



Sept/Oct/Nov 2004

TCN Draws on Experience of Nursing Education Leaders from Other States

Belmont University Hosts Nursing Education Summit Aimed at Addressing Nursing Crisis

Belmont University and Dr. Debra Wollaber, Dean of the Belmont University College of Health Sciences and the School of Nursing, hosted the Tennessee Center for Nursing's statewide conference Thursday in the Massey Board Room. The Tennessee Center for Nursing organized the summit, bringing together Tennessee's nursing edu-

cation leaders, to hear presentations from officials from Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Virginia on how they plan to increase nursing education capacity in their own states.

The purpose of the summit was to bring faculty from Tennessee's nursing schools and members of

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CHARLOTTE BRADSHER POSSIBLY FIRST PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING DOCTORAL STUDENT, SEE PAGE 2



NEW PROGRAM TO IMPACT NURSING EDUCATION CRISIS IN TN



The Tennessee Board of Regents Online Degree Program opened its new Master of Science in Nursing Program this week. The purposes of the program are: to increase access to graduate nursing education, especially for those nurses aspiring to teach in entry level nursing programs, manage professional practice work settings, and practice as advanced clinicians in a changing health care delivery system; to maximize the effective use of technology for delivery of graduate level instruction; and, to encourage and support collaboration among TBR institutions.

Fifty-five degree-seeking students began classes this past Monday, many of whom are preparing to teach in Tennessee's schools of nursing. An additional 25 students are also enrolled in courses offered through the program.

The shortage of nursing faculty in the State is a major factor in the capacity of the education system to produce adequate numbers of trained nurses. In 2003 schools of nursing were forced to turn away hundreds of qualified applicants due to lack of faculty and other resources. With an estimate of half of the nursing faculty in Tennessee projected to retire in the next five years, the situation will worsen unless the state can produce more nurses with advanced degrees to serve as faculty.

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NURSING EDUCATION LEADERS ADDRESS NURSING CRISIS

**FIRST PUBLIC HEALTH
NURSING DOCTORAL
STUDENT GRADUATES:
MAY BE FIRST IN THE
WORLD**

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the Nursing Education Master Plan Steering Committee together to learn from the experience of other states and to initiate discussion on what nursing schools across Tennessee can do to produce more nurses and avert the emerging nursing shortage. The Summit also addressed the need for additional resources to increase faculty numbers and various other capacity-building requirements.

Presenting Nursing Education Capacity-Building Plans were Nancy Bridges, RN, CCM, nurse executive from the Nevada Hospital Association; Fran A'Hern Smith, DNSc, RN, president of the New Mexico Center for Nursing Excellence; Billy Bevill, MSN, RN, associate director of the North Carolina Center for Nursing; and JoAnne Kirk Henry, EdD, RN, associate professor at Virginia Commonwealth University School of Nursing.

Following presentations, the second meeting of the Nursing Education Master Plan Steering Committee convened to evaluate and discuss the findings

from the other states and determine how certain initiatives may be implemented in Tennessee.

"In the face of a looming shortage of nurses in our state, Tennessee schools of nursing turned away hundreds of qualified nursing applicants last fall due to a lack of educational resources to expand student enrollment," said Ann P. Duncan, MPH, RN, executive director of the Tennessee Center for Nursing. "It behooves Tennessee to look at how other states are dealing with increasing educational capacity and hear the 'lessons learned' from these states."

The work of the Nursing Education Master Plan Steering Committee is funded by a grant awarded to the Tennessee Center for Nursing from the Tennessee Hospital Association's Center for Health Workforce Development. The steering committee's purpose is to develop a Nursing Education Master Plan to double the number of nursing school graduates by the year 2010.

The first graduate of the Public Health Nursing option in the DNSc program may also be the first person to graduate with this degree anywhere in the world. Charlotte Bradsher RN, MSN, received her DNSc May 28th, marking the first of what promises to be many more graduates into this very important part of health care.

