional wisdom was that these supply and demand swings were an inevitable part of the dynamic system of healthcare delivery in America. However, today's nursing crisis is fundamentally different from past shortages. The coupling of fewer people entering the profession along with increasing demand related to statewide population growth, a disproportionate increase in the elderly population, and medical and technological advances, has created an unprecedented and persistent shortage.

Although national in scope the shortage is particularly problematic in Arizona. In acute care settings in the United States the average number of RNs is 3.3 for every 1,000 people. In Arizona the ratio is 1.9 RNs per 1,000 people. Nationwide there are 782 RNs per 100,000 people; in Arizona there are only 628 RNs per 100,000 people. In the United States between 1996 and 2000 there was a 2% decline in the ratio of RNs to the population; in Arizona there was a 12.9% decline.

At the same time, the growth of the healthcare industry has been unprecedented. Since the 1990's, healthcare employment has grown 20% faster than total Arizona jobs. Furthermore, the healthcare industry is responsible for 8.6% of jobs in Arizona and 10% of wages. Investment in ensuring a stable and responsive healthcare infrastructure not only serves the healthcare needs of Arizona citizens, but also contributes to the strength

of the economy. For every dollar invested in the industry about 2.2 total dollars are added to the local economy

### Vision for Nursing in Arizona

The health and well being of residents of Arizona will be supported and enhanced through the provision of accessible, high quality care and services by the nursing profession.

### Mission of the Governor's Task Force on the Nursing Shortage

The mission of the Governor's Task Force on the Nursing Shortage is to ensure that the State of Arizona has the nursing resources necessary to meet the healthcare needs of its citizens. The Governor's Nursing Shortage Task Force shall develop a statewide strategic plan to address the nursing shortage in Arizona for both the short and long term. To achieve this end, the Governor's Task Force on the Nursing Shortage will facilitate comprehensive planning and policy development to strengthen the nursing workforce in Arizona, as well as identify potential funding for strategic initiatives. In addition, the Task Force will study and make recommendations on new and emerging issues upon the request of Task Force members.

### Strategic Themes

The work of the Governor's Task Force on the Nursing Shortage was organized around four strategic themes that categorize the factors that contribute to the nursing shortage and recommendations to counter those factors. The factors are:

- Attracting People to the Profession
- Educating More Nurses
- Improving the Work Environment
- Removing Regulatory Barriers

*Attracting people to the profession* focuses on limited public knowledge about the profession of nursing and what nurses do to enhance people's lives related to wellness, renewed health, or the inevitability of dying. *Educating more nurses* focuses on the need to expand the capacity of programs of nursing education in the state, and programs of higher education leading to more advanced practice nurses and nurse educators. *Improving the work environment* focuses on issues in settings where nurses practice that contribute to satisfaction, the desire to continue to practice and the quality of patient care. *Removing regulatory barriers* focuses on examining any statute or rule that currently prevents nurses from proficiently providing high quality care and services to the residents of Arizona.

### Concurrent Efforts

A number of concurrent efforts have been undertaken while the taskforce has been in progress (Table 1). Funding, assistance, and collaboration by hospitals, foundations, and professional associations have been organized through the leadership and direction of the

Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association (AzHHA) in creating and implementing the “Campaign for Caring”, a statewide initiative aimed at increasing interest in healthcare professions, supporting an increased capacity in the state’s nursing education programs, and addressing problems related to healthcare workplaces.

Universities and community colleges have responded to the shortage by creatively enhancing the capacities of their programs. Extended course hours into evenings and weekends have maximized availability of teaching space and clinical rotations. New programs, including second career programs, school and hospital partnerships, and on-line courses have accommodated more learners.

The Arizona Legislature in 2002 passed Senate Bill 1260 charging the “Arizona board of regents and the president or chancellor of each community college district or their designee and one member of the state board of directors for community colleges appointed by the chairman, in conjunction with private educational institutions that provide nursing education programs, hospitals and private hospitals and healthcare organizations, shall develop a caregiver and resource expansion program. The caregiver and resource expansion program shall be a five-year plan to increase the number of nurses who enter and graduate from nursing education programs in this state.” The bill also provides more specific direction regarding the development of a plan to double the capacity of Arizona’s registered nursing education programs by 2007.

Healthcare organizations that employ nurses have initiated plans to create work environments that facilitate the work of nursing. Many have implemented programs to financially support faculty and programs to educate more nurses, and nearly all have enhanced scholarship and loan programs.

The Arizona Nurses Association (AzNA) has provided leadership and direction by educating nursing employers on the characteristics of environments that are attractive and supportive to nurses. In addition, a program was initiated by AzNA to enhance leadership skills of nursing supervisors in partnership with the University of Arizona Colleges of Business and Nursing. AzNA spearheaded legislation in 2003 concerning reporting of patient safety issues. The passage of Senate Bill 1178 established reporting policies and procedures prohibiting retaliation against health professionals working at health care institutions when they in good faith report any unsafe practices or violation of law that put patients’ health or safety at risk. In addition, AzNA worked with the Arizona Organization of Nurse Executives (AzONE) on a project that would eliminate the use of mandatory overtime by hospitals within the state.

