



New York State Association of School Nurses

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New York State Association of School Nurses Memorandum of Support

A3945

S2145

By Assemblyman Morelle

By Senator Flanagan

An act to amend the education law, in relation to the educational preparation for practice of professional nursing

Our Position:

The New York State Association of School Nurses (NYSASN) is the professional organization which represents New York's school nurses. NYSASN's mission is to advance the practice of professional school nursing and enhance the academic achievement of students through the provision of quality school health services. NYSASN strongly supports the above bill, known colloquially as the *RN to BSN in 10*, which would require registered professional nurses to attain a baccalaureate degree in nursing within ten years of their initial licensure as a requirement to practice as a registered professional nurse in New York State, while maintaining multiple entry points to the profession.

Background:

The *RN to BSN in 10* legislation was first introduced in the 2009-2010 legislative session. Since that time, the US healthcare system has undergone monumental changes, largely as a result of the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in 2010 (ACA), and the financial incentives built into that law.

Following the passage of the ACA, there has been an influx of previously uninsured individuals with a disproportionate burden of physical and behavioral health conditions to the healthcare system. At the same time, new models of care have emerged to serve the diverse healthcare needs of *all* Americans while achieving the strategic principles of the "Triple Aim" – that is to simultaneously improve the individual experience of care; to improve the health of populations, and to reduce the per capita costs of care. Achieving the Triple Aim will result in improved safety and quality, and reduced healthcare costs through the elimination of wasteful practices which have no demonstrated healthcare benefit.

Emerging Models of Care:

The principles of the Triple Aim have resonated with all stakeholders: clinicians, the general public, policy makers and government and third party payers. Payment reforms are increasingly rewarding coordination of care to ensure best outcomes and penalizing poor outcomes. In the ambulatory setting, new integrated models of care such as the Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) and Accountable Care Organizations (ACO) have emerged to provide safe, coordinated, and value-based care. Healthcare is increasingly focused on managing chronic health conditions through care coordination, and moving from the acute care setting to the ambulatory care setting.

Policy Implications for New York’s Professional Registered Nurses:

It is increasingly evident that there is a significant gap between the research knowledge which demonstrates the positive impact of nursing education on improved patient outcomes, and the current legal requirements for licensure as a registered nurse in New York State.

Nurses prepared at the baccalaureate level have the additional coursework needed to meet the demands of our rapidly changing healthcare system. This includes nursing research, leadership, quality improvement, systems thinking, nursing management, the physical and social sciences, and population, public and community health.¹ Baccalaureate graduates are thus equipped with a broader understanding of the various cultural, economic, political and social issues which are both determinants of health, and influencers of healthcare delivery.² This advanced coursework prepares baccalaureate-prepared nurses for a broader scope of practice, enabling them to function autonomously at the ‘top of their license’ in the emerging models of care.

Nursing research consistently shows a clear link between higher levels of nursing education and better patient outcomes. These outcomes include lower mortality, lower congestive heart failure mortality, lower failure to rescue rates, lower incidence of decubitus ulcers, lower deep venous thrombosis and pulmonary embolism rates, as well as shorter lengths of stay in the hospital.^{3,4} In addition, numerous policy positions have addressed the need for nurses to advance their education. The 2013 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, an organization whose mission is to improve the health and health care of all Americans, issued a newsletter titled “The Case for Academic Progression” which focused on the evidence linking better patient outcomes to baccalaureate and

¹ American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2014) Fact Sheet: The Impact of Education on Nursing practice. Available at: <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/media-relations/EdImpact.pdf>

² *Ibid.*

³ Blegen, M.A., Goode, C.J., Park, S.H., Vaughn, T. & Spetz, J. (2013) Baccalaureate education in nursing and patient outcomes. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 43(2), 89-94.

⁴ Kendall-Gallagher, D., Aiken, L, Sloane, D.M. & Cimiotti, J.P. (2011) Nurse specialty certification, inpatient mortality, and failure to rescue. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 43(2), 188-194.

higher degree nurses, as well as outlining strategies for facilitating academic progression at the local and state level.⁵

NYSASN's Unique Perspective:

New York's professional school nurses have a unique perspective on the professional skills needed by registered nurses to meet the demands of an increasingly complex healthcare system. School nursing is the most autonomous nursing area at the registered professional nurse entry level; as school nurses, we have always worked to the 'top of our license' to provide comprehensive acute and coordinated care to all of New York's school children in the ambulatory setting. We are very familiar with the 'new' models of care; care coordination for students with chronic health conditions is, and always has been, a fundamental part of the school nurse's role in New York. Our role has always included helping our students and their families navigate the complex healthcare environment. We also have a population health focus: New York's school nurses have been instrumental in closing immunization "gaps in care" through our professional management of New York State's school immunization laws, thereby protecting the health of all New Yorkers. In the school nurse model of school health services, we manage our own programs. In addition, we engage in political advocacy to support legislation which we believe would benefit our professional practice, and we have also taken positions against legislation which we felt would not have been in the best interests of the students we serve.

Conclusion:

NYSASN strongly believes that it is our professional responsibility as registered nurses with unique expertise in care-coordination and population health to share the current research knowledge with our policy-makers. This research unequivocally demonstrates the need for a highly educated nursing workforce to ensure optimum patient outcomes across all practice settings in New York State.

We respectfully urge our legislators to support A3945 and S2145.

⁵ Robert Wood Foundation (2013) Charting Nursing's Future: The Case for Academic Progression: Why Nurses Should Advance Their Education and the Strategies That Make this Feasible. Available at: http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2013/rwjf407597