

Nursing Faculty Shortage in Wisconsin
August 24th 2010 Presentation to Wisconsin Legislative Council
Special Committee on Health Care Access

I am Marilyn Kaufmann. I am currently the nursing program chair at Lakeshore Technical College in the Manitowoc-Sheboygan County area. I have been a Registered Nurse for the past 34 years. I recently completed my second term on the Wisconsin Board of Nursing, serving as chair of the education and licensure committee and in the last several years, as chair of the Board. I have been asked to address the status of the nursing faculty shortage in Wisconsin.

In order to teach nursing courses, faculty must have a minimum of two years of nursing experience and a masters or higher degree in nursing, with some exceptions possible. The standard for teaching nursing courses in graduate nursing programs is a masters degree in nursing at a minimum, and preferably a doctoral degree.

In 2006 the Wisconsin Nurse Faculty Task Force was convened by the Board of Nursing and the Wisconsin Center for Nursing to examine the issues surrounding the perceived nursing school faculty shortage and to provide recommendations to the Board of Nursing and the legislature. The full report can be reviewed at:

http://drl.wi.gov/board_docview.asp?docid=76&boardid=42&locid=0

As part of that effort Wisconsin Schools of Nursing were surveyed for faculty vacancies; Survey results indicate that as of October 2006 the vacancy rate for nurse educators in Wisconsin was 5.6% (12.6% at the PhD level and 4% at the Master's level). A vacancy rate of 5-6% is considered to be an indicator of a shortage. These results indicate that there was a borderline shortage of faculty prepared at the masters level and a considerable shortage at the doctoral level.

Current data indicate that the shortage at the masters level has not improved. The board of nursing allowed (and continues to allow) exceptions to the masters degree in nursing (emergency exceptions for bachelors prepared faculty, standard exceptions for bachelors prepared faculty who are actively enrolled in an MSN program, and, new since 2007, a non-nursing masters degree exception if they teach in their area of expertise). During 2006 over 60 exceptions were granted to both Associate Degree and BSN nursing programs. In 2009 95 exceptions were granted, 50 of them to associate degree programs and 45 of them to bachelors degree programs. These exceptions reflect faculty shortages in pre-licensure programs only. They do not reflect shortages in graduate programs that ultimately prepare the next generation of nursing educators along with nurse practitioners, nurse midwives, and other advanced practice nurses. We do not have current data on faculty openings at the graduate program level.

More data may become available soon from the survey completed as part of the RN licensure renewal this spring. The Department of Workforce Development has been doing the initial work on compiling data on the numbers, ages and retirement plans of current nursing faculty, along with information on nurses who might be interested in and qualified for teaching. I need to point out that nursing faculty form the oldest group within the nursing profession. Therefore the retirement predictions will be particularly important. I recommend that you obtain more information on this shortage from graduate programs in nursing as more data become available.

The 2007 report included several recommendations that I would like to briefly review.

1. Increase awareness of nurse educator career path options. Special efforts should be made to reach out to men and minorities in order to have the nursing faculty of Wisconsin reflect the

diversity of the population of our state. Nurses should be encouraged and supported to complete nursing graduate programs early in their nursing career. Fast track options such as associate degree-to-MSN, BS in another field-to-MSN, BSN-to-PhD, and non-MSN to MSN should be highlighted.

2. Provide financial support and other incentives for nurse graduate students. Public and private support through tax credits, loan reduction and forgiveness and additional fellowships tied to long term educator's roles in Wisconsin must be created and expanded. Graduate students need access to health insurance for themselves and their families while attending school.
3. Assure competitive nursing faculty salaries: The salary differential in Wisconsin matches that found nationally. A 2005 report from AACN noted the following median salaries:
 - Assistant Professor with MSN \$58,567
 - Associate professor with MSN \$62,778
 - Nurse practitioner (specialty care) \$74,015
 - Clinical Nurse Specialist \$71,544
 - Nursing Director \$104,191

Note that these salaries were converted from academic salaries to the calendar year. Other academic specialties have used a market based approach to set faculty salaries. This approach needs to be used for the nursing profession as well. Additional base dollars are necessary to support salaries in nursing programs in both the public and the private sectors.

4. Develop strategies to promote faculty satisfaction and effectiveness. Ways to retain current faculty, including those considering retirement should be developed. Faculty satisfaction with work environment and a realistic workload should be explored. A balance between full time and part time positions must be maintained to assure that faculty work can be completed (student advising, curriculum development, program evaluation and improvement, new faculty support).
5. Promote partnerships with healthcare employers for obtaining clinical instructors.
6. Expand preparation of clinical preceptors.
7. Expanded use of simulated clinical experiences should be explored, although this can be an expensive option.
8. Expand educational opportunities: Expand opportunities for graduate education in all parts of the state through masters programs, clinical doctorates and PhD programs in nursing. Distance learning modalities, especially asynchronous web-based instruction should be expanded as appropriate to support the graduate education of nurses who are working and/or live where on-campus options are not available.
9. Evaluate potential to develop faculty-sharing options between schools.
10. Collect regular supply and demand data for nurse workforce and nurse educators

I would like to try to answer your questions now or you may contact me in the future at marilyn.kaufmann@gotoltc.edu.