

**Chief Nursing Officer
Perceptions of Promoting a BSN Workforce:
2013-2015
NC Future of Nursing Action Coalition**

Project Leader:

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Survey Purpose:

The purpose of the survey was to measure North Carolina Chief Nursing Officer perceptions of promoting a BSN workforce within their institutions and determine the common themes related to workforce policy to promote a higher educated nursing workforce.

Survey Goals:

- provide a “snapshot” of BSN and higher degree prepared nurses employed by NC hospitals and in 2015, public health agencies
- describe employer goals in increasing the percentage of BSN and higher degree prepared nurses
- describe current human resource strategies utilized to increase BSN and higher degrees in the nursing workforce

Summary of Results:

One hundred and twenty Hospital Chief Nursing Officers in North Carolina were surveyed during the years 2013, 2014 and 2015. The coalition used a strategy to increase response rate by limiting the survey to 12 questions. The purpose was that the survey could be completed quickly. The response rate averaged about 33 percent throughout the three year period. In 2015, Public Health Chief Nursing Officers were surveyed as well. The survey, while remaining essentially the same, was modified slightly based upon employer responses over the three year period. For example, if a large number of respondents wrote in a similar theme in the comments section, that theme was added to the next year’s survey.

The survey results showed that over the last three years the goals of hiring and promoting nurses with BSN degrees has a pattern in many parts of the state. Most acute care systems and hospitals have developed human resource strategies to promote higher education in their nursing workforce especially related to clinical ladders. Hospitals in urban areas were more likely to advocate human resource policies to promote BSN education than those in rural areas..

It was noted in 2015 that hospitals employed more BSN educated nurses than in the public health arena. The largest number (31%) of public health CNOs stated that the percentage of

BSN graduates in their workforce is 0-15%. In 2013 and 2014, the largest number of hospital CNOs stated that the percentage of BSN prepared graduates in their workforce was between 16 to 30%. In 2015, 31 percent of hospital CNOs stated that their BSN workforce was between 16 to 30% and 31 percent stated between 46-59%. Data from the survey shows that there has been a gradual increase in the number of BSN prepared nurses in hospitals.

Another interesting outcome of the survey relates to whether the facility or agency has a plan in place to increase the number of BSN or higher prepared nurses in their workforce. Consistently, well over 85 percent of hospitals responding stated they had a plan in place while only 38% of Public Health CNOs stated they had a plan in place. Approximately 50% of hospitals who responded said they had a plan to increase the number of BSN nurses had a specific target date to reach this goal. While of the 38% of public health institutions who had a plan, 91% of the public health respondents had a specific goal stated.

The majority of hospitals reported providing tuition reimbursement for employees as the most common incentive to encourage nurses to return to school. The second most common incentive was providing promotions or clinical ladder incentives for those who continued their education. In Public Health the majority of respondents stated they had insufficient funds to offer tuition reimbursement or other incentives.

The most frequent organizational barriers cited by respondents related to being able to reimburse nurses to return to school with staffing/scheduling issues being a close second.

Overview of comments in survey:

Hospitals:

The comment portion of the survey provided a wealth of information about what hospital CNOs perceived as important interventions related to promoting educational advancement for nurses and have remained consistent over three years. It also provided information about the organizational barriers identified as preventing their institutions from having nurses educated at the BSN or Higher Degree. The most common trend noted in hospitals is to require a BSN within a certain number of years from hire date. Very few CNOs stated that they believed they could attain 80% of a BSN workforce by 2020, but the majority were implementing strategies to move towards that goal in the future.

There were commonalities listed related to barriers, with the most common being competition from the larger university/academic hospitals for BSN graduates. A number cited the lack of Universities in their immediate area that provide the entry level BSN or could provide a means for an RN to BSN degree. Another frequent comment, especially in rural areas, was that many graduates who achieved an ADN did not see how pursuing a BSN could help them personally.

