Nursing Workforce Development Programs

“We cannot get significant improvements in the quality of health care or coverage unless nurses are front and center in the health care system — in leadership, in education and training, and in the design...”

~ Donna Shalala, University of Miami President and former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Who are Nurses?

Registered Nurses (RNs) comprise the largest group of health professionals with approximately 3.1 million licensed providers. RNs offer essential care to patients in a variety of settings, including hospitals, long-term care facilities, community or public health areas, schools, workplaces, and home care. Nurses also receive graduate degrees that allow them to practice autonomously as Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs-including certified nurse-midwives, nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and certified registered nurse anesthetists); become nurse faculty, nurse researchers, nurse administrators, and public health nurses. The services they provide are linked directly to the availability, cost, and quality of healthcare services.

The contributions made by the practice and science of nursing are significant, and in collaboration with other healthcare professionals, improve the quality of America’s healthcare system. Nurses are involved in every aspect of health care, but the present and looming demand for RNs and APRNs limits access to and quality of care. If the nursing workforce is not strengthened, the healthcare system will continue to suffer.

The Rising Demand for Nursing Care

According to the 2012 Bureau of Labor Statistics’ (BLS) Employment Projections 2010-2020, the registered nursing workforce is one of the leading occupations that will add the most positions by 2020. It is expected that the number of practicing nurses will grow from 2.74 million in 2010 to 3.45 million in 2020, an increase of 712,000 or 26%. The projections further explain the need for 495,500 replacements in the nursing workforce bringing the total number of job openings for nurses due to growth and replacements to 1.2 million by 2020.1

Three major factors contribute to this growing demand for nursing care. First, over 275,000 practicing RNs are over the age of 60 according to the 2008 National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses.2 When the economy rebounds, many of these nurses will seek retirement. Second, America’s population is aging. Older Americans will seek more healthcare services creating an influx of consumers and necessitate the need for quality nursing care. Finally, as the BLS’ Employment Projections 2010-2020 notes, “One-third of the projected fastest growing occupations are related to health care, reflecting expected increases in demand as the population ages and the health care and social assistance industry grows.”

Furthermore, in a report released by the Institute of Medicine and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation titled, The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health, clear and evidence based guidance was provided on how to shape nursing’s role in healthcare delivery as the system undergoes considerable changes. The report’s key messages include:

- Nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training; scope of practice limitations should be removed.

- Nurses should achieve higher levels of education and training through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression.

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Nurses should be full partners with other healthcare professionals in redesigning health care in the United States.

Effective workforce planning and policy making require better data collection and an improved information infrastructure.\(^3\)

To achieve these goals and the larger national goals of access to high quality, cost-effective care, support for programs that educate the next generation of nurses is vital.

## Nursing Workforce Development Programs: Demonstrating Success

The Nursing Workforce Development programs, authorized under Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 296 et seq.), have supported the supply and distribution of qualified nurses to meet our nation’s healthcare needs since 1964. For nearly 50 years, these programs have addressed all aspects of nursing workforce demand – education, practice, retention, and recruitment. The Title VIII programs bolster nursing education at all levels, from entry-level preparation through graduate study, and provide support for institutions that educate nurses for practice in rural and medically underserved communities. Today, the Title VIII programs are essential to solving the current national nursing shortage. Between FY 2006 and 2010, the Title VIII programs supported over 400,000 nurses and nursing students as well as numerous academic nursing institutions and healthcare facilities.

Results from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing’s (AACN) 2012-2013 Title VIII Student Recipient Survey included responses from 1,169 students who noted that these programs played a critical role in funding their nursing education. The survey showed that 74% of the students receiving Title VIII funding are able to attend school full-time through this federal support.\(^4\) By supporting full-time education, the Title VIII programs are helping to ensure that students enter the workforce without delay.

### Title VIII Recipients Aspire to High Demand Careers

#### Demand for Primary and Specialty Care Providers

Title VIII addresses the current demand for primary care providers. According to AACN, 88.7% of nurse practitioner students are in master’s programs that prepare them to be primary care providers.\(^5\) Moreover, 90% of visits to Certified Nurse Midwives are for primary and preventive care. Additionally, certified registered nurse anesthetists are often the sole anesthesia providers in nearly all rural hospitals, affording patients access to trauma stabilization, pain care, and surgical services. The Title VIII program helps prepare the advanced practice nursing workforce to meet the needs of our nation.

#### Demand for Care in Rural and Underserved Areas

Additionally, the respondents identified working in rural and underserved areas as future goals.\(^4\) Title VIII funding expands access to care for our nation’s most vulnerable populations. The Nursing Education Loan Repayment and Nursing Scholarship Programs, which provide loan forgiveness and scholarship aid in exchange for service in a critical shortage facility, link nurses to communities that struggle to retain healthcare providers. In FY 2011, the Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program committed to supporting 1,304 nurses working in these facilities. In addition, the Advanced Education Nursing Traineeship Program graduated 7,744 nursing students during the 2010-2011 academic cycle, of which 7,548 (97%) went on to practice in medically underserved areas.

