

North Dakota Nursing Needs Study

Student Focus Group Results

Center for Rural Health

North Dakota Center for Health Workforce Data

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Executive Summary

Background

The Nursing Needs study was mandated by the NDCC Nurse Practices Act 43-12.1-08.2 in which the North Dakota Board of Nursing was directed to address issues of supply and demand including issues of recruitment, retention and utilization of nurses. The North Dakota Board of Nursing then contracted with the Center for Rural Health at the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of North Dakota to conduct the Nursing Needs study.

This study was designed to collect data in order to present a more accurate picture of nurses in both rural and urban areas of North Dakota and compare these data with existing national data as well as to inform policy. During the first year of the study, data collection includes four projects. The first is a facility survey which was sent to all hospitals, long-term care facilities, clinics, home health and regional public health facilities in order to determine demand for nurses and recruitment and retention efforts. The second project was a survey of RNs and LPNs throughout North Dakota. The third project involved conducting several focus groups separately with students and nurses throughout the state. The nursing (RN and LPN) focus groups centered on determining job satisfaction and identifying changes that would encourage nurses to work in North Dakota facilities especially those in rural areas. The focus groups with nursing students (RN and LPN) included questions such as the reasons for choosing the nursing profession and whether they plan to work in North Dakota. The fourth project was a survey of nursing program faculty and questions included their views on their program's capacity to train a sufficient number of nurses, faculty demographics, job satisfaction and what changes may improve the nursing workforce as a whole.

Student Focus Group Results

This report includes the results from the focus groups and surveys completed by Senior level RN and Sophomore LPN level students throughout North Dakota. Focus groups were held at four RN nursing programs (Dickinson State University, Minot State University, Tri-College University, University of North Dakota) and four LPN nursing programs (Dickinson State University, ND State College of Science, Northwest Technical College, United Tribes Technical College). These programs were chosen to represent approximately the four quadrants of the state.

- Most of the students in the focus group were white, not of Hispanic origin and female. More LPN students were over 25 years of age as compared to RN students although the average age for RN and LPN students was about 25 years. One third of the students are married and one third of the students surveyed have children.
- Most of the students are currently employed and are employed for an average of 18 hours a week. A greater percentage of RN students are currently employed in nursing as compared to LPN students.
- Average GPA for RN and LPN students was 3.36 and they were enrolled for an average of 13 credits. Most students were using more than one source of financing for their tuition and fees. LPNs most frequently used personal and family resources and RNs most frequently used federal loans to pay tuition and fees.

- RN students consider location and reputation as important factors when they choose their nursing program, whereas LPN students consider reputation, acceptance of nursing credits and career ladder opportunity as important factors.
- Most RN students and half of the LPN students planned to start working immediately after graduation. Half of the RN students and two-thirds of the LPN students plan to work in North Dakota. One fifth of the RN and one third of the LPN students plan to work in rural areas. Most of the RN and LPN students plan to work full-time and most frequently planned to work in a hospital. None of the students planned to work in nursing education, occupational health, insurance company or regulation.
- Many RN and most LPN students plan to pursue more education. Most RN students planning on more education plan to attend a certified nurse anesthetist or nurse practitioner program. Most of the LPN students plan to attend a RN bachelor's degree program with a few planning to attend a master's degree program.
- RN and LPN students felt that the opportunity to make a difference and personal attraction to the career were important factors in choosing nursing as a career. RN and LPN students felt that teacher and parent opinion were unimportant factors.
- Reasons students chose nursing as a career frequently included job opportunities, interest in medicine and health care and the desire to help people.
- Solutions to address potential nursing shortage students suggested: increasing salary and wages, improving benefits and the job environment, improving recruitment efforts, making changes in education programs and increasing the availability of student loans and financial aid.
- Promotion and recruitment strategies students suggested: promoting the field to elementary, junior high and high school students using career fairs with nurses from a variety of nursing fields, health career classes with CNA certification, tours and job shadowing opportunities. Students also suggested an improvement in the image of both RN and LPNs using commercials, posters, portrayal of nurses in television programs. Students suggested that a more positive image should be portrayed and that the wide variety of opportunities available to nurses should be emphasized.
- Retention and job satisfaction strategies students suggested: increasing pay and benefits with sign-on bonuses and tuition reimbursement, more equipment available, increased emphasis on teamwork and respect from physicians and other staff members.
- Strategies to improve education access students suggested: online or long distance programs although a few students saw problems with these types of programs (access, transferability of credits and inadequate clinical experience). Students also suggested that more nursing programs in rural areas such as programs in health care facilities and some classes offered to high school students would be helpful. Students suggested more of an emphasis on technical skills within their program and to allow students to progress on different tracks to help older students with families to complete their education. Some students also felt that they did not have enough clinical experience. Students suggested

