

Center for
NEW MEXICO
Nursing Excellence

NURSING IN NEW MEXICO

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NURSING IN NEW MEXICO: JANUARY 2009 Executive Summary

Are We Making Progress? Yes!

Registered Nurses (RNs): there are 16,023 licensed RNs with New Mexico residency. **This is an increase of 2,634 since 2002.**

Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs): There are 2,060 licensed LPNs with New Mexico residency. **This is an increase of 130 since 2002**

Nurse Demographics:

- **Age:** 49% of RNS and 48% of LPNs are over age 50. This is up from 46% in 2006. 72% of RNs and 69% of LPNs are over age 40.
- **Gender:** 90% of New Mexico nurses are women; 10% are men. The national average for men in nursing is 5.6%.
- **Education:** 61% of New Mexico RNs entered practice with an associate degree; 28% with a bachelor degree, and 11% with a diploma in nursing. Many nurses continue their formal education, with 39% of nurses reporting an associate degree as their highest level of education, 37.2% reported a bachelor or higher degree in nursing, and 17.8% reported a bachelor or higher degree in another field.

Employment:

- Approximately 72% of nurses work full time in nursing; 20% work part time.
- Employment growth is relatively flat. Nurse employment has shifted from hospitals to the ambulatory and residential care sectors.

Nursing Education:

- The number of graduates from all nursing programs (LPN, associate, and bachelor degree programs) in 2008 was 1,136. **This is an increase of 383 graduates over the number of graduates in 2006.**
- **Students passing National Council Licensure Examination:**
 - 704 RN students passed NCLEX in 2008; **an increase of 325 over 2002.**
 - 241 LPN students passed NCLEX in 2008; **this is an increase of 116 over 2002.**

Are We There Yet? No.

Nursing Workforce: Comparing projected needs with the current NM nursing workforce, deficits will still exist.

(Continued on reverse)

RNs									
	Supply	Demand							
	NMBON	2010 HRSA	Delta	2015 HRSA	Delta	2016 NMWFS	Delta	2020 HRSA	Delta
2007	12,789	14,100	-1,311	15,900	-3,111	15,259	-2,470	18,000	-5,211
2008	13,059	14,100	-1,041	15,900	-2,841	15,259	-2,200	18,000	-4,941
LPNs									
2007	2,407			na	na	5,558	-3,151	na	na
2008	2,412			na	na	5,558	-3,146	na	na

Retention:

- Approximately 50% of nurses not employed in New Mexico are under age 40.
- The first 2 years after obtaining initial licensure are crucial for retention.
- Nurses cite work schedules and staffing, salaries and benefits, respect from management, and the physical demands of nursing as retention issues.

Nursing Education:

- NMHED report that community colleges have a 10% faculty vacancy rate; bachelor programs report a 13.5% vacancy rate.
- Nursing education programs are facing retirements of 25% of full time faculty in the next 5 years.
- There is a significant discrepancy in salary between faculty and peers in the community, especially for community college faculty (approximately \$30,000 less)
- Recurring funding is needed for nursing education support and expansion.
- Increase the number of clinical sites, improve efficiency of scheduling, and use simulation to enhance clinical education. This is currently being explored through a Health Professions Pipeline working group.
- Student remediation and attrition are major challenges for nursing education programs.

Priorities

- Establish the NM Nursing Council. This provides a structure within which to coordinate the complex and inter-dependent initiatives that must come together to successfully address nursing shortage issues. (Under development).
- Adopt a state strategic plan for nursing. This establishes vision and a roadmap to achieve it. A draft of a state plan is currently being coordinated.
- Move forward to develop a robust and reliable data collection capability. A reliable supply and demand forecasting models must be developed immediately.
- Address discrepancies in nurse faculty salaries and compensation, particularly at the community colleges.
- Continue Nurse Loan for Service and Nurse Faculty Loan for Service at current funding levels.
- Collaborate with nurse leaders and employers to explore initiatives and share best practices to enhance work environments and facilitate retention of nurses across the age spectrum.

