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## **REFRESHER COURSE SURVEY 2015--Draft**

### **BACKGROUND**

In 2004, the Arizona State Board of Nursing implemented a requirement for 960 hours of nursing practice within the previous 5 years (equivalent to 6 months full time) to renew an RN or LPN license. Renewing nurses are asked to sign a statement testifying that they practiced for this number of hours, at a minimum, and provide the practice setting. The Board interprets “practice” consistent with the statutory definitions of registered and practical nursing (A.R.S. § 32-1601) which includes indirect patient care activities. Nurses engaged in consulting, recruiting nurses, teaching, coordinating care and supervision of nursing or nursing related services would meet the practice requirement. “Practice” also includes providing nursing services in a volunteer capacity and any employment where the license is required or recommended. If a nurse does not have the required hours of practice, the nurse may either inactivate the license or enroll in a refresher course. Arizona State Board of Nursing maintains a list of approved refresher courses, and these entities have been surveyed since 2006 to ascertain their contribution to the workforce.

In 2013, refresher program regulations were changed to require programs to ensure that they did not enroll students without the necessary clinical placements. This has resulted in many of the distance programs requiring students to obtain clinical placement prior to enrollment. Also in 2013-2014, programs reported increasing difficulty with “Board-ordered” refresher students when the order was to remediate sub-standard nursing practice. Difficulties with this population included: frequent class disruptions, attitude issues on the part of the students, safety concerns for faculty and patients, difficulty securing insurance, and difficulty placing the student in clinical facilities. As a result, most Arizona-based programs are limiting enrollment of such students.

### **DATA COLLECTED**

Refresher courses approved by the Arizona State Board of Nursing were asked to provide information regarding their courses for the calendar year. The information requested consisted of:

- The number of persons admitted into the refresher program
- The number of persons still enrolled from the previous year
- The number of graduates
- The number still enrolled into the next calendar year but progressing at the recommended pace

- The number of persons who failed or withdrew
- The number of persons continuing, but are repeating or lagging

In 2007 the data form was revised to separate RN and LPN enrollments. In 2014 programs were asked to report the number of students enrolled in the course solely as an “NCLEX Review” and did not participate in the clinical portion of the course.

### **Results 2015**

Five RN and three LPN refresher programs reported enrollments in 2015. Reporting RN programs included: Pima Community College Center for Training and Development (CTD), GateWay Community College, Mesa Community College, Mohave Community College, South Dakota State University and MedStar Academy. Reporting LPN programs included: GateWay Community College, Mohave Community College, and South Dakota State University. There were 11 programs that reported admissions in 2014 compared to eight programs in 2015. Programs not admitting students included Northland Pioneer College RN program, Pima Community College CTD LPN program, and Innovative Academic Solutions LPN program..

### **Enrollments and Graduation 2014**

Number of Arizona <b>RN</b> refresher students admitted to the refresher program in 2015: <b>TOTAL=137</b>	Number of Arizona RN students admitted in 2014 who continued enrollment into 2015: <b>TOTAL=44</b>	Number of Arizona <b>RNs</b> students who graduated from the program in 2015: <b>TOTAL=105</b>	Of those admitted in 2015, number of Arizona <b>RNs</b> continuing in the program into 2016 at the recommended pace (e.g. regular students): <b>TOTAL=40</b>	Number of Arizona <b>RNs</b> who failed or withdrew from the program in 2014: <b>TOTAL=28</b>	Number of Arizona <b>RNs</b> who remain in the program but are repeating or lagging due to failure or other reasons: <b>TOTAL=7</b>	RN NCLEX Review Students with no clinical in 2014: <b>TOTAL=12</b>
Number of Arizona <b>PN</b> refresher students admitted in 2015: <b>TOTAL=38</b>	Number of Arizona PN students admitted in 2014 who continued enrollment into 2015: <b>TOTAL=6</b>	Number of Arizona <b>PN</b> students who graduated from the program in 2015: <b>TOTAL=15</b>	Of those admitted in 2014 number of Arizona <b>PNs</b> continuing in the program into 2015 at the recommended pace (e.g. regular students): <b>TOTAL=12</b>	Number of Arizona <b>PNs</b> who failed or withdrew from the program in 2015: <b>TOTAL=7</b>	Number of Arizona <b>PNs</b> who remain in the program but are repeating or lagging due to failure or other reasons: <b>TOTAL=2</b>	PN NCLEX Review Students with no clinical in 2014: <b>TOTAL=5</b>

