



The NLN Calls for Increase in Title VIII Funding

In testimony dated March 30, 2006, the NLN urged the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees with authority over Title VIII – Nursing Workforce Development Programs – to ensure that these programs are funded at a minimum level of \$175 million for FY 2007. As NLN’s CEO Dr. Ruth Corcoran stated, “Placing this minimal funding request in perspective, note that during the last serious nursing shortage in 1974, Congress appropriated \$153 million for nurse education programs. In today’s dollars that appropriation would equate to approximately \$592 million, nearly four times the amount the federal government is spending on nurse education now.”

In an NLN survey of the 2004-2005 academic year, an estimated 147,000 qualified applications were turned away from nursing programs at all degree levels owing in large part to the lack of faculty necessary to teach this number of additional students – a 17.6 percent increase from the 2003-2004 academic year. Corcoran continued, “With an increasing application pool, a key priority in tackling the nurse shortage has to be scaling up the capacity to accept qualified applicants. Today’s undersized supply of appropriately prepared nurses and nurse faculty does not bode well for meeting the needs of a diverse, aging population.”

A copy of the testimony can be accessed by going to the [NLN web site](#).

North Carolina Lawmakers Consider Nurse Faculty Fellows Program

A group of North Carolina lawmakers charged with recommending ways to stave off a nursing shortage is considering creating a nurse faculty fellows program – much like the state’s teaching fellows grants – that would be sponsored by state and private funds. While the

nationwide nursing shortage has not yet hit North Carolina as badly as some other states, the demand for nurses is expected to increase drastically and the state’s schools already have waiting lists because they do not have enough instructors.

“People are flocking towards the nursing profession, but we’re turning qualified applicants away,” said Brenda Cleary, executive director of the North Carolina Center for Nursing. According to the center’s data, fewer than half of the nearly 15,000 qualified candidates were offered admission to the state’s nursing programs in 2003. About 2,300 nurses graduated in 2003-2004 from the state’s community colleges – the largest producer of nurses. At the same (Cont’d page 2)

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## **NC Lawmakers Consider Nurse Faculty Fellows Program** (Cont'd from page 1)

time, the demand for nurses is expected to increase by about 4,400 between 2004 and 2006. Meanwhile, the number of qualified teachers is not increasing at the same rate. At present, the state has about 900 RNs in nursing schools, and the center estimates that as many as 225 more may be needed in the next couple of years. In addition, just as the state needs more nursing teachers, those who are now teaching are approaching retirement age.

Another challenge in North Carolina is that the standards for teaching are getting higher. Most nurses do not have the advanced degrees that will be required for them to teach, and those who do can make more money by practicing in specialties than by teaching. "We demand a higher credential and on top of that, the salaries aren't competitive with the marketplace," said Sharon Tanner, associate vice president of instructional development and technology for the North Carolina Community Colleges.

The group of lawmakers studying the problem initially proposed spending \$375,000 on nursing scholarships, with private funding having to match that amount. The money would provide \$15,000-per-year loans to 50 students for nursing training, and – for each year the borrower teaches other nurses – the state would forgive a year of the loan. However, the legislators have indicated that they are willing to change their proposal based on what they learn in the coming months. The group plans to present a plan to their colleagues in May, when the North Carolina Legislature reconvenes.

### **MD Funds Nurse Support Program**

To provide for two statewide initiatives designed to help alleviate the shortage of nurses, the Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission has approved funding in the amount of \$9.4 million a year over the next 10 years for the Nurse Support Program (NSP). The first initiative will fund graduate nursing faculty scholarships and living expenses, new nursing faculty fellowships, and state nursing scholarship and living expense grants. The second, the competitive institutional grants initiative, will expand the state's nursing capacity through shared resources, increase the state's nursing faculty, increase nursing student retention, and increase the pipeline for nurse faculty.

According to Janet Allen, dean of the University of Maryland School of Nursing, "This funding comes at a time when the state and the nation are experiencing a severe shortage of nurse faculty, which resulted in Maryland nursing schools denying admission to nearly 2,000 qualified applicants in 2003-2004." She continued, "This state initiative is unprecedented. Maryland needs nurses, and to get more nurses, we need the nurse faculty to educate

them. This program couldn't have come at a better time." Allen collaborated with other health care providers in the state to conceive and help develop the NSP.

### **Tax Break Proposed for Nurse Faculty in Ohio**

Ohio State Representative Peter Ujvagi wants to offer tax credits to nurse faculty to even out the playing field with their colleagues in clinical practice. Without an incentive to attract and keep teachers to train more nurses, he fears patient care will continue to decline. Ujvagi said the tax break may cost the state in the short run, but it is a long-term investment that will eventually pay off.

The Ohio State University College of Nursing encourages the best juniors and seniors to go on for advanced degrees so they can teach at some point in their careers. "We're going to really need to focus even more heavily than we have so far to have more people become educators," warned OSU associate dean Karen Ahijevych, PhD, RN. Ahijevych said a tax incentive would help. She just hopes it's not too little, too late.

## PA Announces Initiatives to Aid Nurse Educators

The Pennsylvania Higher Education Foundation announced six new education initiatives to encourage current nurses to seek higher education to become nurse educators. Through a cooperative effort with the Leadership Council of the Pennsylvania Center for Health Careers, the organization added the initiatives to its existing measures that aim to reduce the state's nursing shortage by increasing undergraduate admissions to state nursing schools.

"Part of our mission is to provide and improve access to higher education," explained Mike Reiber, spokesperson for the nonprofit Pennsylvania Higher Education Foundation. Reiber explained that after working to increase the number of applicants to nursing schools, it became clear that a problem existed at the higher education level with the shortage of nurse faculty.

Included in the new initiatives are:

- The Nurse Educator Loan Forgiveness Program forgives up to \$50,000 of qualified loan debt, provided that the applicant agrees to work three to five years as a new nurse educator at an approved Pennsylvania post-secondary school.

- The Graduate Nurse Education Grant Program awards scholarship funds to state graduate nursing schools to increase enrollment and improve retention of future nurse educators.
- The Nurse Faculty Lines Program provides funds annually to nonprofit state nursing schools to underwrite nurse faculty positions.
- The Interim Student Loan Guarantee Program provides alternative loans to meet unmet needs of new nursing schools, nursing schools attempting to reopen, and nursing schools providing accelerated programs.

For more information, go to the [Pennsylvania Higher Education Foundation](#) web site.

## Nurse Faculty Bill Introduced in SC

South Carolina State Senator Joel Lourie (D) recently introduced S.1137, the **Nurse Faculty Scholars Act**. This bill would establish the South Carolina Nursing Scholars Commission which will provide scholarship loans to nurses to obtain baccalaureate and master's degrees in nursing. The legislation also would establish the South Carolina Center for Professional Nurse Retention and Recruitment which will address issues concerning recruitment, retention and utilization of professional nurse resources.

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