Nursing In New Mexico: January 2009

Are We Making Progress? Yes!

NURSING WORKFORCE

Nurses Licensed In New Mexico

When discussing New Mexico nursing data from the NM Board of Nursing, the data for New Mexico nurses with New Mexico residency is used, versus total number of nurses licensed. According to the New Mexico Board of Nursing 2008 Annual Report, there are 16,023 registered nurses (RN) with NM residency. This is an increase of 2,634 (19.67%) since 2002. For licensed practical nurses (LPNs), there are 2,960 in 2008, an increase of 130 (4.6%) from 2002. (New Mexico Board of Nursing (NMBON), 2008)

Nurse Demographics

Age: Forty-nine percent (49%) of RNs and 48% of LPNS are over age 50. This is up from 46% for both RNs and LPNs in 2006. While the increase for RNs over age 50 has remained steady at 1% per year for the last several years, it jumped 2% from 2007 to 2008. Approximately 72% of RNs and 69% of LPNs are over age 40 (NMBON, 2008).

Gender: Ninety percent (90%) of NM nurses are women; 10% are men. The percentage of men in nursing has remained steady since 2005 between 9.5 and 10%. (NMBON 2008) Nationally, men account for 5.6% of nurses (HRSA, 2007)

Initial Education: Sixty-one percent (61%) of nurses entered practice with an associate degree, 28% with a bachelor degree, and 11% with a diploma in nursing. (NMBON, 2008) Associate degree and bachelor degree entry to practice is up slightly since 2005: 60% associate degree, 27% bachelor degree, and 13% diploma in nursing. (NMBON, 2005)

Highest Education level: As indicated in the chart below, a significant number of nurses further their education. Only 39% of nurses report an associate degree as their highest level of education. Thirty seven percent (37.2%) have a bachelor degree or higher in nursing, and another 17.8% have a bachelor degree or higher in another field. There has been no change since 2005. (NMBON, 2008; NMBON, 2005)

	Diploma	Assoc	BSN	BS Other	Master Nurses	Master Other	PhD Nurses	PhD Other
2005	7	40	28	12	8	5	0.3	0.8
2008	6	39	29	12	8	5	0.2	0.7

Employment

Approximately 72% of licensed nurses are working full time in nursing; approximately 20% are working part time in nursing (NMBON, 2008).

Employment of licensed nurses grew from 1996 to 2006 by 16.7%, with an average annual growth rate of 1.8%. Most of the growth has occurred due to the growth in the number of RNs (registered nurses). The number of LPNs (licensed practical nurses) remained flat since 1999.

Though the number of licensed nurses increased, the number of jobs held by licensed nurses has been stable since 1999. Because of the increase in the number of licensed nurses and relatively flat employment growth, the employment rate for both RNs and LPNs fell from 82% in 1996 to 70% in 2006.

The nominal medial quarterly earnings rose from \$8,000 per quarter in 1996 to \$12,000 per quarter in 2006 (includes inflation).

