



Community College Leaders Join with National Nursing Education Organizations to Support Academic Progression for Nurses

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WASHINGTON, D.C., September 18, 2012 - In a historic move to support all nurses moving to advance their education, leaders from national organizations representing community college presidents, boards and program administrators have joined with representatives from nursing education associations to endorse a Joint Statement on Academic Progression for Nursing Students and Graduates. With the shared goal of preparing a well-educated, diverse nursing workforce, this consensus statement represents the shared view that nursing students and practicing nurses should be supported in their efforts to pursue higher levels of education. Endorsing organizations include the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), the Association of Community Colleges Trustees (ACCT), the National League for Nursing (NLN), and the National Organization for Associate Degree Nursing (N-OADN).

Pictured from left to right: Dr. Beverly Malone, CEO, National League for Nursing; J. Noah Brown, President and CEO, Association of Community College Trustees; Dr. Geraldine "Polly" Bednash, CEO, American Association of Colleges of Nursing; Dr. Walter G. Bumpus, President, American Association of Community Colleges; Donna Meyer, President, National Organization for Associate Degree Nursing.

"As the leading advocate for community college nursing programs, N-OADN welcomes collaboration with these other key national organizations to support academic progression," said N-OADN President Donna Meyer, MSN, RN. "Working together will benefit the education of future nurses, as well as facilitate the unity of the nursing profession."

"For the nation and the communities we serve, there can be no larger imperative than to ensure the health and wellbeing of our citizens, said AACC President Walter G. Bumphus. "Such a goal is at the heart of the work community colleges do in preparing close to half of all new nurses, and it is central to our support for this new collaboration to support educational progression."

Said NLN CEO Beverly Malone, PhD, RN, FAAN, "It is an honor and a privilege to see our partnership fulfill its critical charge. The design and implementation of seamless models that promote academic progression and lifelong learning are vital to meet the call to build a strong and diverse nursing workforce to advance the nation's health."

"Community college nursing programs are a vital component of the healthcare industry and the well-being of all Americans," said ACCT President and CEO J. Noah Brown. "Governing boards need to ensure that we continue to provide high-quality pathways into the nursing profession and support the professional advancement of our nation's nurses."

"Providing opportunities for nurses to advance their education serves the public good," said AACN CEO Geraldine "Polly" Bednash, PhD, RN, FAAN. "AACN stands ready to work with our colleagues in higher education to remove barriers to educational advancement and encourage all nurses to take the next step in their professional development."

Nurse educators across program levels are dedicated to preparing nurses with the skills and competencies needed to provide the best care possible to patients. The supporting organizations are committed to working together to ensure that nurses pursuing advanced education can proceed seamlessly into associate, baccalaureate, master's and doctoral programs. The new consensus statement, endorsed by the leadership of each organization, reads as follows:

Joint Statement on Academic Progression for Nursing Students and Graduates

Nursing is by far the largest healthcare profession in the U.S. with more than 2.6 million registered nurses (RNs) practicing in hospitals and other settings nationwide. Despite

their large numbers, many more qualified nurses must be prepared in programs offered by community colleges and four-year institutions to meet the nation's growing demand for health care and to replace a large wave of nurses nearing retirement. By 2020, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that more than 1.2 million additional RNs will be needed to work in acute care hospitals, long-term care facilities, community health centers, nursing schools and other areas.

To fulfill our shared goal to prepare a robust nursing workforce, the undersigned organizations, acknowledge our full support of academic progression for nursing students and graduates. Community college presidents, boards, and program administrators are aligned with the nation's nursing association leaders in the belief that every nursing student and nurse deserves the opportunity to pursue academic career growth and development. It is through the collaboration and partnering of our various organizations that we can facilitate and inspire the seamless academic progression of nursing students and nurses. Our common goal is a well-educated, diverse nursing workforce to advance the nation's health.

Working together will facilitate the unity of nursing education programs and advance opportunities for academic progression, which may include seamless transition into associate, baccalaureate, master's and doctoral programs. Collectively, we agree that every nursing student and nurse should have access to additional nursing education, and we stand ready to work together to ensure that nurses have the support needed to take the next step in their education.

American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)

Association of Community Colleges Trustees (ACCT)

American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)

National League for Nursing (NLN)

National Organization for Associate Degree Nursing (N-OADN)