Impact of DHE Nursing & Allied Health Initiative Grants

Background

From the beginnings in 2005, grants from MA Department of Higher Education (DHE) have had a tremendous impact on nursing education and healthcare workforce development. A key success factor was the involvement of a broad group of stakeholders to serve an advisory role, plus the recognition that bringing together nursing education and nursing practice professionals would be needed for effective program design and implementation. This led to the establishment of an enduring public/private partnership now over 10 years in existence.

What started as a “coalition of the willing” to fix the critical problems is today a strong professional group, the MA Action Coalition (MAAC), working to advance the quality of nursing education and training to meet current and future demands in a rapidly transforming world of healthcare. The MAAC is proud to be part of a national campaign to strengthen the nursing profession. Guided by the Institute of Medicine’s (IOM) 2010 report on the Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health, Massachusetts nurses are providing leadership for this national work, sharing our success stories and learning from others across the country.

The situation in 2005 – multiple barriers to meeting the demand for new nurses

Issues addressed by the first wave of grants targeted three important areas: the critical shortage of nurses and the faculty needed to prepare them, capacity constraints in higher education and an outdated system for placing students in clinical learning experiences. Funding was directly aimed at:

- Increasing faculty (through scholarships tied to length of service agreements)
- Simulation technology (manikins and scenarios to increase the clinical preparation of students)
- Development of a Centralized Clinical Placement System (CCP)-match students to clinical sites
- Welcome Back Center (to attract foreign-educated nurses to attain their licenses in MA)

The goals during this early period of work are still relevant and include:

- Create seamless progression through all levels of nursing education.
- Develop consensus on essential aspects of nursing practice (core competencies) to serve as framework for educational curricula. The resulting Nurse of the Future Nursing Core Competencies are now used across 20 states including Massachusetts.
- Develop a statewide nurse internship/preceptor program.

Appropriations from the legislature provided funds to begin grants in FY2005 and covered the priority topics above. By 2010, with a fully developed set of core competencies, new grants began to address what was termed “Education Redesign”. Grantees addressed seamless academic progression and strategies to smooth the transition into practice for new nurses.

The timing was right to form a MA Action Coalition in 2011 to focus on work to implement the IOM recommendations and to take a major role in the national initiative to transform healthcare through nursing. It was a perfect fit for the interests of our existing strong public/private partnership and its proven nurse leaders. The alignment of DHE grants and national priorities is shown on the reverse side.
How Do DHE Nursing Grants Align With Goals of Academic Progression in Nursing (APIN) Grants* and National IOM Priorities

Goal 1 – Create Accelerated Pathways for Nurses to Achieve Baccalaureate or Higher Degree

Bring to scale seamless academic progression models
- 2011 – Berkshire Community College – with local practice partners, strengthening preparation for long term care/gerontology
- 2011 – Fitchburg State University - with Worcester State, designing an accelerated LPN to BSN program
- 2012 – Springfield Technical Community College – with UMass Amherst, an accelerated RN to BSN program
- 2014 – American International College – with local practice sites and Springfield Technical Community College, enhancing a RN to BSN program plus advanced practice program for primary care NPs
- 2014 – Cape Cod Community College with UMass Boston, creating a RN to BSN program, on-site at Cape Cod
- 2014 – Fitchburg State University – with Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School, pathways to LPN and BSN for Veterans
- 2014 – Holyoke Community College – with Elms College and Wingate Health Care, developing seamless LPN to BSN academic pathways

Facilitate transfer between 2 and 4-year public higher education
- 2012 – Salem State University - with North Shore Community College, easing the transition between 2 and 4-yr programs

Increase flexible options for incumbent nurses to advance education and increase diversity
- 2012 – Worcester State University – with UMass Memorial Medical Center, creating a blended learning model for incumbent nurses to advance their education
- 2015 – UMass Lowell – with Lowell General Hospital and Genesis Healthcare, developing and implementing a Collaborative Post-Baccalaureate Nurse Residency Program

Goal 2 – Promote the Integration of Nurse of the Future Nursing Core Competencies® (NOFNCC)

- 2011 – UMass Dartmouth - with local practice partners, expanding use of Competencies
- 2011 – Regis College - with Lahey Clinic, a transition into practice project using Competencies
- 2014 – UMass Dartmouth – analysis to refine and test the Nursing Competency Assessment Tool

Goal 3 – Increase Faculty Pool to Educate Nurses from BSN through Doctoral Degrees

Provide opportunities for retired or semi-retired nurses to remain active in teaching positions, dual roles for nurses in both practice and education, better utilization of current faculty through online matching system, and build future pipeline with increased capacity and diversity.

- 2011 – UMass Lowell – with D’Youville, a short term rehab, enhancing opportunities in long term care for students, faculty and staff
- 2012 – Simmons College – with the Visiting Nurse Association of Boston, providing new nurses with home care nurse residencies, clinical teaching skills for preceptors
- 2014 – UMass Lowell – with local practice partners, developing programs for Nurse Practitioners to increase faculty and preceptor capacity
- 2015 – Curry College – comprehensive research on innovative preceptor models

*The MAAC has received two APIN grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation totaling $600,000 (grant period was August 2012 through November 2016).