Employment by Sector

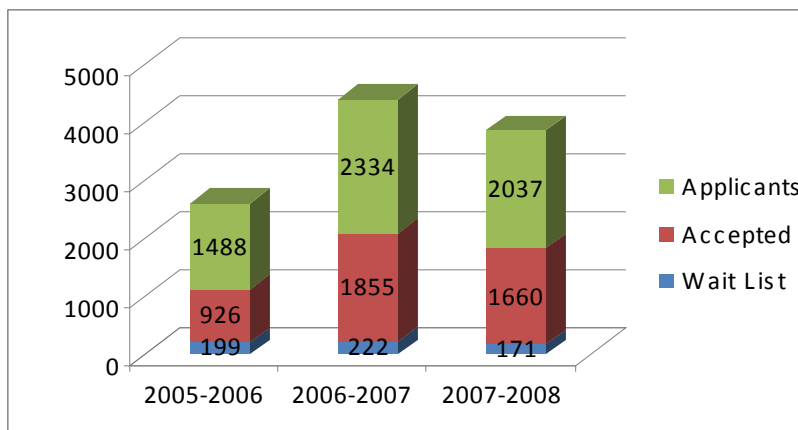
- Ambulatory Care Sector: The number of jobs for nurses has doubled from 2000 (1996) to 4000 (2006). Median quarterly earnings increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000.
- Residential Care Sector: The number of jobs for nurses have increased from 830 (1996) to 1565 (2006). Median quarterly earnings grew slightly.
- Social Assistance Sector: The number of jobs for nurses has increased from 83 (1996) to 186 (2006). The median quarterly earnings have declined to pre-1996 levels.
- Hospital Sector: The number of jobs held by nurses rose between 1996 and 1999 (7300 to 8600, they then dropped to 1996 levels by 2006 with an average employment of 7090. The median quarterly earnings grew and remain significantly higher than the other sectors. (New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research [NMBBER], July 11, 2008)

NURSING EDUCATION

Nursing Program Capacity

The nursing education programs at New Mexico public colleges and universities have been able to expand their capacity with the partial assistance of grant funds provided by the state legislature through NM Higher Education Department. They have been able to steadily increase the percentage of students that they can accept (82% for 2007-2008 versus 62% for 2005-2006). Overall, waiting lists have decreased.

NURSING PROGRAM CAPACITY – QUALIFIED APPLICANTS/ACCEPTED 2005-2008



(NMHED, 2008, p.13)

Number of Students Graduating from State Nursing Programs

The public colleges and universities of New Mexico have focused on expanding entry to practice LPNs and RN nursing programs (associate degree [ADN] and bachelor degree [BSN]). The number of graduates from all nursing programs (LPN, ADN, and BSN) in FY 2008 was 1,136. **This is an increase of 383 graduates over the number of graduates in FY 2006.** (NMHED 2008, p. 14)

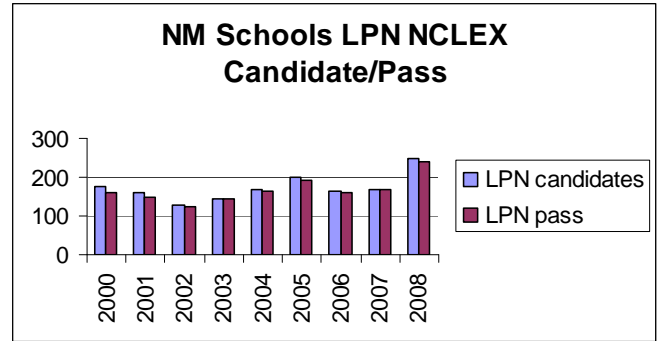
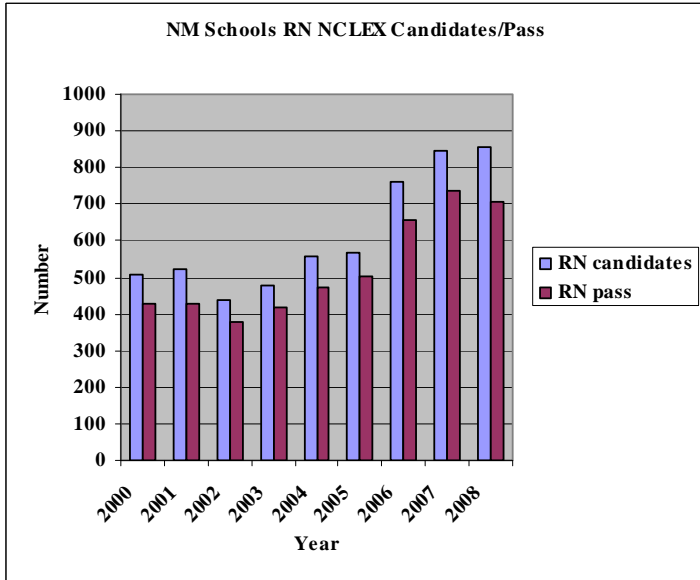
Number of Students Passing National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX):

