

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing

The Recommendation for Illinois Community Colleges

The Illinois Council of Community College Presidents

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Introduction

All community colleges in Illinois offer the Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN). However, due to the increasing complexity of the health care system, most medical professional organizations strongly prefer the Bachelor of Science degree (BSN) in nursing as the minimum educational requirement to practice professional nursing. In order for Illinois to meet the increased demand for nurses, special consideration must be given to graduates of ADN programs who wish to complete a baccalaureate degree. If community colleges in Illinois could offer BSN programs, including RN-to-BSN programs, Illinois could meet the workforce demands for this health care profession. The reduced cost and convenience of BSN programs at the local community college would make it possible for RNs to move up the career ladder without leaving their current employment, incurring additional educational debt, or moving away from their families.

In January of 2014, the Illinois Council of Community College Presidents (ICCCP) released a white paper on the need for Illinois to consider the addition of an applied baccalaureate and the bachelor's degree in nursing (BSN) in the community college. The white paper specifically outlined the many reasons this dialogue was an important one at this time in our history. The drive behind the white paper came as a result of local industry partners' need for a more highly educated workforce particularly in nursing. The ICCCP was simply responding to the local challenges presented to us by our workforce partners. This follow up paper contains information from the previous white paper regarding need and funding but focuses specifically on the BSN.

It was reported, nationally, there will be 55 million job openings in the economy through 2020: 24 million openings from newly created jobs and 31 million openings due to baby boomer retirements. Among these, STEM, Healthcare Professions, Healthcare Support and Community

Services will be the fastest growing occupations, but will also require higher levels of post-secondary education. Dramatic changes in health care, advances in technology, and increased responsibilities of health care professionals all require scaling up the educational preparation of the entry-level professional nurse.

Specifically the facts for the need for additional BSNs are compelling. Data from a paper entitled “BSN at the Community College” compiled for the Illinois Council of Community Colleges Presidents by Cynthia Maskey and Donna Meyer, presented these facts:

Demand Pipeline

- **43.7% of hospitals** and other healthcare settings are requiring new nursing hires to have a bachelor’s degree in nursing (up 4.6 percentage points since 2012), while **78.6% of employers are expressing a strong preference for BSN program graduates.** <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/student/news/2013/new-data>
- The Magnet Recognition Program[®], a voluntary credentialing program for nursing care that many hospitals are pursuing, calls for “an action plan that includes a target and demonstrates evidence of progress toward **80% of registered nurses obtaining a baccalaureate or graduate degree in nursing by 2020;** ... and an appraisal of established, realistic targets to meet the organization’s strategy to increase the number of registered nurses with a degree in nursing (baccalaureate or graduate degree).”
<http://www.nursecredentialing.org/DEO-FAQ>
- A 2013 survey of nurse executives revealed that **80% preferred the hiring of BSNs.** However, they were not able to meet this preference due to lack of accessibility to BSN graduates and nurses (Pittman, Herrera, Horton, Thompson, Ware & Terry, 2013)

- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the RN workforce is expected to grow from 2.71 million in 2012 to 3.24 million in 2022, an increase of 19%. **The Bureau projects the total number of job openings for nurses will be 1.05 million by 2022.** <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.t08.htm>
- A 2012 survey of 2,744 Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) student respondents in Illinois revealed that 86.7% of them intended to pursue a bachelor's degree (Illinois Community Colleges Registered Nursing Student Survey Report, October 9, 2012- not published).
- A 2013 study done by the National Student Nurses Association found that **90% of all student nurses intended to return to school for another degree** (Mancino & Feeg, 2013).

Supply Pipeline

- Fully 25% of qualified nursing applicants nationally were not accepted into nursing programs in 2012 due to a lack of capacity.
http://www.nln.org/researchgrants/slides/topic_admissions_rn.htm
- Based on the annual reports of the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, in 2011, 2012 and 2013 there were 52%, 46% and 44% respectively of the qualified applicants not admitted to the BSN programs **due to lack of capacity in Illinois BSN programs.** (IDFPR Annual Reports)
- Anecdotally, community colleges report that most of our nursing graduates are transitioning to online BSN programs and are not transitioning to the State universities. This occurs because many of our nursing students are nontraditional students and have families and jobs in the area. They simply do not have the added time in their schedule to

allow for travel to a public university. The online programs provide that much needed flexibility but they do so at a much higher price.

The ability to supply BSN prepared nurses has failed to keep pace with the growing demand. Demand for higher skills and magnet status for hospitals demand a BSN. Allowing community colleges this authority will go a long way toward improving access for many, if not most, of our nursing graduates who are largely nontraditional students. This in turn will provide the pipeline that hospitals desperately need.

Cost

- According to the College Board, Illinoisans paid one of the nation's highest prices for a four-year degree from an in-state school during the 2014-2015 academic year, with the average cost at \$12,770 a year. By comparison, the average full-time Illinois community college student pays \$3,758 per year in tuition and fees.

It is important to note that State funding is not required for this initiative. The ICCCP recommends student tuition and property tax revenue should be the funding model. As with other states, it is anticipated the third and fourth year tuition costs likely will be higher than traditional associate degree tuition. Many community colleges already utilize a variable tuition schedule for many of its career and technical degrees at the associate's level. It is anticipated the third and fourth years of the BSN would follow the same model.

Furthermore, "as an estimated 32 million Americans gain insurance under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the current shortage of primary care providers (PCPs) will worsen, but nurses trained at the graduate level will help fill the gap. Nurse practitioners (NPs), who must earn a master of science in nursing (MSN) or a doctorate of nursing practice (DNP) degree, are the fastest-growing group of PCPs. By 2025 they are projected to double

their numbers and near or top 200,000. Certified nurse midwives will also contribute by providing primary care services to women of childbearing age (Charting Nursing's Future, Robert Wood Foundation, September 2013).”

It would appear the universities are perfectly suited to step in and provide the graduate education needed to meet the growing demand for these upper level positions, allowing the community colleges to aid in meeting the demand for the BSN. This strategy would allow universities and community colleges to collaboratively respond in a comprehensive way to the continued shortage.

In summary, the ICCCP believes the time has come to have this very important dialog about the state of our future workforce in Illinois. In order for Illinois to continue to be competitive and meet the needs of its local workforces throughout the state, we recommend the community college system be allowed to offer the BSN. Twenty-three states across our nation already have approved community colleges to be providers of baccalaureate programs. The ICCCP specifically recommends allowing for the approval of the BSN to be offered through Illinois' community colleges.