

# **Connecticut League for Nursing (CLN)**

**393 Center Street, P.O. Box 365**

**Wallingford, CT 06492**

**203-265-7314 \* Marcia@ctleaguefornursing.org**

## **Connecticut League for Nursing- Council of Deans & Directors Key Elements for a Comprehensive Nursing Education Plan for the State of Connecticut**

Based on the Nursing Report entitled, “**Enhancing the Education and Supply of Nurses In Connecticut**”- Issued October 2005 published by the Connecticut League for Nursing’s Council of Deans & Directors, Connecticut received its first glimpse of the status of Nursing in Connecticut. By all intent and purposes, our future looks very bleak.

Currently Connecticut:

- Ranks 49<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states in producing nurses at only 19 per 100,000. The national average is 31 per 100,000.
- Is projected to have a 57% **vacancy** rate of bedside nurses in less than 15 years.
- Lags behind national trends for funding nursing education initiatives. Within the last year, California has committed \$90 million over 5 years, Arizona- \$20 million, and Florida has committed \$5 million to their statewide nursing efforts.
- Has 23% of the current nurse faculty planning to retire in the next 5 years.
- Denied over 2000 qualified nursing applicants entrance into CT nursing programs due to lack of educational resources.

Nurses comprise the largest percentage of Connecticut’s healthcare workforce. Thus it is critical that all those concerned about the health of our citizens play an active role in creating solutions to ensure that the supply of nurses at all levels will be sufficient to provide for our citizens’ health and to address current and future public health needs. It is hoped that this beginning effort will serve to focus attention and mobilize action to sustain the high quality nursing education infrastructure that is necessary to train all levels of nurses.

**Nursing education issues are multi-faceted and COMPLEX!** As there are numerous access points for an individual to become a Registered Nurse (RN) and the strict regulations and licensing processes that exist in Connecticut, no single solution can solve our problem. For an RN to move to a position of leadership within the Clinical Setting, become a Nurse Faculty or Preceptor requires that the nurse access “Formal College Education” to gain the necessary credentials to be accepted for any of the above position. In addition, compensation levels vary greatly between practice and academia, therefore there is a serious need to make this more equitable to attract top notch nurses to academia and mentor the next generation of nursing professionals.

It is VERY IMPORTANT that individuals who are involved in decision-making related to Nursing Education and Nursing Workforce issues work closely with The Connecticut League for Nursing, the Connecticut Nurses Association and the State Board of Nursing to understand the impact that their decisions will have, not only on nursing, but the entire healthcare system in Connecticut.

Below are the areas that Connecticut needs to address and focus on to proactively manage Connecticut's long term nursing crisis.

### **The (4) Key Elements for a Comprehensive Nursing Education Plan:**

- Expanding the Infrastructure at each of the (18) existing Schools and Programs of Nursing
  - This could include: classroom space, faculty space, laboratory space, simulation activities, student resources, and associated staff necessary to coordinate the usage of these services; also due to the impact of expanded nursing student enrollments on other department, seek to assist them with accommodation of more students

**IMPACT: This element will immediately help to alleviate the number of qualified Nursing students left out of nursing school due to lack of resources, and positively position the schools to accept more students in the future.**

- Adding new full time Nursing Faculty positions and part time Clinical Faculty positions

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- Partnering with Healthcare Facilities to develop effective Education and Training Models for nursing students involved in their clinical placement, and to enhance their programs for new nurse employees involved with the orientation process.

**IMPACT: This element will immediately help our hospitals, long term care settings and homecare organizations expand their facilities to take more nursing students for clinical placements, thereby, allowing currently students the opportunities for clinical practice. This will also expand their infrastructure to “absorb” new graduates into new employee orientation programs to help with the transition from “student to clinician”, as well as foster and support retention of new nurses within the field.**

- Offering Scholarships for Nurses who want to pursue a career in teaching
  - Formal Educational Tracks- MSN, PhD; and
  - Expanding professional development opportunities at schools and healthcare facilities to prepare Nurses as Preceptors, Clinical Faculty, Researchers, etc. to assist in the teaching of our student nurses

**IMPACT: This element will help us produce the future Nursing Faculty needed to support the expanded nursing school enrollments. By creating an “electronic” system or database to track the availability of Nursing Faculty, we will not repeat our current situation. Moreover, by having all the nurses placed in the database highlighting their educational levels, we will always be able to know what we “have on hand” and where the areas of shortages may lie within Education, General Bedside Practice and Specialty Areas for effective statewide Human Capital Management of our pool of nurses.**