

NLN Board of Governors Takes Faculty Shortage to the Hill

On May 12, the **NLN** Board of Governors took to Capitol Hill. They met with their individual congressional delegations and advocated for increased funding for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs, especially for remedies directed at the nursing faculty shortage. At most of the approximately 45 offices visited, members of congress and their legislative assistants were unaware of the faculty shortage and the effect that it was having in their particular states.

Armed with facts and figures, the board members took on the role of advocates. In their visits, they noted that:

T Federal investment in nursing education is less than one-tenth of 1 percent of the total federal budget.

T In 1974, during the last serious nursing shortage, Congress appropriated \$153 million for nurse education programs. In today's dollars that would be worth \$592 million, approximately four times what the federal government is spending now.

T During the 10-year span from 2002 to 2012, health care facilities will need to fill more than 1.1 million RN job openings.

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) projects that, absent aggressive intervention, the RN workforce will fall 29 percent below requirements by the year 2020.

T The number of full-time faculty needed to "fill the nursing gap" may be as high as 40,000.

T Currently, fewer than 20,000 full-time faculty are in the system.

T An estimated 125,000 applications were turned away from nursing programs at all levels for the academic year 2003-2004. (Preliminary report was released by the **NLN** in December 2004).



From the left, Representative Cynthia McKinney (D-GA), NLN president Joyce Murray, and NLN board member Joan Darden

Congress is in recess until next week. When they return, the appropriations process will be in full swing. We will need the help of every **NLN** member if we are to see **any** increase in the FY 2006 Title VIII budget. To stay on top of what is going on and to know how you can help, sign up to receive **Email Alerts** by going to **NLN's Public Policy Action Center**. Scroll down to the **NLN Email Alerts/Action E-List** box, click it, and then fill out the form that is provided. Do it now!

From the States . . .

Arizona: Boost to Nursing Education

The Arizona House overwhelmingly approved a Senate-passed bill to spend 20 million dollars over five years to relieve the state's shortage of nurses. The bill would spend four million dollars annually to institute a plan to expand the number of graduates from nursing education programs. The proposal is an outgrowth of a coalition of universities, colleges, hospitals, and other organizations. It establishes a partnership to increase the capacity of nursing education programs through collaboration among education and health care organizations. The bill now returns to the Senate for consideration of changes made in the House.

Colorado: Nursing Faculty Shortage

According to a recent report – [The 2004 Colorado Nursing Faculty Supply and Demand Study](#) – released by the Colorado Center for Nursing Excellence, nurse educators, health care providers, and policymakers face substantial challenges related to the current supply of nursing faculty and the ability to educate enough nurses to meet the state's growing needs. Colorado's shortage of qualified nursing faculty at its two-year nursing schools is three times the national average and nearly double the national average at its four-year schools. The state struggles to compete with other states to attract faculty in the face of budget constraints and workload demands that plague the state's largely public nursing education programs. The faculty shortage is expected to be exacerbated in the coming years by an increasing number of faculty retirements. The current nursing shortage in Colorado is estimated at 11 percent, yet more than 2,600 applicants were denied admission

to the state's nursing education programs in 2003 due to capacity constraints. The center has been awarded a \$1 million grant from the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment to design, develop, and disseminate new resources to facilitate the transition of clinical nurses into teaching roles.

Maine: Financial Assistance

A bill introduced in the Maine House of Representatives would provide financial assistance to nurses who are interested in becoming nurse educators. The proposal would provide up to \$4,500 in loans for master's degree students and up to \$6,000 in loans for doctoral students. Loan recipients would be required to teach in the state for at least three years.

Michigan: Fewer Graduates

A recent report from the Michigan Center for Nursing – [Survey of Nursing Education Programs: 2002-2003 School Year](#) – shows that the state's nursing education programs are graduating fewer nurses, even though the demand for nurses has been increasing. According to the report, there was a 7.2 percent decline in the annual number of graduates from undergraduate nursing programs between 1997-98 and 2002-03 (from 4,260 to 3,951). Nearly 2,100 qualified applicants were turned away from Michigan nursing education programs due to the lack of faculty and clinical training sites. In an effort to ease the shortage of nurses and other health care workers, the state is providing \$10 million in grant funds for each of the next two years to develop new nursing and medical training programs at the state's colleges and universities.

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