

A NURSE'S GUIDE TO THE INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE'S

THE

FUTURE *of* NURSING:

LEADING CHANGE, ADVANCING HEALTH



In 2010, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) released a report called **“The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health.”** As an agenda for the nursing profession in the 21st century, this document is making a massive impact on nurses, health care organizations, and legislation.

Many nurses have questions about the report and how it will affect them and the field. This brief summary is intended to provide a greater understanding of its contents and how you can prepare for the changing health care environment. The full, detailed report is available on the IOM’s website at iom.nationalacademies.org.

FOUR KEY FINDINGS

The IOM report's ultimate goal is to improve health care and patient outcomes through nursing practice and policies. In four key messages, the report details the way changes in health care due to technology, demographics, and other factors are affecting expectations and demands on nursing.

1



Nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training.

Nurses may have an exceptional amount of education and experience, but they may not be able to use all of it for various reasons, including:

Historical, regulatory, and policy barriers.

A complex, fragmented health care system.

Differences in state laws regarding nursing practice.

Nurses should achieve higher levels of education and training through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression.

Nursing core competencies have greatly expanded in the last several decades to include public health, geriatrics, leadership, teamwork, and change management. In addition, nurses are caring for more patients with complex issues, using more technology, and collecting and synthesizing information from several sources to determine optimal patient care.

All of these factors point to a need for higher education standards as well as easier access to nursing degree programs at all degree levels. Online programs, such as the **RN to Bachelor of Science in Nursing** and **Master of Science in Nursing** at the University of Saint Mary, can be a convenient and flexible alternative to on-campus programs.

2



FOUR KEY FINDINGS

3



Nurses should be full partners with physicians and other health professionals in redesigning health care in the United States.

To support nurses' expanded role in health care today, the report suggests various actions including:

Formally recognizing leadership skills as core competencies and implementing them into nursing program curricula.

Encouraging more nurses to join committees, commissions, and boards to have a greater say in health care policies.

Effective workforce planning and policy making require better data collection and an improved information infrastructure.

The report recommends that the health care industry create an organized method for collecting detailed data on:

The numbers and types of health care professionals across the U.S.

Where they are employed.

Their roles, activities, and duties.

This information will help identify where health care needs are being met and where they are falling short. The findings can then be used to plan future nursing workforce requirements more effectively, as well as identify trends that might affect nursing practice and education needs.

4



EIGHT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

“The Future of Nursing” goes on to provide eight recommendations for taking action to carry out the goals identified in the key messages.

1



Remove scope-of-practice barriers.

State laws regulating the practice of nursing vary widely, as do rules in different settings and organizations. For instance, a nurse in an Oklahoma outpatient clinic may not be legally able to provide the same services as a nurse in another facility in Michigan. To remove barriers and standardize nursing practice, the report suggests actions including:

Expand Medicare to cover certain nursing services.

Call on the Federal Trade Commission and the Department of Justice to review state regulations on nurses that restrict the services they can offer.

Expand opportunities for nurses to lead and diffuse collaborative improvement efforts.

Suggestions for accomplishing this include:

Health care organizations should actively encourage nurses to develop innovative, patient-centered models for care.

Ask nurses for input and feedback on the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of health care technology and devices.

Provide entrepreneurial training and development to help nurses create their own health care initiatives.

2





EIGHT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

3



Implement nurse residency programs.

The report found that a residency period could help ease nurses' initial transition from education to practice, or the transition to a different clinical practice, by providing psychological and professional support. To promote more residencies, the report suggests:

Redirect funding for diploma nursing programs to implement nurse residency programs in areas facing a critical lack of health care access.

Procure funding for nurse residencies from health care companies, government agencies, and philanthropic organizations.

Increase the proportion of nurses with a baccalaureate degree to 80 percent by 2020.

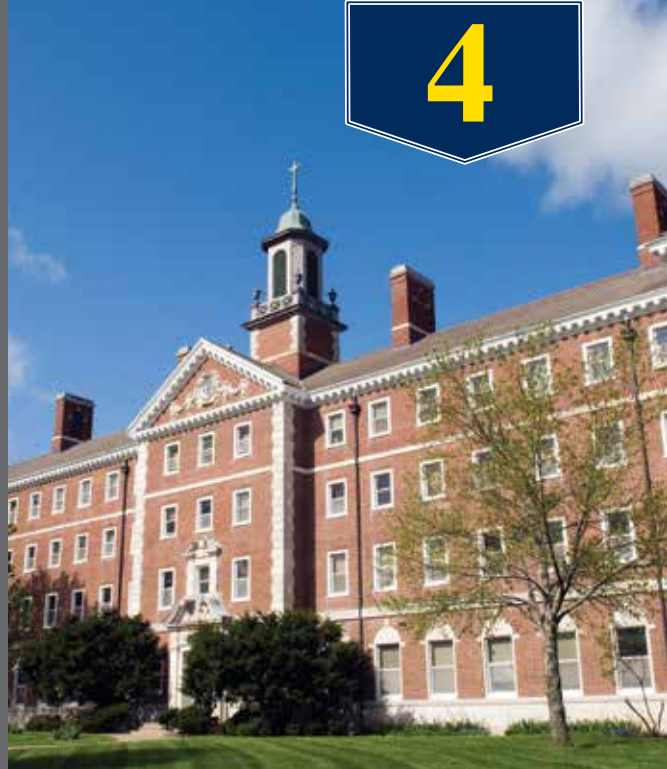
Health care has grown so complex that nurses today need skills in critical-thinking and evidence-based practice — skills that are developed in Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree programs such as the [online RN-BSN at the University of Saint Mary](#). To encourage more nurses to earn a BSN,

Nursing accrediting bodies should require nursing schools to provide defined academic pathways, such as the RN-BSN.