When reached at her home in Memphis, Dr. Bradsher stated, "This is an exciting occurrence in my nursing career because the preventive care focus of public health was often an exercise in swimming upstream for me, beginning early as a senior nursing student when I requested a public health nurse preceptor instead of the traditional hospital nurse. The value of public health is now being realized more than ever and I am looking forward to participating in a small way by working with programs that promote health in population-based settings. Completing this doctoral program has not only increased my public health knowledge, but also has renewed my dedication as a public health practitioner and nurse educator." After graduation, she plans to serve as a consultant to CDC, WHO, and other agencies in the area of mass immunization programs worldwide.

Dr. Bradsher's faculty advisor, Dr. Craig Stotts, developed the PHN option in 2001 and continues to serve as the option coordinator. "I'm proud of Charlotte's many accomplishments and helping us blaze this new trail. She will be a leader at the national and international level in the area of public health nursing."

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Recognizing that the critical shortage of nursing faculty impacts the number of nurses in the workforce, the deans and directors of the six Tennessee Board of Regents Schools of Nursing that currently offer baccalaureate and higher degrees are working together to offer the Master of Science in Nursing via the Regents Online Degree Program (RODP). The MSN-RODP offers concentrations in Nursing Education, Nursing Administration, Nursing Informatics and Advanced Practice Nursing. The Advanced Practice Nursing concentration includes the Family Nurse Practitioner option.

The program is designed for working registered nurses who are unable to pursue additional graduate education because of job demands, family responsibilities, or time/distance constraints. Students are typically employed nurses for whom convenient access is crucial for pursuing a masters degree, and for whom few transfer opportunities are currently available. Students access lessons, discussions, quizzes and other content within a secure asynchronous online environment. Web-based courses are designed to engage students and include a wide range of teaching and learning tools. Continuous access to an individual grade book allows students to monitor their progress. Built in calendar features encourage students to maintain steady progress, and access to the 24/7 help desk assures support when needed.

RODP students have access to all resources students would have on a University campus, including a virtual Bookstore, a virtual Student Center, and a Virtual Library. By accessing the full-text version of the Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), students may conduct extensive library research from the comfort of their home computer.

The Master of Science in Nursing Regents Online Degree Program, using technology, will improve access to high quality, affordable, student-centered graduate nursing education opportunities and maximize the use of limited state resources through cooperation among the six TBR Universities.

The six Tennessee Board of Regents universities are Austin Peay State University, East Tennessee State University, Middle Tennessee State University, Tennessee State University, Tennessee Technological University, and the University of Memphis. As a consortium, the schools share resources (e.g., faculty and courses). Each course is developed by faculty from across the State with the greatest degree of expertise in the subject matter. "Students enrolled in MSN-RODP classes have the advantage of having the highest qualified faculty in the system developing and teaching the courses," said Dr. Pam Holder, Coordinator of the MSN-RODP program. "In addition," said Holder, "the Regents Online Degree Program provides an exceptionally strong infrastructure for the delivery of web-based courses." Web-based courses reach populations not currently enrolled in graduate education, and also permit students who are currently enrolled in on-campus programs to take additional courses, thus completing their programs sooner. "The success of RODP speaks for itself, and provides documentation that high quality programs can be delivered using distance methodologies," added Holder.

RODP was established by the Tennessee Board of Regents to improve access to high quality, affordable, student-centered learning opportunities. Using technology, RODP programs assist Tennessee in meeting the state wide needs of workforce development. Now in its 4th year, RODP is experiencing solid growth and has been recognized internationally as an award winning online delivery program. Enrollment has grown each semester (5932 students for fall 2005) and the attrition rate has fallen as students and faculty gain familiarity with tools and pacing for online learning success. Dr. Robbie Kendall-Melton, Associate Vice-Chancellor, attributes the programs success to "the collaborative efforts of the campuses; the guidance of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Dr. Paula Short, in establishing a Strategic Plan for RODP; the governance of the RODP Curriculum and Oversight Committees; the support of the Chancellor, Dr. Charles Manning, and the Board of Regents; and most importantly, the commitment from the faculty and campus RODP staff members".

