

# **Title: Recruitment of African Americans into Nursing**

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## **Background**

A general nursing shortage is worrisome to the nursing profession and to the health of the United States. But a shortage in African American nurses is even more troublesome. Minority groups in the United States constitute 25% of the population with approximately 12% African American. By the year 2015, one third of the nation will be ethnically and culturally diverse, with African Americans expected to increase to 20%. Yet, African American student enrollment in baccalaureate nursing programs has experienced a precipitous drop over the past 20 years. Current recruitment and retention strategies fail to address the immediate need for African American nurses and generally do not plan for long-term recruitment of students.

## **Career Choices of African American Students in Higher Education**

- Business
- Education
- Engineering
- Computer Science
- Law
- Medicine

## **Health Career Choices of African American Students**

- Associate Degree Nursing
- Licensed Practical Nursing
- Licensed Vocational Nursing
- Certified Nursing Assistant
- Medical Assistant
- Medical Technology

## **Recruitment Strategy Weaknesses**

- Broad and general without regard to cultural sensitivity
- Often rely on remediation and financial assistance as primary strategies
- Fail to market nursing as a career competitive with careers frequently selected by African American college students
- Minimal attention to curricular and institutional issues:
  - cultural diversity in the curriculum
  - accommodation of different learning styles
  - African American faculty, role models, and peers

## **Recommendations**

- Provide minority faculty, advisors, role models, mentors, and peer support
- Target African American licensed nurses without baccalaureate degrees, allied health professionals without nursing degrees, high school scholars, and outstanding graduate students from other disciplines for recruitment

- Provide financial assistance
- For Associate Degree RN's:
  - Grant credit for traditional clinical courses
  - Design coursework for completion in one academic year
  - Offer classes at hospitals and other health agencies for the convenience of students
  - Focus the curriculum on professional issues, ethics, community health, and case management
  
- For Licensed Practical Nurses:
  - Grant credit for pharmacology and technical skills
  - Provide peer support with associate degree nursing students
  - Provide part-time study options
  
- For High School Students:  
Adopt an Athletic Coach Paradigm
  - Establish, cultivate and maintain close relationships with guidance counselors, science, math and health teachers
  - Attend (scout) academic competitions at high schools
  - Make home visits to potential students and their families
  - Provide campus visits to colleges and schools of nursing
  
- For Graduate Students:
  - Recruit from historically black colleges and universities
  - Use "bridge programs" that lead to graduate education in nursing
  - Market career opportunities in nursing: Advance Practice Nursing Specialties, Nursing Education, and Nursing Administration

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