that incorporating more education programs with LPN and RN degrees would allow students to obtain employment and more clinical experience while still pursuing their RN degree.

- Barriers to working in North Dakota included the lack of unions to protect nurses, more pay and benefits, job opportunities, availability of newer technology and lower patient loads available in other states. Students suggested increasing pay and offering tuition reimbursement programs might encourage nurses to stay in North Dakota.
- Barriers to working in rural areas included the desire to work in a large hospital with many critical cases, lack of jobs for spouses, lack of new technology and little cultural diversity. Few students had a clinical experience in a rural area. Students suggested that making education programs available in rural areas would increase the availability of nurses. Also, a travel program in which nurses would work for a period of time (ex. 6 months) and then travel to a different facility, alternating rural and urban sites.

North Dakota Nursing Needs Study Introduction

The Nursing Needs study was mandated by the NDCC Nurse Practices Act 43-12.1-08.2 in which the North Dakota Board of Nursing was directed to address issues of supply and demand including issues of recruitment, retention and utilization of nurses. The North Dakota Board of Nursing then contracted with the Center for Rural Health at the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of North Dakota to conduct the Nursing Needs study.

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Student Focus Group Results

The RN student focus groups included a total of 63 senior level students and the LPN focus groups included a total of 58 students. Below are results from the survey given during the focus groups. Note that not all participants answered all questions, so percentages may not total 100%.

Demographic Statistics

- **Race**

Of the RN students 92% were White, 3% were Hispanic and 3% were American Indian or Alaskan Native.

Of the LPN students 93% were White, and the remaining 7% were American Indian or Alaskan Native.

- **Gender**

Of the RN students 87% were female and 11% were male. In the Minnesota RN student survey, 90% of the students were female, a similar percentage to that of North Dakota.

Of the LPN students 95% were female and 4% were male.

- **Age**

Average age of the RN students was 24.30 (SD = 4.75) with 29% of the students age 25 and above. In the Minnesota RN student survey, 29% of students were also above age 25. For comparison, the National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses (Spratley et al., 2000) found an average age upon graduation of 27.5 years.

Average age of the LPN students was 25.29 (SD=7.62) with 38% of the students age 25 and above.

- **Marital Status**

Of the RN students, 37% were married, 3% were divorced, 48% were single and 11% were living in a committed relationship. Similar to these results, 36% of RN students in Minnesota were married, 6% were divorced, 48% were single and 10% were living in a committed relationship. For those North Dakota RN students who were married or living in a committed relationship 90% of the spouses or significant others were employed. Many of these spouses/significant others (67%) were employed in the same city or surrounding area as the education program which the student was enrolled in.

Of the LPN students 31% were married, 3% were divorced, 45% were single and 21% were in a committed relationship. For those LPN students who were married or living in a committed relationship 93% of the spouses or significant others were employed. Many of these spouses/significant others (77%) were employed in the same city or surrounding area as the education program which the student was enrolled in.

- **Children**

Of the RN students 27% having children with the majority of those having 1 or 2 children (94%). 6% of the RN students with children have 3 or 4 children. 39% of the RN students in the Minnesota survey have children which is slightly more than North Dakota, with 55% having 1 or 2 and 18% having 3 or 4.

