

What Have We Done About the Michigan Nursing Shortage?

What is the Problem? Michigan and the nation have a rapidly worsening nursing shortage. The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth estimates that by 2015, Michigan will need 18,000 additional RNs. A nursing shortage has implications for the availability and quality of healthcare, as well as the safety of patients and nurses. Education of new nurses is reduced by a shortage of qualified faculty (average age 51.1) and of clinical education sites and instructors; in 2006, Michigan nursing education programs turned away 4,200 qualified applicants. Recruitment and retention of practicing nurses requires changes in regulations, and a safer, more respectful and supportive nursing workplace.

What Have We Done So Far to Fix the Problem? Michigan's strategic plan for addressing the nursing shortage, *The Nursing Agenda for Michigan: 2005-2010* was developed by the Coalition of Michigan Organizations of Nursing, COMON (www.micomon.org) and the Michigan Department of Community Health Office of the Chief Nurse Executive, (www.michigan.gov/mdch/ocne). The *Nursing Agenda* includes new approaches to a) nursing education, b) recruitment and retention of practicing nurses, and c) regulation and licensure of nurses. The implementation of this strategic plan has engaged the 38 Michigan nursing organizations of COMON, multiple State agencies¹, Regional Skills Alliances, the Michigan Legislature, educators, and health care stakeholders.



Nursing Education Initiatives in 2006/2008

- Governor Granholm allocated \$30 million over three years to the Accelerated Health Care Training Initiative², innovative programs to produce additional nursing graduates, including:
 - More than 210 second-degree bachelor's nursing graduates from nine (9) accelerated programs.
 - More than 650 nursing graduates from 15 accelerated programs.
 - Two hundred and thirty-nine staff nurses prepared as clinical instructors, so that students have more opportunities to gain clinical experience, and staff nurses are provided with an interesting new role and future opportunities.
 - Twenty-two students enrolled in a Doctor of Nursing Practice program, many of whom will become nursing faculty.
- The Michigan Legislature Joint Appropriations Subcommittee for Community Colleges called for a workgroup to increase the number of Community College nursing graduates, including strategies for maximizing graduation rates for existing nursing students
- Improved access to additional scholarships for nursing master's students, supported by \$250,000 added to funding for the Michigan Nursing Scholarship Fund (PA 444, SB 1371).
- Targeted access to nursing student scholarships supported by \$178,000 provided annually by Michigan nurses licensing fees (Nursing Professional Fund).
- Promoted diversity in the Michigan nursing population through faculty and education program development to improve recruitment and retention of diverse nursing students (supported by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and MDCH).

Turn this sheet over for information about Nursing Recruitment and Retention Actions and Nursing Regulatory and Licensure Actions.

The complete *Nursing Agenda for Michigan* is available at www.micomon.org. Contact the Office of the Chief Nurse Executive at (517) 241-9841. May 2007.

Nursing Recruitment and Retention Actions in 2006/2007

- Michigan Legislators have become more informed on nursing workforce issues, and have demonstrated through legislation their commitment to addressing the nursing shortage. A group of bills have been introduced in the Legislature to address workforce issues (see section on Nursing Licensure and Regulation).
- The Michigan Center for Nursing has implemented a campaign -- *It's a Guy Thing Too* -- to increase the recruitment and retention of male nurses.
- The *RN Career Transition: Nursing for Life* program³ assists nurses with planning and preparation for life-long nursing careers. The initiative also may attract regional and community resources to address nursing workforce issues at the local level.



For more information, contact COMON at tthomps@mph.org, or call the Office of the Michigan Chief Nurse Executive at (517) 241-9841, or contact the organization listed below.

Nursing Regulatory and Licensure Actions in 2006/2007

- The Michigan Legislature has introduced and is considering legislation in the following areas: improve **nurse staffing** (reduce nursing “burn-out” and increase patient safety) in hospitals by using measures of patient need (acuity) to determine appropriate staffing levels [HB 4340, SB 0063]; regulation of **nursing hours and overtime** [HB 4339]; and use of **patient lift equipment** to increase patient safety and reduce nursing injuries [HB 4013, SB 0377].
- Governor Granholm signed PA 398, HB 6253, and PA 643, HB 5750, which streamlined procedures for temporary licensure for nurses coming into Michigan with a license in another state. This improved the workforce availability of nurses moving to Michigan.
- The Michigan Legislature is moving toward passage of SB 0197, a bill that removes the requirement for a redundant examination for foreign nursing graduates. The companion bill [HB 4207] was passed unanimously by the House. These bills will improve the flow of qualified foreign nursing graduates into the Michigan healthcare system, and make Michigan more attractive to these nurses.
- A barrier to clinical experience for nursing students was removed through a policy revision for criminal background checks until a fully operational system is in place.

¹ Michigan Department of Community Health, Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, Michigan Department of Education, and Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

² The AHCTII is one component of the MIOPPS program of the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth.

³ *The RN Career Transition: Nursing for Life* program of the Michigan State University College of Nursing is funded by the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation in partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Quarterly updates of this document are posted on the COMON website, www.micomon.org.