In 2008,

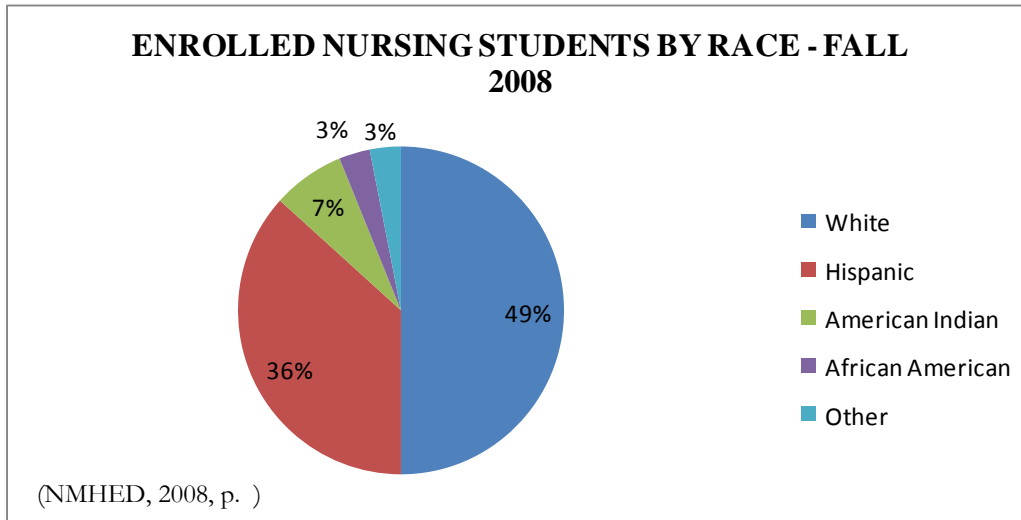
- 704 RN students passed NCLEX; this is an **increase of 325 over 2002.**
- 241 LPN students passed NCLEX; this is an **increase of 116 over 2002.**

(NMBON, 2008)

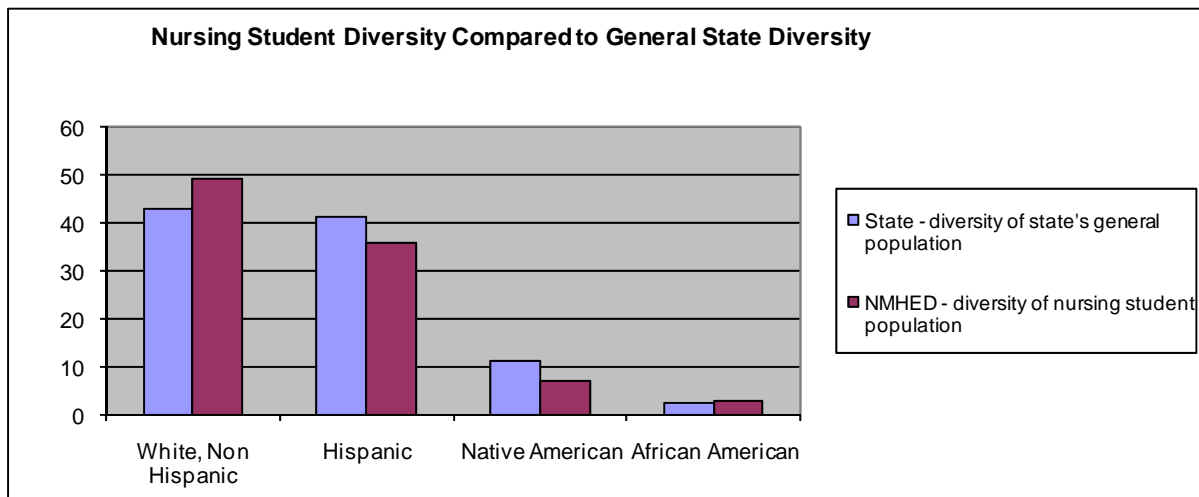
*Note: In 2008, National Council Licensure Examination raised the passing score, which affected overall pass rate.