#### Demand for Faculty to Educate the Next Generation of Nurses

Now more than ever, educating the next generation of nurse faculty is crucial. Faculty vacancy has been repeatedly identified as a primary factor hindering maximum student capacity in our nation’s nursing schools. In fact, according to AACN 2012-2013 Enrollment and Graduations Survey, nursing schools were forced to turn away 79,659 qualified applications from entry-level

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baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs in 2012.\textsuperscript{5} Title VIII provides a direct solution to this crisis. In FY 2010, the Title VIII Nurse Faculty Loan Program supported 271 faculty members who graduated and went on to teach in our nation’s nursing schools. Yet this only fills a small portion of the nearly 1,800 vacant faculty positions reported by AACN member schools in academic year 2011-2012. While over one-third of the respondents of the Title VIII Student Recipient Survey identified being a nurse faculty member as their ultimate career goal,\textsuperscript{4} more must be invested in the future pool of nurse faculty.

**Top 5 Career Aspirations of Title VIII Recipients**

1) Nurse Practitioner  
2) Nurse Faculty Member  
3) Nurse Researcher  
4) Operate a Nursing Practice  
5) Practice as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist

**Investing in Nursing’s Future: Title VIII Funding in Action**

**Need for Federal Support**
This year’s Title VIII Student Recipient Survey showed that federal support for nursing education is critically important. Of the students responding, 75.8% of undergraduate students, 63.8% of master’s students, and 57.7% of doctoral students rely on federal loans to pay for their education. When asked how much loans were required, the undergraduate student population averaged $39,610 and the master’s student population averaged $35,509. Some master’s and doctoral students reported as high as $120,000.\textsuperscript{4}

**Home State Advantage**
According to AACN’s 2012-2013 Title VIII Student Recipient Survey, 83% of the respondents reported that they planned to work in their home state after graduation.\textsuperscript{4} By supporting Title VIII, new nurses stay in the communities where they were educated—a direct state investment.

**Historical Support**
Congress has used the Title VIII authorities as a mechanism to address past nursing shortages. When the need for nurses was great, higher funding levels were appropriated. For example, during the nursing shortage in the 1970’s, Congress provided $160.61 million to the Title VIII programs in 1973. Adjusting for inflation to address the 39-year difference, $231.099 million (FY 2012 funding level) in 1973 dollars would be over one billion in current dollars.

The time is now to support the next generation of nurses like the Title VIII recipients highlighted here who will provide care to our nation in all settings with expert skills obtained through their education, training, and practice.
Recipient of the Nursing Workforce Diversity Program

Ronald Harris
Michigan State University
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Student

"Support from Title VIII funding impacted my decision to enter into the nursing profession and allowed me to experience the collegiate environment. The Nursing Workforce Diversity program gave me hope that I can make a difference through my college education and in the nursing profession. I am a first-generation college student who comes from a low-income family. I was always told I would never go to college, and now, thanks to Title VIII, I am a student who is making a difference because of programs like these. Cuts to Title VIII programs would deny other students with stories similar to mine the opportunity to become a nurse. I believe it is vital to invest in the future nurses who will one day take care of you. When I graduate, I plan to practice in a rural area serving Latino populations, and intend to pursue a graduate degree in nursing."

Recipient of the Advanced Education Nursing Traineeship

Teresa Martinez
Florida Atlantic University
Nurse Practitioner Student

"I have a strong desire to work as a primary care provider in a rural area where many of the patients are underprivileged and underserved. Were it not for the federal financial aid I received through the Title VIII Advanced Education Nursing Traineeship program, I would not have been able to afford to continue in the program on a full-time basis. This would have meant delaying my graduation for an additional one to two years. As a future nurse practitioner, I will empower my patients in reaching their health goals through health promotion and disease prevention."

Recipient of the Advanced Nursing Education Program

Michelle Midkiff
Loyola University New Orleans
Doctor of Nursing Practice Student

"I am a nurse practitioner and I run a practice in New Orleans, Louisiana. I received support from the Title VIII Advanced Nursing Education grant program while pursuing my Doctorate of Nursing Practice degree. Title VIII dollars supported the development and implementation of the first DNP program in Louisiana and provided my colleagues and I access to create better value in evidence-based nursing practice for primary care patients. My doctoral degree has allowed me to further build upon my 30 years of clinical nursing practice, exercise my leadership skills as a faculty member, and serve as preceptor for nurse practitioner students. Furthermore, it will help me improve evidence-based practice within our healthcare system."

