

Berkshire Regional Executive Summary

Four organizations were interviewed from the Berkshire Region. The complete list of survey participants is available in Regional Appendix 1. All list and ranked-list questions were totaled to develop regional frequencies. Responses are listed by institution type and comments are noted as reported with repetitive comments consolidated into singular statements. The following pages provide a detailed summary of this Region's current partnership efforts, identify gaps in service and the resources needed to improve programming efforts and strengthen existing partnerships or create new ones.

Partnership Parameters

The majority of partnerships in the Berkshire Region focus on rapidly increasing the numbers of nurses, with fewer initiatives concentrated on increasing the faculty or meeting future demand. The total number of partnership activities identified by respondents was eight (8). The majority of partnership efforts are focused at the LPN and Associate Degree levels. A majority of the partnerships are characterized as most successful. Regional Appendix 2 provides a summary of partnership parameters. Program examples include flexible work schedules for employees to attend an LPN program, and a health care facility paying the MSN program tuition of 2 BSN staff, who will assume a joint appointment of at least 2 years following graduation.

Characteristics of Partnerships

The most frequently reported characteristics of most successful partnerships in this Region are flexible work schedules for employees attending school; flexible class scheduling; healthcare facility support for clinical faculty, and strong, trusting relationships among the participants. Other important factors reported were having representatives from the health care facilities serving on the school's advisory committees; recruiting students as health care facility employees, and employees with positions in both organizations.

Both the school of nursing and health care facilities agreed that the most important contribution of the health care facility's nursing leaders to a most successful partnership is that staff are recognized and rewarded for participating in clinical education of nursing students. These respondents differed in their opinion on the most important contribution of the nursing faculty to most successful partnerships. The school of nursing identified the faculty's role in enhancing the quality of patient care in the clinical setting as their most important contribution. Health care facilities chose the need for faculty to maintain clinical knowledge and expertise required to be effective partners with nurses in the clinical setting as faculty's most important contribution to successful partnerships.

The major factors contributing to Least Successful Partnerships included the distance to the nearest BSN program; lack of support for staff release time to support the clinical experiences of students, and ineffective/difficult working relationships with the school of nursing.

School of Nursing Perspective

From the School's perspective, securing an adequate number and type of clinical sites is difficult. Specific to this area, as it is more rural than most, having a supply of patients available for assignment to students is at times a challenge. Shortened length of patient stay compounds this problem of patient availability. The school of nursing reports a wait list, and cites the lack of budgeted faculty positions, availability of clinical placement sites, and lab and classroom space as equally important reasons for turning away qualified students. The school of nursing reports having an active student retention plan and a Nursing Career Ladder Initiative (NUCLI) grant for student retention, but has no strategic plan for nursing faculty recruitment and development.

Health Care Facility Perspective

Health care facilities are grappling with nursing shortages, especially BSN prepared nurses, and need programs that will help them fill the gaps. All health care facilities reported having a strategic direction for nursing workforce development and are encouraging nursing staff to advance their education. They identified the need for stronger leaders at the community college level, nursing faculty who are clinically current and more aware of the service demands on nurses, as the resources needed to improve the quality of nursing education in their area. The trend in ideal nurse staffing percentages indicates a call for more BSN prepared nursing staff.

Barriers

The Berkshire Region respondents consistently identified the lack of a locally based BSN program and the lack of funding to support program development as the most significant barriers to meeting their nursing workforce goals. The school of nursing also reported a lack of nursing faculty; programs that help students balance work/school issues, and clinical space within health care facilities that enhances student learning as additional barriers.

Regional Needs

Berkshire Region Respondents identified the following nursing workforce development needs:

- A BSN and an MSN nursing program that is conveniently located within the Berkshire Region. Such programs are necessary to meet the area's need for more BSN prepared nurses, more nursing faculty, and to facilitate the professional development of its entire nursing workforce.
- Nursing faculty salaries that are more competitive with practice setting salaries
- More classroom, lab, and clinical teaching spaces
- Clinically competent nursing faculty who are well versed in all practice areas including home health care.
- Stronger leaders at the community college
- Productive meetings that encourage open dialogue, improved relationships, and discussion of shared and individual goals between nursing programs and health care facilities.

Survey Respondents

4 organizations were interviewed and identified that they had partnerships. The complete list of participating organizations can be found in the Regional Appendix 1. The types of institutions, facilities or agencies that participated in the Berkshire region include:

- **Schools of Nursing - 1**
- **Acute Care Facilities – 2**
- **Long-term Care Facilities - None**
- **Home Health Care Organizations -1**

Responses

The following pages contain a summary of all responses for the Berkshire region, excluding any institutions, facilities, or agencies that indicated that they had no partnerships. The actual questions are noted in *italics* with the summary of responses noted below the questions. Multiple item list questions are ranked by the frequency of responses. All comments are summarized with common themes noted.

