

# Title: Tennessee Center for Nursing Best Practice Initiative

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**Issue:** The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), consisting of 16 states, reports an impending nursing faculty shortage. Further, there are currently no unfilled nursing student enrollment capacities in Tennessee's public nursing programs that prepare students for registered nurse licensure. These factors will impact the state's ability to educate sufficient numbers of registered nurses to meet the future demand.

## **Description of Problem:**

### **Projected Need**

- In Tennessee, a projection of nursing supply and demand, commissioned by the TN Center of Nursing, funded by Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and conducted by the TN Hospital Association in July 2001 found that over the next few years, demand will exceed supply. This gap becomes greater each year beginning in 2008, and a total shortage of over 9,000 RNs is predicted by 2020. [\[1\]](#)
- A similar study conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services predicts a much greater nursing shortage for Tennessee. Data extracted from the DHHS report shows that Tennessee is projected to have the most critical shortage of all SREB states by the year 2020, as provided in Table 1. [\[2\]](#)

**Table 1. 2000-2020 Projections for Shortages of RNs in Tennessee, the SREB, and the U.S.**

State		2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Tennessee	Shortage #'s	-6798	-12,455	-19,050	-27,110	-36,305
	Shortage %	-13%	- 22%	- 31%	- 40%	- 48.5%
SREB (average)	Shortage #'s	-26,409	-49,662	-93,768	-176,335	-288,085
	Shortage %	- 4%	- 7%	- 13%	- 23%	- 38.7%
U. S. (average)	Shortage #'s	-110,707	-149,387	-275,315	-507,063	-808,416
	Shortage %	- 6%	- 7%	- 12%	- 20%	- 28.8%

### **Declining enrollment**

- Across the SREB states, a majority of associate's programs were full and could not accept more students for the 2001-02 academic year. In contrast, a majority of the bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs could have accepted more students. [\[3\]](#)
- In Tennessee, the enrollments in all RN initial licensure programs decreased by 25% from 1996 to 1999. [\[4\]](#)
- In Tennessee's private nursing programs, 143 additional nursing students could have been admitted in 2002 (33 in West, 47 in Middle, and 63 in East Tennessee). [\[5\]](#)

### **Educational Issues Related to Nursing Faculty**

- Nationally, 40% of all RNs will be older than age 50 by the year 2010. [\[6\]](#)
- Nationally, the average age of nursing professors is 52, and for associate professors is 49. [\[7\]](#)
- In the SREB states in 2001, more than 432 unfilled faculty positions were reported. [\[8\]](#)
- 86 of these SREB schools reported that they did not have enough faculty to cover their undergraduate and graduate programs. [\[9\]](#)
- 144 faculty members retired from these schools in that academic year. [\[10\]](#)
- SREB projections for 2002-2006 indicate that 784 nurse educators expect to retire. [\[11\]](#)
- In 1996, only 7.6% of Tennessee RNs had either a Masters or doctorate, which are required degrees for holding faculty positions in nursing education programs. [\[12\]](#)
- Faculty resignations reported for the SREB states in the next two years total 558, including 26 for Tennessee. [\[13\]](#)

· There were 30 full-time and 10 part-time unfilled nursing faculty positions in Tennessee in 2002 among the 20 institutions responding.[\[14\]](#)

**Proven Strategies to Boost Enrollment:**[\[15\]](#)

- Enhancing capacity in existing schools of nursing through partnerships with local institutions to expand faculty and enrollment pool.
- Recruiting from within by use of ADN to BSN strategies.
- Advertising and promotion to advance messages about the school's particular academic programs and the rewards of a nursing career.
- Priming the early pipeline by targeting high schools students with recruitment strategies.
- Targeting underrepresented and nontraditional groups by use of such strategies as partnerships with high schools, colleges and universities that serve large numbers of minority students.
- Employ dedicated recruiters to assist schools in finding adequate numbers of qualified applicants to fill vacant faculty positions.
- Improving financial aid through strategies such as nursing employers reinstating tuition reimbursement.
- Enhancing distance learning.
- Polishing the image of nursing, particularly with high school guidance counselors.

**Proven Strategies to Recruit and Retain Faculty:**[\[16\]](#)

- Compressing education time to telescope the time from baccalaureate enrollment to doctoral degree.
- Financial incentives for students and faculty to move on to doctoral programs.
- Retaining the master's-level educator track.

**National Recommendation:** Make nursing education more efficient by reducing the number of nursing schools in hospitals and community colleges and increasing capacity in baccalaureate and graduate degree programs.[\[17\]](#)

**Tennessee Center for Nursing Recommendation:**

Whereas in 2002 there were 143 openings for students wishing to pursue degrees that prepare them for initial nursing licensure at private Tennessee colleges, and  
Whereas the state's public nursing program's student enrollments were filled to capacity, and that capacity could be expanded if qualified nursing faculty and more clinical learning sites were available; and  
Whereas there were 432 unfilled nursing faculty position in the southern region in 2001 with an additional 26 educators expected to retire by 2004;  
The Tennessee Center for Nursing recommends that the Tennessee Board of Nursing promote enhanced efficiency of the state's existing nursing programs by considering available student capacity and the limited resource of nursing faculty when considering the approval of new programs preparing students for initial registered nurse licensure in Tennessee.  
Further, for any new registered nurse licensure program considered for approval, the Center recommends that the Board act to facilitate partnership models between newly interested parties and existing Board approved programs.  
Finally, the Tennessee Center for Nursing encourages the facilitation and approval of new programs at the masters and doctoral levels with education tracks aimed at preparing graduates for nursing faculty roles.

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[\[1\]](#) *Projection of Supply and Demand for Nurses in TN: 20002-2020.* TN Center for Nursing and TN Hospital Association. July 2001

[\[2\]](#) *Projected Supply, Demand, and Shortages of Registered Nurses: 2000-2020.* DHHS. March 2000.

[\[3\]](#) *Nursing Faculty Shortage.* Southern Regional Education Board.

[\[4\]](#) *Talking Points.* Tennessee Center for Nursing, Inc. 2001

[5] New Reference

[6] *Nursing Workforce: Emerging Nurse Shortages Due to Multiple Factors*. Government Accounting Office. July 2001.

[7] *Strategies to Reverse the New Nursing Shortage*. American Association of Colleges of Nursing. 2002.

[8] *Nursing Faculty Shortage*. Southern Regional Education Board. 2000-2001 Survey

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] *Ibid*

[12] *Talking Points*. Tennessee Center for Nursing, Inc.

[13] *Nursing Faculty Shortage*. Southern Regional Education Board. 2000-2001 Survey

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] *Amid Nursing Shortages, Schools Employ Strategies to Boost Enrollment*. American Association of Colleges of Nursing. June 2000

[16] *Faculty Shortages Intensify Nation's Nursing Deficit*. American Association of Colleges of Nursing. April 1999.

[17] *When Care Becomes a Burden: Diminishing Access to Adequate Nursing*. Claire M. Fagin. Milbank Memorial Fund. 2001