Recipient of the Nurse Faculty Loan Program

Sharon Hendrix
Frontier Nursing University
Doctor of Nursing Practice Student

"I obtained an Associate Degree in Nursing, but I always desired to pursue my BSN and a graduate degree in nursing. I was unable to attend a four-year college because of limited financial means, so I worked the night shift in a community hospital and paid my way while completing a BSN degree. Still desirous of an advanced degree, I returned to school and became a Family Nurse Practitioner. Teaching has always been my dream, and I realized it is essential to have a doctoral degree if I wanted to teach in a graduate nursing program. The Nurse Faculty Loan Program allowed me to reduce my work load in order to excel and achieve my dream of earning a Doctor of Nursing Practice. Making a contribution to the state of Kentucky where I had long-practiced as a Board Certified Family Nurse Practitioner, bought my first home, and came to love my local community, was an important life goal. My wealth of knowledge and experience will educate, nurture, and guide young nurses into the future. Thank you for giving me a dream, and the means to achieve it. I hope I have given back ten-fold to those who have given so much to me."
Federal Funding for Title VIII Programs by State: Fiscal Year 2012

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An Overview of the Title VIII Programs

Advanced Nursing Education (ANE) Grants (Sec. 811) support projects that enhance advanced nursing education and practice in master’s and doctoral programs. The ANE grants help to prepare our nation’s nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, nurse midwives, nurse anesthetists, nurse educators, nurse administrators, public health nurses, and other nurse specialists requiring advanced education. In FY 2010, these grants supported the education of 7,863 students.

Advanced Education Nursing (AEN) Traineeships assist graduate nursing students by providing full or partial reimbursement for the costs of tuition, books, program fees and reasonable living expenses. Funding for the AEN Traineeships supports the education of future nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, nurse midwives, nurse anesthetists, nurse educators, nurse administrators, public health nurses, and other nurse specialists requiring advanced education.

Nurse Anesthetist Traineeships (NAT) support the education of students in nurse anesthetist programs. In some states, certified registered nurse anesthetists are the sole anesthesia providers in almost 100% of rural hospitals. Much like the AEN Traineeships, the NAT provides full or partial support for the costs of tuition, books, program fees, and reasonable living expenses.

In FY 2010, the AEN Traineeship and the NAT supported 12,325 nursing students.

Workforce Diversity Grants (Sec. 821) prepare disadvantaged students to become nurses. This program awards grants and contract opportunities to schools of nursing, nurse-managed health centers, academic health centers, state or local governments, and nonprofit entities looking to increase access to nursing education for disadvantaged students, including racial and ethnic minorities under-represented among RNs. In FY 2010, the program supported 10,361 students. The money may be used for educational progression support such as stipends for diploma or associate degree nurses to enter bridge or degree completion programs, scholarship or stipends for accelerated degree programs, pre-entry preparation, advanced education preparation, and retention activities.

Nurse Education, Practice, Quality, and Retention Grants (Sec. 831) help schools of nursing, academic health centers, nurse-managed health centers, state and local governments, and healthcare facilities strengthen programs that provide nursing education. In FY 2010, this program supported 4,860 undergraduate nursing students.

Nursing Student Loan (NSL) Program (Sec. 835), established in 1964, also addresses nursing workforce shortages. The revolving fund provides each accepted nursing student, undergraduate or graduate, a maximum of $17,000 at 5% interest with a preference for those in financial need. The repayment period is 10 years. The NSL program may provide $3,300 in non-taxable loans to nursing students during each of their first two years of study and $5,200 for their last two years. Funds are loaned out to new students as existing loans are repaid. This program has not received additional appropriations since 1983.

Nurse Loan Repayment and Scholarship Programs (Sec. 846) support current students and new graduates and in FY 2010 supported 1,304 nursing students. The Loan Repayment program repays up to 85 percent of nursing student loans in return for at least three years of practice in a designated healthcare facility or teaching in an accredited school of nursing. The Scholarship program offers individuals who are enrolled or accepted for enrollment as full-time nursing students the opportunity to apply for scholarship funds. Upon graduation, recipients are required to work in a healthcare facility with a critical shortage of nurses or teach in an accredited school of nursing for at least two years.

Nurse Faculty Loan Program Grants (Sec. 846A) increase the number of qualified nurse faculty by creating a student loan fund within individual schools of nursing and supporting individual students. Students must agree to teach at a school of nursing in exchange for cancellation of up to 85 percent of their educational loans, plus interest, over a four-year period. In FY 2010, these grants supported the education of 1,551 future nurse educators.

Comprehensive Geriatric Education Grants (Sec. 855) are awarded to individuals in geriatrics to better provide healthcare services for the elderly. These grants may be used to educate RNs who will provide direct care to older Americans, develop and disseminate geriatric curriculum, prepare faculty members, and provide continuing education. They may also provide traineeships for individuals who are preparing for advanced education nursing degrees in geriatric nursing, long-term care, gero-psychiatric nursing or other nursing areas that specialize in the care of the elderly population.
The Nursing Community is a forum for professional nursing organizations to collaborate on a wide spectrum of healthcare and nursing issues, including practice, education, and research. These 58 organizations are committed to promoting America’s health through nursing care. For more information about the Nursing Community or the Title VIII programs, contact Suzanne Miyamoto at smiyamoto@aacn.nche.edu, or 202-463-6930.