For more information about the program please visit the MSN-RODP website at <http://www.rodg.org/msn> or contact Dr. Pam Holder at pgholder@tbr.state.tn.us or 615-366-3972.

*Article submitted by Dr. Pam Holder
Coordinator for Nursing Education
Regents Online Degree Program*

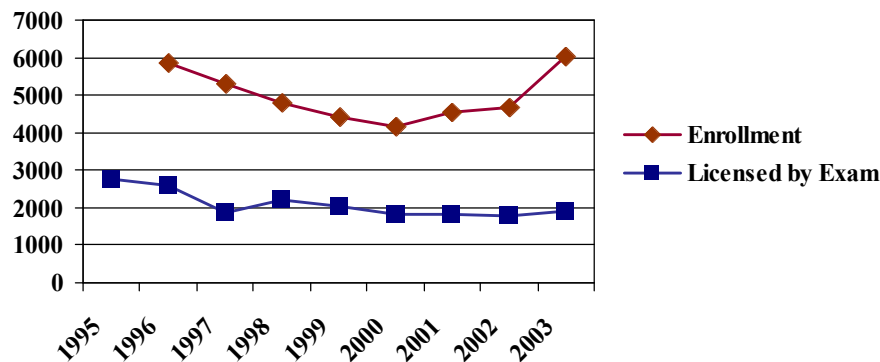
OF SHORTAGES AND PIPELINES

ANN P. DUNCAN, MPH, RN

A draft (January 2004) of the Health Resources and Services Administration, DHHS, document "What is Behind HRSA'S Projected Supply, Demand, and Shortages of Registered Nurses" states that by the year 2020 Tennessee is projected to have a shortage of 35,300 RNs and is anticipated to meet only 53% of the demand for nursing care. To compound this nursing shortage, projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics forecast that by the year 2010 there will be a national shortage of 10,033,000 workers, most of which are skilled worker positions. Competition among the occupations and professions for the best and brightest to enter their respective fields will be fierce. Every employer needs to read *Impending CRISIS: Too Many Jobs, Too Few People* (Roger Herman, et al) to learn how to prepare for this gathering storm. Meanwhile, Tennessee has a small "window of opportunity" to prime the nursing pipeline while we still have more qualified nursing candidates than our schools of nursing can enroll.

The following data indicate that we will have to do more than merely increase the number of students who enroll in nursing programs if we are to meet the challenges of assuring an adequate supply of professional nurses in Tennessee. Figure 1 shows that since 1995 there is a considerable difference between the number of students who declare nursing as a major and the number who successfully graduate and become licensed as registered nurses. The reasons for student attrition need to be identified and effective strategies implemented to improve the retention of qualified nursing students to graduation and licensure in Tennessee as registered nurses.

Figure 1: Comparison of Enrollment in Tennessee Initial RN Licensure Programs and RNs Licensed by Examination