**Combined Total Enrolled RN =137+44=181**

**Combined Total Enrolled LPN=38+6=44**

**Total Enrolled in any Refresher Course 181+44=225**

**Total Graduated 105+15=120**

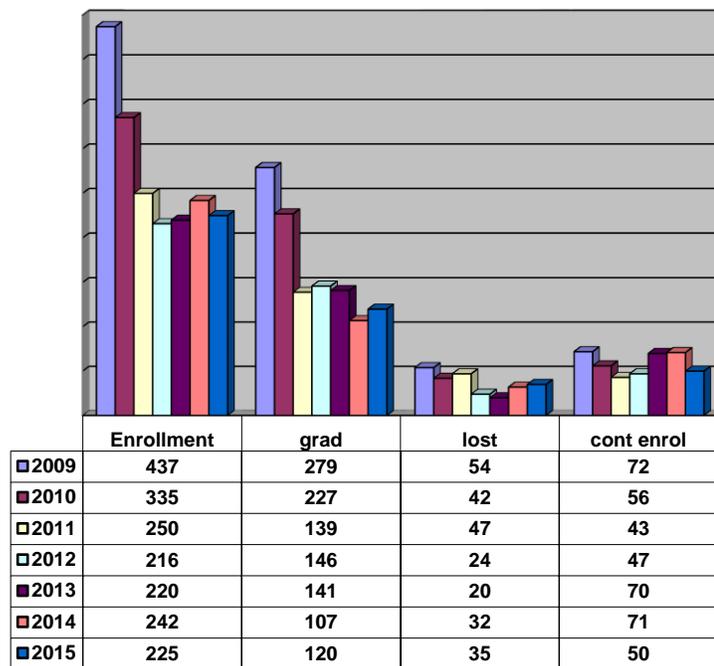
Date: 5/32/16

**Graduated + continued enrollment 120+40+12=172**

**Total fail/withdrew=35**

There were a total of 225 persons enrolled in a nurse refresher course in 2015. This represents a slight decrease from the 242 persons enrolled in 2014 and is consistent with recent trends. One hundred and twenty (120) students graduated in calendar year 2015 and 50 are continuing at the normal pace (172), indicating that 76% of students (172/225) students are either successful (graduated) or have the potential for success (still enrolled at the recommended pace). This is within the previous range of success rates (76-96%) and the same as the success rate in 2014. Thirty-five students (15%) were lost to a program either through failure or withdrawal. Seven RN students and two PN students are persisting in the program but lag behind the recommended pace. Trended data on the chart below reveals that since 2012 rates of enrollment (250-216), graduation (146-107) and attrition (47-20) have remained relatively stable.

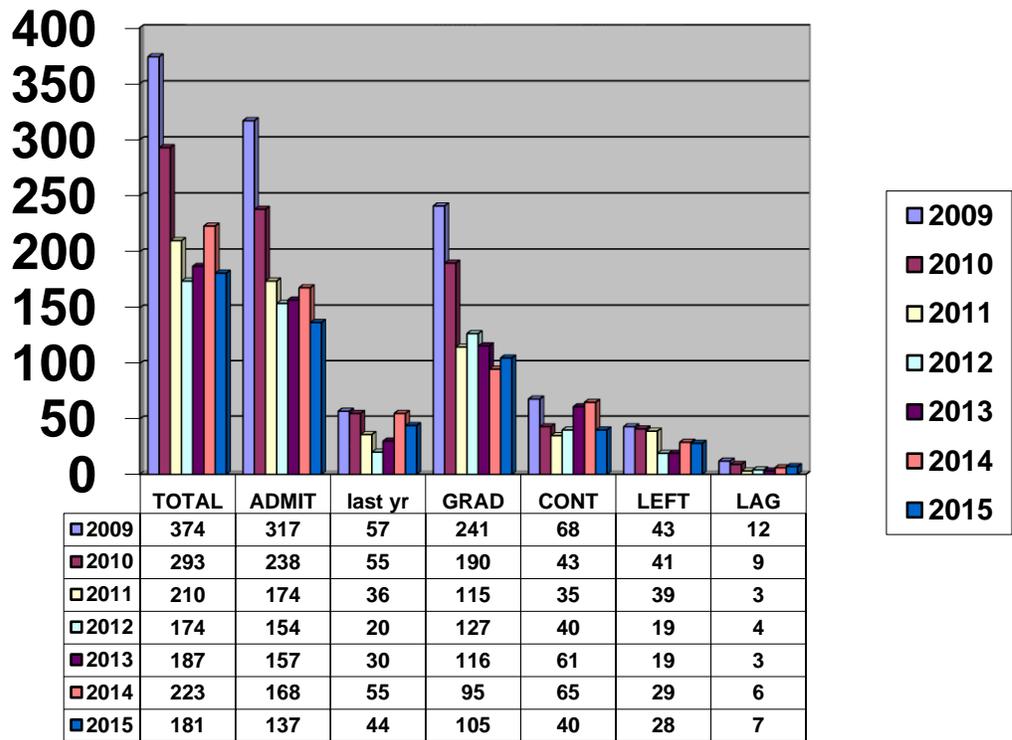
### RN/LPN Refresher Data



**RN Refresher Programs**

The bulk of refresher program students are RN refreshers. The numbers of RN refresher students decreased in 2015 from 223 to 181, a 19% decrease. Of total enrollments 76% were admitted within the calendar year and 24% were continuing from 2014. This closely mirrors the proportion of admitted to continuing students in other years. In 2015, 105 (58%) of RN refreshers successfully completed within the calendar year, 15% (28 students) withdrew or failed, and 22% (40 students) are continuing enrollment into 2016 with 4% (7 students) continuing but at a slower pace due to failure or other circumstances. Twelve RN students took the course as an NCLEX review only and did not complete the clinical portion.