Of the LPN students 27% have children with 65% having 1 or 2 children and 35% having 3 or 4 children.

Academic and Program Statistics

- **Employment**

81% of RN students are employed with average hours per week of 17.69 (SD = 9.09). The Minnesota RN student survey found 89% of students were employed. 12% of employed North Dakota RN students work 30 or more hours per week whereas in Minnesota 23% of the RN students work 30 or more hours per week. 80% of North Dakota employed RN students work in nursing.

78% of LPN students are employed at 18.09 (SD=9.36) average hours per week. 14% of employed LPN students work 30 or more hours per week. 68% of the employed LPN students work in nursing.

- **Enrollment**

RN students enrolled in an average of 13.10 credits (SD = 2.44) with 9% enrolled in 16 or more credits. 7% of the Minnesota RN students were enrolled in 16 or more credits.

LPN students enrolled in an average of 12.79 credits (SD=3.02) with 16% enrolled in 16 or more credits.

- **Grade Point Average (G.P.A)**

Average overall G.P.A. for RNs was 3.40 (SD=.31) and average nursing G.P.A. was 3.40 (SD = .53).

Average overall G.P.A. for LPNs was 3.32 (SD=.41) and average nursing G.P.A. was 3.14 (SD=.66).

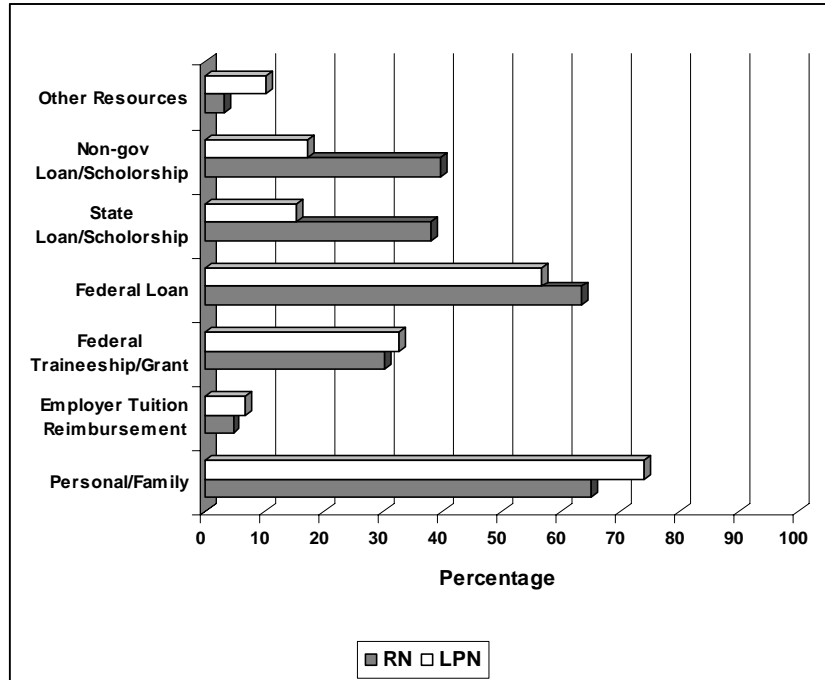
- **Tuition and Fee Sources**

Of the 63 RN students, 78% used more than one source to finance their tuition and fees. 65% of RN students using personal and family resources and 63% had federally assisted loans. Other sources included an employer tuition reimbursement plan (5%), federal traineeship scholarship or grant (30%), state or local government loan or scholarship (38%), non-government scholarship loan or grant (40%), and 3% other resources.

Of the 58 LPN students, 71% used more than one source for financing their tuition and fees. 74% of LPN students used personal and family resources and 57% had a federally assisted loan. Other sources included an employer tuition reimbursement plan (7%), federal traineeship, scholarship or grant (33%), state or local government loan or scholarship (16%), non-government scholarship, loan or grant (17%) and 10% other resources.