Note:

Questions 1-8	were asked of all participants.
Questions 9-15	were asked of Schools of Nursing only.
Questions 16-21	were asked of Health care facilities/agencies.
Questions 22-26	were asked of all participants.

Questions 1 and 2 – Completed by all

Beyond clinical placements, what partnership relationships do you have that focus on rapidly increasing the supply of skilled nurses; increasing nursing faculty and/or focus on the future demands of the health care industry? Please define the levels of education accomplished.

See Regional Appendix 2 for full display of all responses to Questions 1 and 2. Listed below is a summary of information and comments provided for these two questions. Responses are listed by institution type. Program Examples highlight specific features mentioned by respondents when describing their **successful** partnerships.

Acute Care Responses

Number of Partnerships Range: 1-2 partnerships per facility.

Types of Partnerships

- Most partnerships are focused on meeting future demands and rapidly increasing the supply of nurses. Only 1 of the mentioned partnerships focused on increasing the supply of faculty.
- Partnerships mentioned included state schools of nursing and a technical high school LPN program.

Long-term Care Responses

No respondents in this region

Home Health Care Responses

Number of Partnerships Range: One agency with 2 partnerships

Types of Partnerships

- Primarily a clinical rotation partnership

School of Nursing Responses

Number of Partnership Range One school of nursing with 4 partnerships

Types of Partnerships

- These partnerships focused on faculty development, joint appointments, a workforce development grant, and a program to rapidly increase the supply of nurses.

Program Examples

- Flexible work schedules for employees to attend LPN program
- Health care facility pays tuition for BSN staff in MSN program with understanding that upon graduation, individuals will have joint appointment at hospital and community college and will work for at least 2 years.

Question 3- Completed by all

For your Most Successful Partnership, please indicate all the items that represent current or recent joint endeavors that occur because of the partnership.

N = 4

	YES
Flexible work schedules for employees attending school.	4
Flexible class scheduling (night weekend/other).	4
Healthcare Facility provides/supports - clinical faculty.	4
Strong, trusting relationships with individuals in partnership.	4
New Grad Residency Program.	3
Shared Funding of initiatives (please define).	3
Onsite Classes	2
Student Nurse Intern Program	2
Measurable Outcomes	2
Healthcare Facility provides/supports - Academic Faculty	2
Student Nurse Aide Program	1
Preceptor Development Program	1
Continuing Ed (workshops, conferences)	1
Cost effective (ROI)	1

Comments:

Acute Care:

No additional responses

Home Health Care:

The agency nurses evaluate the students and discuss students' experiences with the faculty.

Schools of Nursing:

Shared funding of \$30,000 for adjunct faculty salaries. Measurable outcomes include more graduates entering workforce

Question 4 – Completed by all

In your Most Successful Partnership, the health care facility participates in/or provides:

N = 4

	YES
School Advisory Committee	3
Recruitment of students	3
Employees with positions in both organization	3
Clearly defined roles for faculty in practice settings.	3
Strong orientation programs for students when begin work on patient care units.	3
Shared Funding Initiatives.	3
Ads that promote nursing in both organizations.	2
Joint Leadership Development.	1
Strong Orientation Programs for clinical faculty.	1
Curriculum development and evaluation	1

Comments:

No additional comments

Question 5 - Completed by all

In your Most Successful Partnership, the school of nursing participates in/or provides:

N = 4

	YES
Recruitment of students as employees into health care facility	3
Clearly defined roles for clinicians who serve as adjunct faculty	3
Active Student Retention Program	2
Leadership development education	1
Committees in health care facility	0
Research projects	0

Comments:

No additional comments

Question 6 – Completed by all

Beyond the above elements, what other contributing factors make the most successful partnerships successful?

Acute Care:

Location: Isolation forces partners to work together

Home Health Care:

Community collaboration with students who come from within service area. Makes experience closer to home

Schools of Nursing:

Relationships make more qualified faculty available

Question 7 – Completed by all

In those partnerships ranked as Least Successful, what are the major contributing factors?

Acute Care:

Some schools of nursing are not easy to work with. They send students, but are not invested in working with the organization.

The distance to the BSN program makes it difficult for working staff to attend.

Employees do not want to use online programs, especially the ADN to BSN student group.

Home Health Care:

Agency is too small to provide necessary clinical experience for students.

Schools of Nursing:

Lack of support for staff release time to support clinical experience

Question 8 - Completed by all

What's needed to improve the outcomes of the Least Successful partnerships?