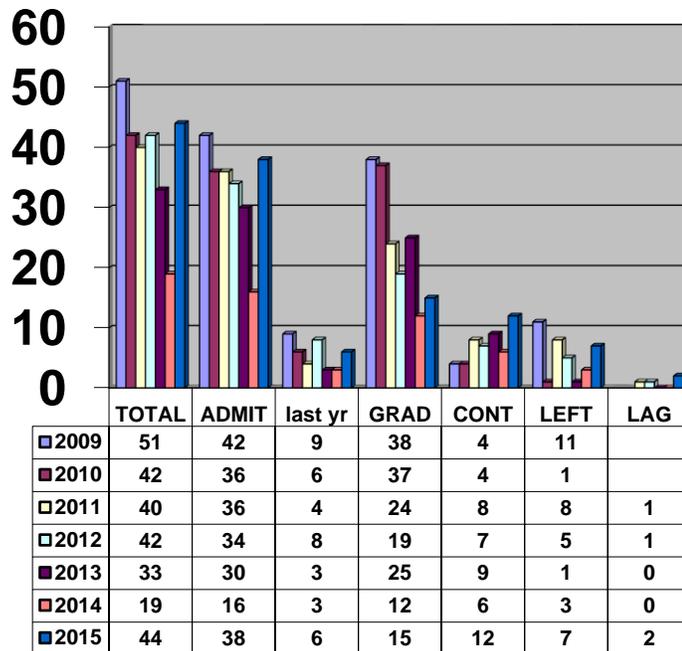
**RN REFRESEHER**



**LPN Refresher Programs**

LPN refresher program enrolled students increased by 130% in 2015 as compared to 2014. In 2014 there were 19 LPN refresher students as compared to 44 LPN refresher students in 2015. However a lower percentage of students actually successfully completed the LPN refresher. In 2015 34% of students successfully completed and in 2014, 63% completed making the overall range for completers between 34-88% in all years measured. Twelve LPN students remained enrolled into 2016; nine LPN students withdrew or failed; and two students are lagging behind. Five LPN student took the course as an NCLEX review.

## LPN REFRESEHER



### Board Discipline

Programs were also asked to report how many students enrolled as a result of a consent agreement or Board disciplinary order. There were four such students in 2015 compared to two such students in 2014, 12 such students in 2012, and 17 such students in 2011. Three of the students enrolled in an out-of-state distance program. The majority of Arizona Refresher programs do not accept Board-ordered remediation students.

### CONCLUSIONS 2015

Based on the data provided by refresher programs, the following patterns were observed in 2015.

- Enrollments in refresher courses have remained stable since 2011
- Enrollment in an LPN refresher program increased significantly, however enrollments may have been underreported in 2014 due to one program not reporting accurate numbers.
- Only 1/3 of LPN enrollments actually successfully completed the refresher compared to 58% of RN enrollments

### DISCUSSION 2016

Refresher course providers met at the Board offices on April 12, 2016, and offered the following discussion points regarding refresher students and programs:

Date: 5/32/16

- Increasing use of hybrid on-line formats and simulation for refresher students
- Integration of electronic medical record has been helpful
- Mixed reports regarding ease of securing preceptorships for students
- One program reported that approximately 75% of students receive job offers from the worksite of the preceptorship
- It was determined that it was feasible to combine RN and LPN students within a course and modify assignments and modules as needed. This enables schools to provide a refresher to a few LPN students when LPN enrollments are insufficient to meet school thresholds for holding a course.
- Board ordered refreshers can enroll in the Competency Based Refresher Program offered by Scottsdale Community College (SCC).
  - This course was specifically designed for Board referred nurses with practice deficiencies.
  - The course consists of HESI testing, low fidelity skill testing and high fidelity simulation with both a simulation course and 3 individual simulations. Course elements are progressive and each must be completed to the standards of the program to progress or graduate
  - Nick DeFalco, Nursing Program Director at SCC, reported six enrollees, 5 RNs and 1 LPN. One RN passed the HESI. One has failed in 2 attempts and it was determined that he/she was deficient in drug dosage calculation.
  - SCC reported that, due to low enrollment numbers, they are changing the option to be a non-credit course
  - SCC will need to increase tuition to cover the extensive personal coaching needed by these respondents
  - Time frame for completion is estimated from 6 to 12 months.
  - From these experiences, SCC is also focusing more efforts on working with their current students to catch and remediate errors earlier.

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