Public Health

Public Health CNOs overwhelming stated that low public health salaries makes it difficult to recruit Public Health Nurses with BSN's and that most agencies had very few tuition reimbursement funds or none at all. The highest reported tuition reimbursement in public health was one agency which provided \$1,000 per year. Another common response by public health CNOs was that there was lack of incentives for ADN graduates because there they would

not receive an increase in pay to obtain a higher degree. In addition, a clinical ladder wasn't offered in most of the agencies.

Future Plans:

The NC Future of Nursing Education Committee plans to repeat the survey in July 2016. The Executive Council of the Future of Nursing Action Coalition in North Carolina will continue to aggregate and trend the results to determine the Chief Nursing Officers Perception of an increasingly educated nursing workforce and disseminate the data to the current stakeholders in the state and the nation. The survey will again be completed by the North Carolina AHEC in collaboration with the North Carolina Hospital Association. Plans are to continue to include Hospital CNOs and Public Health CNOs to provide another "snapshot" of North Carolina trends of BSN workforce promotion. Other CNOs may be added such as long term care CNOs who are being considered if there is a mechanism to easily distribute the survey to new groups.

Results Table:

Survey Question		Year of Results			
		Hospitals	Hospitals	Hospitals	Public Health
Agency Type		2013	2014	2015	2015
CNO Survey Response Rate		50/120 42%	31/120 26%	36/120 30%	29/99 29%
Is your facility part of a system? YES		74%	80%	78%	28%
Estimate the percentage of RNs currently prepared at the BSN or higher level at your facility/agency	0-15%	12%	3%	8%	31%
	16-30%	35%	32%	31%	14%
	31-45%	22%	29%	22%	10%
	46-59%	20%	23%	31%	24%
	60-75%	8%	13%	8%	7%
	76-90%	2%	0%	0%	10%
	91-100%	0%	0%	0%	3%
Does your facility have goals or plans in place to increase the percentage of BSN and higher prepared nurses? YES		88%	97%	89%	38%
If yes, does your goal include a specific percentage and target date? If yes, please share in the comment box below.		60%	47%	53%	91%

If Yes, are your efforts targeted at specific group(s) of nurses? (Choose all that apply)	Managers	63%	60%	50%	64%
	Educators	30%	33%	38%	18%
	Clinical Experts	23%	30%	28%	27%
	Staff Nurses	90%	93%	97%	100%
Which of the following strategies is your facility/agency using to increase the number of BSN and higher prepared nurses? (Choose all that apply)	Require for Initial Hire	40%	24%	19%	18%
	Require within a Defined Time Limit	28%	41%	31%	0%
	Limit Promotions to RN with BSN or higher degrees	60%	72%	72%	18%
	Partner with an institution or agency to promote educational advancement (e.g. University, RIBN, AHEC)	42%	80%	47%	18%
	Require completion of BSN within a define time period from date of hire	NA	NA	53%	9%
Indicate current incentives used to increase number of BSN and higher prepared nurses: (Choose all that apply)	Pay Differential	16%	24%	16%	9%
	Tuition Reimbursement	97%	79%	91%	18%
	Bonus at completion of BSN or Higher Degree	4.5%	0%	3%	0%
	Promotion or clinical ladders	32%	55%	91%	18%
Indicate organizational barriers to increasing number of BSN and higher prepared nurses: (Choose all that apply)	Insufficient funds for tuition reimbursement.	58%	63%	25%	76%
	Insufficient funds for incentives	40%	54%	22%	79%
	Insufficient senior leadership support	7%	13%	11%	7%
	Scheduling/staffing barriers and issues	35%	21%	28%	41%
	Cap on Tuition Reimbursement	NA	NA	44%	17%
	Other	28%	33%	42%	17%

Does your facility or system currently have or is it pursuing Magnet status?	Yes	52%	58%	39%	NA
	No	48%	36%	61%	NA

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