Regulatory initiatives by the 2004 Arizona Legislature included the passage of House Bill 2256, which provides for piloting a study of medication technicians passing medications to custodial patients in long-term care facilities. The adoption of rules by the Arizona State Board of Nursing (ASBN) related to the multistate compact for nurse licensure and the application process for foreign-educated nurses. These new rules have ensured that nurses moving into the state meet educational and competency standards. The Department The Department of Health Services (DHS) has proposed rules which will

strengthen nurse staffing requirements, including an acuity plan that is reviewed and evaluated annually, with results reported to the governing authority. In addition, the DHS is proposing the acuity plan include an assessment of a patient's need for nursing services be made by a registered nurse who is providing nursing services directly to that patient.

The Task Force acknowledges that these many efforts have not been sufficient to address the shortage of nurses in Arizona. As evidence mounts demonstrating that nurses are critical in ensuring patients receive quality health care, the need to address the nursing shortage in Arizona becomes even more critical. Unfortunately, there is no easy or simple solution.

The Task Force acknowledges reasons for this shortage are multiple and complex and must be addressed in a comprehensive manner through public and private partnerships. Since much time, funding and energy has been directed to this shortage, the Task Force has identified key priorities as well as gaps in current initiatives, and focuses this strategic plan on those areas needing current and future attention.

Strategic Theme	Activity	Status
Attracting People to the Profession	Campaign for Caring	Waiting lists for programs
Educating More Nurses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Universities and Community Colleges increasing capacity.</li> <li>2. Nursing Education Program and Expansion Plan (plan to double enrollment by 2007).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student admissions are near or exceed capacity each year. Enrollment in nursing programs (RN &amp; PN) increased 26% from 2001-2003. Capacity also increased at universities and community colleges. See Board of Nursing Website. Consider adding chart from AZBN</li> <li>2. Estimated cost to double capacity is \$125 million; \$14 million has been identified.</li> <li>3. New programs entering the market using new educational approaches.</li> <li>4. Legislation introduced to allow Community Colleges to prepare nurses at the baccalaureate level.</li> <li>5. Changing community demand for advanced practice nurses including NPs as intensivists and CNSs.</li> </ol>

Improving the Work Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “Magnet” Work Environment.</li> <li>2. Staffing.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One hospital in Arizona Magnet Credentialed. Seven more are in development.</li> <li>2. Eliminating mandatory overtime.</li> <li>3. One hospital in Arizona implemented 1:4 ratios on med-surg. Now two with Navapache Regional MC. DHS implementing 1:2 ratios in ICU. Requiring an acuity system and that staff have knowledge of the staffing plan.</li> </ol>
Removing Regulatory Barriers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Legislation introduced to pilot med tech role in long term care.</li> <li>2. Multistate licensure enacted.</li> <li>3. State Board added flexibility to application process for foreign-educated nurses while maintaining educational and competency standards.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Legislation on pilot medication technician passed.</li> <li>2. Licensure compact adopted by 20 states so far.</li> <li>3. Foreign educated nurses continuing to experience delays at the national level.</li> </ol>

### Goals and Objectives of the Strategic Plan

With the intent of focusing statewide efforts on those activities that would most dramatically impact the nursing shortage in the short-term while simultaneously creating an infrastructure for addressing future demands for nursing care, the Governor’s Task Force on the Nursing Shortage prioritized suggested activities. Four goals were identified, and strategies, expected outcomes, and responsible parties were identified. Table 2 details a strategic map for addressing priority strategies.

GOAL 1. Strategies are implemented for forecasting the changing nursing workforce demand and attracting people to the profession.

GOAL 2. Strategies are implemented to double the capacity of Arizona’s registered nursing education programs over 2003 levels by the year 2007.

GOAL 3. Strategies are implemented to improve the work environment of Arizona’s registered nurses.

GOAL 4. Strategies are implemented to remove regulatory barriers to nursing practice and education.

The Governor's Nursing Shortage Task Force recommends the appointment of an Oversight Committee to assure implementation of the strategic plan.

Theme	Activity	Expected Outcome/Date	Responsible Party
Attracting People to the Profession	Identify the number of nurses and nursing assistants needed in various practice settings by geographical location, educational preparation and ethnicity.	Report on number of nurses and nursing assistants needed geographically, and by educational preparation, by December 2004.	Rose Conner, Kathy Malloch, Peggy Mullen, Fran Roberts, Marla Weston, Lynn Maschner
	Implement centralized information for students on waiting lists to access information on openings in schools through ASBN website.	Available nursing education openings routinely listed on website by August 2004.	Joey Ridenour
	Design strategy for retaining people on waiting list. Determine, through a longitudinal study, if people on waiting lists remain interested in pursuing a career in nursing or have changed career paths.	Plan developed to counsel individuals currently on education program waiting lists.	Pat Harris, Joey Ridenour, Jean Stengel
	Identify strategies for attracting a more diverse population and more bilingual individuals to nursing.	Marketing campaign developed and implemented for attracting diverse populations and bilingual individuals to nursing by 2006.	Adda Alexander
	Continue to monitor number of individuals entering programs and number on waiting lists.	Annual report to nursing community by December 2004.	Joey Ridenour
Educating More Nurses	Monitor and collaborate on fundraising and plan development for Nursing Education Program and Expansion Plan.	Plan developed to identify \$111 million over the next five years for increasing educational capacity.	Fran Roberts, Marjorie Isenberg