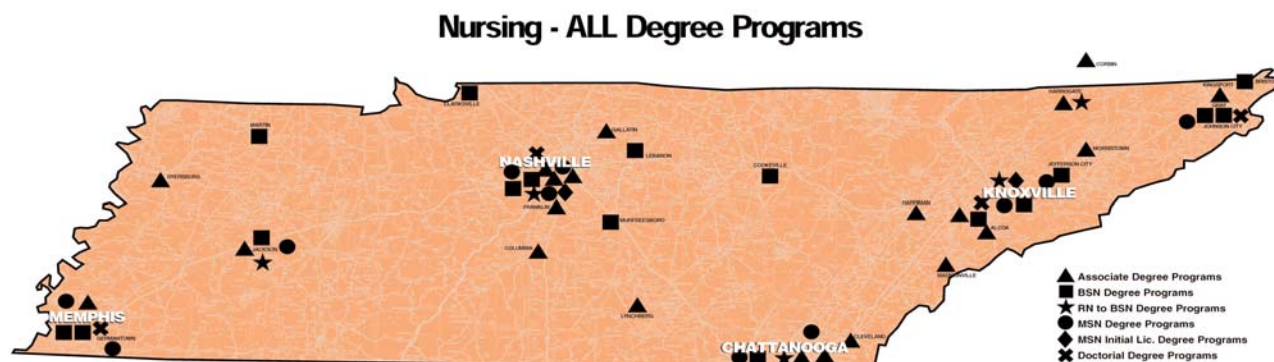


TN Board of Nursing Data

Establishing new schools of nursing for a resource-strapped state like Tennessee is not an effective strategy for increasing the supply of registered nurses. Figure 2 shows the location of schools of nursing across the state. Over 95% of Tennesseans live within 35 miles of an existing registered nurse program. Additionally, there are off-site courses that are not shown on the map and the increasing use of distance learning technology is bringing courses to individuals on their personal computers. The UTCHS College of Nursing MSN Program and the RODP-MSN Program are exemplary initiatives in the use of distance learning technology by schools of nursing.

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Figure 2: Geographic Distribution of Schools of Nursing



"Securing Tennessee's Future: Increasing Educational Capacity in Nursing"

The Tennessee Center for Nursing (TCN) has recommended that schools who want to offer nursing as a major establish a partnership with an existing school of nursing, such as the partnerships Fisk and Lipscomb Universities established with the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing. There are several compelling reasons why establishing new schools of nursing is not an effective strategy for increasing the supply of new nurses: a new school of nursing comes at a considerable infrastructure cost that is much less when partnering with an existing school of nursing; it takes less faculty to expand a program to serve a partner university than to start a new program, and there is a critical shortage of faculty already without making the situation worse; and finally, health facilities who are already working with numerous nursing and allied health programs would have to deal with even more programs seeking student clinical experience and further complicating coordination among programs.

There are effective strategies that schools can implement to increase nursing educational capacity but additional resources will be needed. The Nursing Education Master Plan Steering Committee has sent a questionnaire to all nursing degree programs in the state asking that they identify strategies the individual schools propose to use and the resource requirements that will be needed. In January 2005, the master plan will be distributed to the public and the difficult work of finding the resources necessary to increase educational capacity in this state will accelerate. Financing the educational pipeline to prepare enough registered nurses to meet the projected demand for care will be costly, but the cost in both human and financial terms of doing otherwise will be far greater.

Ann P. Duncan is the Executive Director for TCN



Dr. Bradsher's dissertation topic was a study of the measles immunization campaign in Kenya. Other PHN dissertation topics currently in progress cover areas as diverse as obesity in school-children, the nursing shortage, and homeless services in Memphis. Students in the PHN option come from states ranging from California to Virginia, and Wisconsin to the southern part of Alabama. They are encouraged to conduct their dissertation research in their hometowns where they already are members of the community and where they will continue to live and be leaders in preventing disease and promoting health at the community, state, and national levels.

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Valda Barksdale & Ann P. Duncan, Editors

TCN Calendar

September

29-30 TN Hospital Association
Annual Meeting
Nashville Convention Center

October

1-3 TN Assoc of Student Nurses
Annual Convention
Middle TN State University

6 TCN Executive Committee
Fall Meeting
Maple Leaf Lodge
Townsend, TN

7-8 TCN Board of Directors
Fall Meeting
Maple Leaf Lodge
Townsend, TN

22-24 TN Nurses Association
Annual Convention
Embassy Suites Cool Springs

26 Nursing Ed Master Plan
Steering Committee Meeting
TN Hospital Assoc Board Room

28-30 Passport to Nurse Wellness:
Creating a Positive Environment
for Nurses Conference
Loews Vanderbilt Plaza

December

1-3 RHAT 10th Annual Conference
Chattanooga Marriott
Convention Center