Health care organizations should offer tuition reimbursement and clear salary increase and promotion opportunities.

Nurse leaders in academia should partner with health care organizations and secondary schools to recruit nursing students from diverse backgrounds.

4





EIGHT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

5



Double the number of nurses with a doctorate by 2020.

The shortage of nursing faculty has long been an area of concern. Encouraging more nurses to earn doctorates adds to the supply of instructors as well as researchers who can help the profession evolve.

To do so, the report suggests:

Monitor nursing school graduates to ensure that at least 10 percent of BSN graduates undertake a master’s or doctoral degree program within five years of their graduation.

Expand private and public funding for accelerated graduate degree programs in nursing.

Make salaries and benefits packages for academic and clinical nurse faculty competitive with other nursing specialties.

Ensure that nurses engage in lifelong learning.

Health care moves so quickly that nurses are already learning constantly. Supporting lifelong learning with dedicated resources can help them make an even greater impact on patient care, as well as their own careers. The report suggests that:

Schools should collaborate with health care organizations to ensure that nursing coursework aligns with present and future health needs.

Health care organizations offering continuing education should regularly evaluate and update their own programs.



6



EIGHT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE



7

Prepare and enable nurses to lead change to advance health.

Public, private, and government health care decision makers should actively work toward promoting more nurses for leadership positions.

Nursing associations should develop leadership-training programs.

Nurses should expand their presence on boards, executive teams, and other leadership bodies.

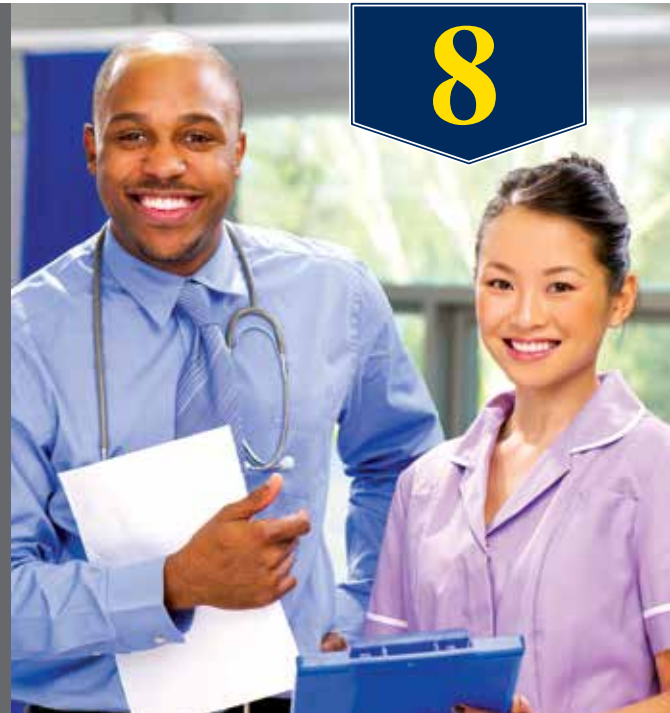
Build an infrastructure for the collection and analysis of interprofessional health care workforce data.

More workforce data can provide insights into gaps in nursing and other health care services across the country. The report suggests various ways government agencies could go about this:

Develop and distribute a standardized set of data that can be used to assess health care workforce needs by demographics, numbers, skill mix, and geographic distribution.

Measure and monitor the collected data to forecast future nursing workforce requirements.

The Department of Labor, educators, and employers should collaborate to pinpoint workforce gaps and create plans for filling them.



8

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LEADING CHANGE, ADVANCING HEALTH

FOUR KEY FINDINGS

- 1 Nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training.
- 2 Nurses should achieve higher levels of education and training through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression.
- 3 Nurses should be full partners with physicians and other health professionals in redesigning health care in the United States.
- 4 Effective workforce planning and policy making require better data collection and an improved information infrastructure.

EIGHT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

- 1 Remove scope-of-practice barriers.
- 2 Expand opportunities for nurses to lead and diffuse collaborative improvement efforts.
- 3 Implement nurse residency programs.
- 4 Increase the proportion of nurses with a baccalaureate degree to 80 percent by 2020.
- 5 Double the number of nurses with a doctorate by 2020.
- 6 Ensure that nurses engage in lifelong learning.
- 7 Prepare and enable nurses to lead change to advance health.
- 8 Build an infrastructure for the collection and analysis of interprofessional health care workforce data.

HOW WILL THE FUTURE OF NURSING IMPACT YOU?

Take the first step toward ensuring that you are prepared for the changing health care landscape outlined in “The Future of Nursing.” The online [RN to Bachelor of Science in Nursing](#) and [Master of Science in Nursing](#) degrees at the University of Saint Mary align with the competencies and goals recommended by the Institute of Medicine. Develop your skills and take advantage of opportunities in today’s health care environment — as well as tomorrow’s.