Acute Care:

BSN program needs to have satellite program as students are concerned about the extra hours required to commute.

Home Health Care:

Would like to see more defined goals so that agency could direct student experience.

Schools of Nursing:

Need recruitment of employers who can provide clinical instructors at the facility.

Question 9 – Completed by Schools of Nursing

Do you have an adequate number and type of clinical sites?

Adequate Number

N = 1

Region	Yes	No
Berkshire		1

Adequate Type

Region	Yes	No
Berkshire	No answer	No answer

Comments:

There are at times, a lack of patients available for assignment to students

Question 10 – Completed by Schools of Nursing

If you have had to turn qualified students away within the past 12 months, please prioritize the following reasons, with number one (#1) being the most frequent reason for turning students away.

N = 1

	Rank	Respondents
The lack of budgeted faculty positions	1	1
The lack of lab space	2	1
The lack of available clinical sties	3	1
Other	4	1

Comments:

Lack of classroom space, have waiting list to enter program

Question 11 – Does your School of Nursing have an active student retention plan?

N = 1

Region	Yes	No
Berkshire	1	

Comments:

Have NUCLI grant for student retention

Question 12 –Does your School of Nursing have a strategic plan for nursing faculty development?

N = 1

Region	Yes	No
Berkshire		1

Comments:

Need more funding to expand nursing program on the campus

Question 13 – Completed by the Schools of Nursing

In the partnership you ranked Most Successful, please prioritize the importance of the following elements. Please rank in order of importance with number one (#1) being the most important.

N = 4

	Rank	Respondents
Faculty enhances quality of pt care in the clinical setting.	1	1
Faculty maintain clinical knowledge & expertise required to be effective partners with nurses in the clinical setting	2	1
Faculty and SON administration seek and use clinician input/feedback	3	1
Faculty and SON administration nurture clinical preceptors who model the competencies they want students to attain.	4	1

Comments:

No additional comments

Question 14 – Completed by the Schools of Nursing

In the partnership you ranked Most Successful, please prioritize the importance of the following elements. Please rank in order of importance with number one (#1) being the most important.

The health care facility/agency nursing leaders and staff:

N = 1

	Rank	Respondents
Recognize/reward nurses who participate in clinical education of nursing students.	1	1
Recognize/reward nurses who support efforts to generate new knowledge through research or quality improvement projects.	2	1
Involve faculty in patient care improvement projects	3	1

Comments:

No additional comments

Question 15 – Completed by the Schools of Nursing

Please rank in order of importance, the impact collective bargaining has on the following elements. Please rank with number one (# 1) being the most important.

N = 1

	Rank	Respondents
Offer evening/weekend classes	1	1
Recruit full time faculty	2	1

Comments:

No additional comments

Question 16 and 17 – Completed by the health care facilities

Question 16 - Within your budgeted nursing staff, what is the percentage of: LPNs; RNs with diplomas; RNs with ADNs; RNs with BSNs; RN with MSN and RNs with PhD

Question 17- What is the ideal percentage of each of these categories for your organization?

Complete record of all responses regarding nurse-staffing percentages given by health care facilities in the Berkshire Region.

Notes:

- 3 health care facilities – 2 acute care and 1 home health care - were interviewed.
- Data are reported exactly as reported by respondents.
- All numbers reported here are percentages.
- “ 0 ” equals zero
- “ X ” means no data value reported by respondent.
- “ SC ” means see comments
- “ * ” means nurse staffing percentage spread across multiple categories
- Several respondents provided comments either in addition to or in place of data values; all comments are included under the table in the Comments section

Question 16- Within your budgeted nursing staff, what is the percentage of:

Survey Id	LPN	RN/diploma	RN/AD	RN/BSN	RN/MSN	RN/PhD
Berk A 1	11	4	61	16	8	X
Berk A 2	10	25	35	25	5	X
BerkHH1	10	10	20	50	10	X

Question 17 - What is the ideal percentage of each of these categories for your organizations?

Survey Id	LPN	RN/diploma	RN/AD	RN/BSN	RN/MSN	RN/PhD
Berk A 1	11	X	20	40	25	3
Berk A2	X	X	40	50	10	X
Berk HH1	X	X	X	100	X	X

Comments

Berk HH1 – Shortage of BSN qualified nurses in Berkshire Country and no BSN schools

Question 18 Completed by the health care facilities -

Does your institution have a strategic direction for nursing workforce development?

N = 3

	Yes	No
Berkshire	3	

Comments:

Acute Care:

Have a project scholarship to assist LPN to ADN; ADN to BSN; BSN to MSN
Working with union to develop a clinical ladder program to recognize different levels of education.