Diversity of Students: NMHED reports that 49% of enrolled students are white, 36% are Hispanic, 7% are Native American, and 3% are African American.



The following chart compares nursing student diversity with the state's diversity.



Are We There Yet?

No.

NURSE WORKFORCE

Licensed Nurses versus Nurses in the Workforce

Though the NM Board of Nursing reflects 16,023 licensed LPNs and RNs living in New Mexico for 2008, not all are currently working as nurses in New Mexico. Approximately 72% of these nurses are working full time and 21% are working part time for a total of 15,471 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) (13,059 RNs, 2,412 LPNs). The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and New Mexico Workforce Solutions have estimates on projected future needs for nurses. HRSA projections only address RNs; NM Workforce Solutions projects for both RNs and LPNs. While a nurse workforce supply projection model is being developed, provided is a rough comparison between nurses currently in the workforce and national/state projections. The shortfalls indicated in the chart below are estimates comparing future projections to the number of nurses working in 2008; they do not reflect retirements, change in nursing education productivity, or other supply projection model variables. If the nursing workforce maintained the 2% annual growth over the next two years that was seen between 2007 and 2008, the state would fall short of the 2010 HRSA projection by 483 nurses.

RNs	Supply	Demand							
	NMBON	2010 HRSA	Delta	2015 HRSA	Delta	2016 NMWFS	Delta	2020 HRSA	Delta
2007	12,789	14,100	-1,311	15,900	-3,111	15,259	-2,470	18,000	-5,211
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LPNs									
2007	2,407			na	na	5,558	-3,151	na	na
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Sources: Supply: NM Board of Nursing Licensure Annual Reports									
Demand: Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)									
What is Behind HRSA's Projected Supply, Demand and Shortages									
of Registered Nurses? Exhibit A-2. HRSA 2004									
for Registered Nurses (Licensed Practical Nurses) for a base year of									
2006 and a projected year of 2016.									
Demand: New Mexico Workforce Solutions Laser Data									
Assumptions: Supply data is limited to licensed nurses with NM residency									
Supply is the estimated number of nurses in the workforce									
Part time = 1/2 FTE (HRSA methodology)									
Contact the NMCNE for full methodology in calculation of estimated supply.									
HRSA study does not address licensed practical nurses									

NURSE WORKFORCE RETENTION

Age of the New Mexico Nursing Workforce

The New Mexico nursing workforce continues to age, with 49% of RNs and 48% of LPNS over age 50. This is up from 46% for both RNs and LPNs in 2006. Approximately 72% of RNs and 69% of LPNs are over age 40. Interestingly, while the increase for RNs over age 50 has remained steady at 1% per year, it jumped 2% from 2007 to 2008 (NMBON, 2008). When looking at employment by age, the number of jobs held by nurses over age 40 increased from 1996 to 2006, while the number of jobs held by nurses under age 40 decreased. (UNMBBER July 2008, p. 9) As the workforce continues to age, retirements will have an increasing impact on the workforce and the workplace.

Retention

There is no on-going collection of data from employers related to vacancy and turnover rates. The two studies conducted by the UNM Bureau of Business and Economic Research (UNMBBER 2008; Ruiz, 2008) provided data regarding nurse population behavior related to retention by looking at employment and licensure trends. These data provide some insight into retention dynamics and may have implications for initiatives to improve retention. While some assumptions can be made as to what is contributing to these trends, further study is needed to validate the assumptions.