Table 2: Strategic Map			
Theme	Activity	Expected Outcome/Date	Responsible Party
	Address the faculty shortage and the non-competitive salary structure of nursing faculty to meet current and future faculty demands.	Develop a plan for attracting nurses to faculty positions including (1) outline for adjusting salaries to meet market demands and (2) prediction of number of faculty needed based on growing demand and retirement projections.	Marjorie Isenberg, Pat Harris, Fran Roberts, Judy Sellers
	Explore strategies for increasing alternatives for educating more nurses while maintaining current standards.	Strategies identified for increasing alternatives for educating more nurses while maintaining current standards.	Pat Harris, Jayne Wilkins, Fran Roberts, Marty Enriquez, Richard Patze
		Delete this item – accomplished through online, weekend, fast track, career paths, etc	
	Implement program to assist foreign educated nurses to successfully complete NCLEX.	Program graduates first class by August 2005.	Bertha Sepulveda
	Evaluate the merits of baccalaureate nursing education through the state's community colleges.	Nursing community recommendation for increasing baccalaureate nursing education in Arizona.	Marla Weston, Kathy Malloch
	Explore HRSA, WIA (workforce investment act) and other funding for enhancing preceptor development.	Apply for a grant that enhances recruitment and retention of nurses.	Mardy Taylor, Ada Alexander, Marty Enriquez, Rose Conner
	Clarify and enhance the work of preceptors. Enhance support in the work environment to orient and mentor students, new graduates, new employees traveling nurses, and programs to transition experienced nurses to new settings.	Create and disseminate template for model orientation, precepting, residency and mentoring programs.	Sandy Hughes

Theme	Activity	Expected Outcome/Date	Responsible Party
	Establish practices for transitioning new graduates into competent RNs.	Evaluate pilot residency program and incorporate into model precepting/residency program.  Evaluate a national pilot residency program and a change in hours worked from 12 hour down to 8 hour shifts.	Sandy Hughes, Marjorie Isenberg, Marty Enriquez
	Identify excellent preceptors as future faculty.	Delineate criteria for selecting preceptors as future faculty and disseminate to clinical professors.	Linda Hunt, Fran Roberts, Lynn Maschner
Improving the Work Environment	Focus on improving the work environment in three areas where most nurses work: hospitals, long-term care, home health/hospice.	Share best practices on creating a positive work environment from different employment settings.  Develop materials to help HCOs implement desirable nursing practice environments (repository of information)	Jayne Wilcox, Adda Alexander, Peggy McMacken, Peggy Mullan, Judy Sellers
	Promote educational session by AzNA on “what it means to be a professional nurse.”	Increase presentations to clinical nurses, emphasizing the important contributions of nursing’s voice and expertise.	Marty Enriquez, Marla Weston
	Establish reward mechanisms for best practice facilities, including AzNA recognition and nomination by clinical nurses.	Expand existing award program to increase participation in nominations and recognitions.	Marla Weston

Table 2: Strategic Map			
Theme	Activity	Expected Outcome/Date	Responsible Party
	Establish an Arizona Center for Nursing as a venue for data collection on nursing outcomes, centralized repository of information on nursing, and resources for assisting nurses to navigate regulatory agencies. (Joey Ridenour will revise this language)	Development of process and reports for reliable data about the nursing's needs including projections for practice and education.  Establish reward and incentive information for nurses and organizations.	Marla Weston, Kathy Malloch
	Continue to monitor activities in other states related to initiatives.	Communicate information to Arizona nurses	Marla Weston
		(This item was moved up 5 rows and changed to an outcome. Peggy MacMacken is included in item above.)	
	Promote leadership education for clinical nursing supervisors.	Modify program based upon pilot and expand to statewide implementation by December 2004.	University of Arizona College of Nursing and Business, Marla Weston
Removing Regulatory Barriers	Evaluate data collected on barriers to foreign educated nurse licensure.	Data evaluated at the end of the first cohort completing the program by August 2005.	Bertha Sepulveda
	Implement medication technician pilot study.	Implemented by August 2005 (Susan will verify this date..)	Peggy Mullen

Table 2: Strategic Map			
Theme	Activity	Expected Outcome/Date	Responsible Party
	Continue to monitor for other regulatory barriers.	Barriers identified on ongoing basis.	Joey Ridenour