Are encouraging ADN to BSN, but give tuition assistance to any employees who wish to enter nursing program

Home Health Care:

Tuition reimbursement and flexible schedules to support educational needs of staff

Question 19 -Completed by the health care facilities

What additional resources are needed in your region to ensure achievement of your strategic goals for your nursing workforce?

Acute Care:

Need to have a BSN program housed in the Berkshires, not online

Applying for federal grant to purchase simulation equipment for clinical lab experience for students

Home Health Care:

Need BSN program in area

Question 20 – Completed by the health care facilities

In the partnership you ranked most successful, please prioritize the importance of the following elements. Please rank with number one (#1) being the most important.

N = 3

	Rank	Respondents
Faculty maintains clinical knowledge & expertise required to be effective partners with nurses in the clinical setting.	1	2
Faculty and SON administration seek and use clinician input/feedback.	2	1
Faculty enhance quality of pt care in the clinical setting	2	1
Faculty and SON administration nurture clinical preceptors who model the competencies they want students to attain.	2	1
Faculty maintains clinical knowledge & expertise required to be effective partners with nurses in the clinical setting.	3	1
Faculty and SON administration seek and use clinician input/feedback.	3	1
Faculty enhances quality of pt care in the clinical setting.	3	1
Faculty and SON administration nurture clinical preceptors who model the competencies they want students to attain.	4	2

Comments:

No additional comments

Question 21 – Completed by the health care facilities

In the partnership you ranked Most Successful, please prioritize the importance of the following elements. Please rank in order of importance with number one (#1) being the most important.

The health care facility/agency nursing agency leaders and staff:

N = 3

	Rank	Respondents
Recognize/reward nurses who participate in clinical education of nursing students.	1	2
Recognize/reward nurses who support efforts to generate new knowledge through research or quality improvement projects.	2	2
Involve faculty in patient care improvement projects.	3	2
Seek & use faculty feedback about hospital policies & guidelines.	4	2

Comments:

No additional comments

Question 22- Completed by all

What state statutes, regulations or policies present barriers to you as you try to enhance the nursing workforce?

Acute Care:

Funding to pay faculty equivalent to nurses in service.

BORN requirement for MSN for clinical faculty

Home Health Care:

Clarification of Medicaid regulations of what students can bill for when providing services and clarification of what students can and cannot do in the agency.

Schools of Nursing:

Current BORN waiver is supportive. Need to constantly review statutes regulating nursing education

Question 23 –Completed by all

What suggestions or programs are needed to improve the quality of the nursing education in your area?

Acute Care:

Stronger leaders at Community College

Faculty need to be more aware of service demands on nurses.

Faculty should be required to work in the clinical setting on a routine basis.

Faculty supervising students need to be familiar with clinical setting

Home Health Care:

Need more BSN programs

Faculty need to be educated to the real world and work in community health so they will be better prepared to teach students.

Schools of Nursing:

More funding to support faculty salaries

Question 24- Completed by all

What is the greatest problem facing your facility/institution in providing nursing education support to your student/employees?

Acute Care:

Lack of faculty

Lack of space at the school

Lack of clinical space in the hospital to have student receive clinical experience

Shortened length of patient stays impacts learning experiences

Home Health Care:

Limited financial resources

Limited employee time to attend programs

Schools of Nursing:

Ability of students to balance work/school issues.

Older students

Question 25- Completed by all

What suggestions do you have to enhance the relationship between your facility/institution and schools of nursing.

Acute Care:

Joint faculty and service committees

Improved communication between school and facility leadership

Faculty working in clinical setting a set time each year

Home Health Care:

Have SON give preceptor classes

Recognition from SON for student preceptors

Schools of Nursing:

More meetings where concerns are discussed openly

Better relationships between SON and facilities

Question 26 -Completed by all

Additional comments:

Acute Care:

No additional comments

Home Health Care:

Would like to see students get a better understanding of Home Care; Faculty need to be more knowledgeable in this area

Schools of Nursing:

No additional comments

BERKSHIRE REGION SUMMARY

Appendix 1

List of Participating Organizations

Berkshire Community College

Berkshire Medical Center

Lee Regional VNA

North Adams Regional Hospital

APPENDIX 2											
BERKSHIRE REGION											
Partnership Parameters											
	Focus			Educational Level					Partnership Status		
Institution Type	Rapidly Increase Nurses	Increase Faculty	Future Demand	LPN	AD	BSN	MSN	PhD	Least	Moderate	Most
SON	3	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	1
Acute Care	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	2
Long-term Care	No	Respondents									
Home Health Care	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1