- When looking at the nurses who are not employed in New Mexico, approximately 50% are under age 40 in 2006, even though this age group makes up less than 30% of the overall workforce. By contrast, in 2003, the under age 40 group only accounted for 20% of the nurses not employed in nursing. (UNMBBER 2008, p. 9)
- For nurses obtaining initial licensure in New Mexico, the first 2 years are critical for retention. The most license expirations occur at the first license renewal period (2 years after initial licensure). The retention rate at the first renewal period is 93 – 95%; at 4 years the retention rate is 87-92%. (Ruiz, 2008, p. 9)
- For nurses who obtained initial licensure in another state and transferred their license (license by endorsement), the first 4 years are critical in retention. The retention rate was 72-78% at the first renewal period (2 years after initial NM licensure), and 60-68% at 4 years. Less than half (48%) of nurses who initially endorsed into New Mexico in 1997 were actively licensed and living in the state in 2007. (Ruiz, 2008, p. 10)

The New Mexico Board of Nursing included several questions to the licensure renewal form in an effort to gain insight to nurse retention dynamics. The New Mexico Center for Nursing Excellence Research Committee took a sample of applications from the first 6 months of 2008. Findings:

- 76.7% of responding nurses have no plans to leave their current positions; 18.6% plan to leave within 3 years.
- For those planning on leaving within 3 years, the top 4 incentives to stay were increased salaries, improved benefits, more flexible scheduling, and respect from management.
- When asked when they planned to retire, 18% of responding nurses plan to retire in 3 years, 15% in 10 years, 16% in 15 years, and 50% in 20 years or later.

- When asked what would need to change for them to delay their retirement, the top four responses were: staffing, flexible scheduling, improved salaries/benefits, and decreased physical demands.

Discussion

Over the last several years, the focus has been on the aging nursing workforce and the need to accommodate and retain mature nurses, as well as recruit for their successors. The two reports by the University of New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research indicate that attention also needs to be given to younger nurses, as an increasing number are not employed as nurses in New Mexico. The reasons for this are not explored by the studies. Work by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing has shown that the first 2 years of a nurse's practice are critical to retention. Their study of newly licensed nurses indicated that 33.1% of RNs and 40.8% of LVNs had changed positions in the past year or were planning to change within the next 12 months (Kenward & Zhong, 2004). Creating positive, respectful work environments are also necessary for retention. The New Mexico Organization of Nurse Executives, New Mexico Nurses Association, New Mexico Center for Nursing Excellence, New Mexico Board of Nursing, New Mexico Hospital Association and employers are working within their organizations and collaboratively to develop and implement retention initiatives and share best practices across the state.

NURSING EDUCATION

While the nursing education programs at New Mexico colleges and universities have had success in expanding enrollment and the number of students graduating and passing licensure examinations, challenges still exist.

Faculty

NMHED (2008, p. 16) reported that ADN programs had a 10% vacancy rate and BSN programs had a 13.5% vacancy rate of budgeted positions, while facing retirements of 25% of full time faculty in the next 5 years. There are many challenges to recruiting and retaining qualified faculty. The most pressing is nurse faculty salaries. In community colleges, nurse faculty face a \$30,000 pay deficit compared to their colleagues in clinical practice (\$44,000 versus \$70,000). Addressing faculty pay through collegiate funding formulas and other initiatives needs to be explored and will take some time. Relief in the form of tax credits, similar to the Rural Health Practitioner Tax Credit, would be welcome in the short term.

Funding

Funding for program expansion, particularly to hire additional faculty and increase faculty salaries, needs to be recurring funding. With nursing curriculum a minimum of 2 years, non-recurring funding severely limits the ability of nursing education administrators to hire adequate numbers of faculty to meet student cohort needs through the program duration.

Obtaining the advanced degrees required for faculty positions is another challenge. The Nurse Faculty Loan for Service program through NMHED supports nurse faculty in this endeavor. It is imperative that funding at the current level of \$50,000 be maintained. It has been identified that the

key nursing organizations need to work with and support NMHED to improve communications with the nursing community about the loan for service program and call for applications.

The New Mexico Center for Nursing Excellence has facilitated a task force to identify nurse faculty issues and additional ways to support faculty. As there is no mechanism in the state to facilitate faculty networking and sharing of best practices, a conference for nursing faculty is being proposed within the next year.

Clinical Sites

Nursing education program directors also identify insufficient sites for clinical education. A task force through the Health Professions Pipeline working group is exploring ways to increase the number of clinical sites, improve the efficiency of scheduling students for clinical rotations, and how simulation technology can support clinical education more effectively. The task force is in development and will consist of both educators and organizations serving as clinical sites. As this is a major undertaking, a pilot project is being considered for the Albuquerque area initially. Best practices and lessons learned can then be shared with the rest of the state.

Students

Faculty has identified student remediation and attrition as major challenges for their programs. Of the schools requesting nursing education program expansion funds through NMHED during the last call for proposals, the majority included requests for funding to support tutoring programs and other modalities to support students and promote their academic success. This is an issue to be explored in collaboration with NMHED.

The Nursing Loan for Service program is available to nursing students. Like the Nurse Faculty Loan for Service Program, nursing organizations need to work with NMHED to promote the program for maximum participation. It is essential that current funding of \$300,000 be maintained.

OTHER NURSING INITIATIVES

New Mexico Nursing Council Initiative

The nursing shortage has been recognized in New Mexico for many years. Since 2002, there have been 5 forums – legislative memorials and task forces- to articulate the nursing shortage and identify initiatives. While early initiatives were actualized, most of the 52 recommendations made during these forums have not seen any successful action.

In analyzing the situation, the Board of Nursing and Center for Nursing Excellence identified two main barriers to moving forward: 1) no organization or agency “owned” the recommendations (had authority/accountability) and 2) there was little interface with New Mexico communities. Since the impact of the nursing shortage is felt at the community level and each community has its own unique challenges, these communities need to be engaged along with active solutions.

During the summer of 2008, the New Mexico Board of Nursing and the New Mexico Center for Nursing Excellence hosted a series of 6 town halls around the state. The goals of the town halls were two-fold: identify ownership of the recommendations (state/community/shared) and obtain consensus around prioritizing the state-owned recommendations; and to build consensus on a structure that would be action oriented in achieving nursing workforce/professional goals that included communities. The top five recommendations were all in support of nursing education.

The results of the town halls are currently being shaped into a nursing strategic plan for nursing to include a long term vision, short/intermediate goals, and a proposed structure. The draft strategic plan will be completed by the first part of January 2009. The structure – the New Mexico Nursing Council – includes both state and community level organization to move recommendations to action. Implementation of the structure is projected for the first quarter of 2009.

PRIORITIES

- Establish the NM Nursing Council. This provides a structure within which to coordinate the complex and inter-dependent initiatives that must come together to successfully address nursing shortage issues. The structure of this council is currently under development.
- Achieve consensus on a state strategic plan for nursing. This establishes vision and the roadmap to achieve it. A draft of a state plan is currently being coordinated.
- Move forward to develop a robust and reliable data collection capability. While some progress has been made, a reliable supply and demand forecasting models must be developed immediately. With this foundational data deficits and costs can be determined.
- Address discrepancies in nurse faculty salaries and compensation, particularly at the community colleges. This is a priority for recruitment and retention of faculty. Efforts to offset salary disparities, such as tax exemptions for nursing faculty, are needed in the short term.
- Continue Nurse Loan for Service and Nurse Faculty Loan for Service at current funding levels. Collaboration between NMHED and the nursing community is essential to widely disseminate information about these programs and maximize use of these resources.
- Collaborate with nurse leaders and employers to explore initiatives and share best practices to enhance work environments and facilitate retention of nurses across the age spectrum.

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