The percentage of students using various financing sources is displayed in figure 1. LPNs use slightly more personal and family, employer tuition reimbursement, federal traineeships or grants and other resources compared to RNs. RNs use more federal loans, state loans and scholarships and non-government loans and scholarships compared to LPNs.

Figure 1: Percentage of Students Utilizing Sources for Tuition and Fees



- **Factors in Choosing Nursing Education Program**

Table 1 lists the percent of students who rated each of the factors on how important they were in their decision to attend their current education program.

Table 1: Factors in Choosing Nursing Program

Factors	Did Not Consider		Not Important		Somewhat Important		Very Important	
	RN	LPN	RN	LPN	RN	LPN	RN	LPN
Cost	6	10	6	9	54	33	33	47
Location	5	9	6	5	40	34	49	50
Duration of program	6	2	14	12	54	38	25	47
Reputation	8	3	5	3	43	31	44	60
Acceptance of nursing credits	25	16	22	2	30	29	22	52
Acceptance of non-nursing credits	24	17	16	3	37	36	24	41
Career ladder opportunity	17	3	14	10	44	33	38	52
No waiting list to enroll	24	9	21	5	27	16	25	50

Note. Numbers are percentage of students who ranked each factor.

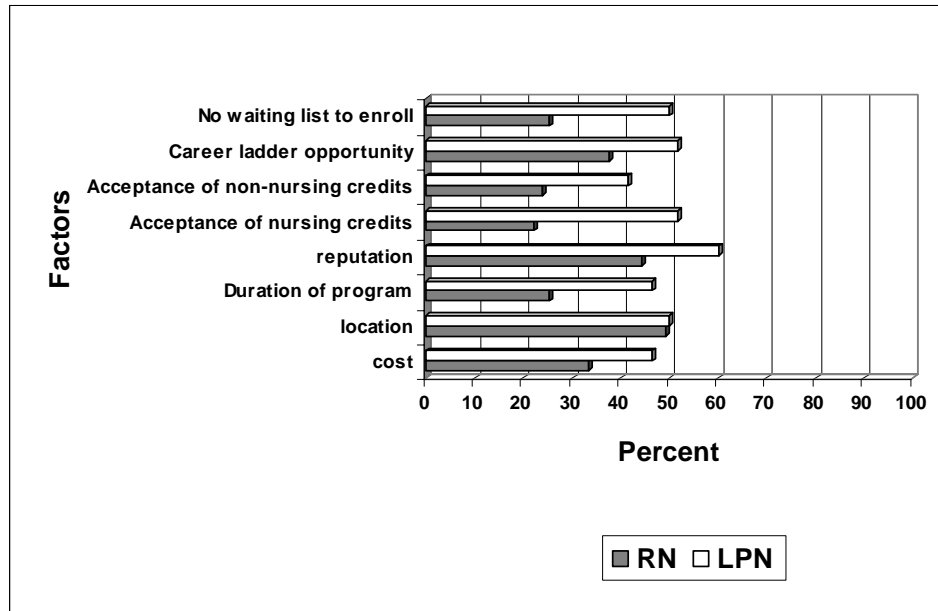
For RN students the most important factors were location (49%) and reputation (44%). Acceptance of nursing credits (25%) was the least frequent factor when choosing their program. For Minnesota RN students, the most important factors were location (92%), reputation (90%) and length of program (88%) in choosing a nursing program.

Acceptance of nursing credits (29%) and acceptance of liberal arts credits (17%) were least frequent factors for Minnesota students.

For LPN students the most important factors were reputation (60%), acceptance of nursing credits (52%) and career ladder opportunity to pursue additional nurse training (52%). Non-nursing credits (17%) was the least frequent factor when choosing their program.

The percent of students who ranked each factor as very important are displayed in figure 2. LPNs more frequently ranked all of the factors as very important compared to the RN students. The greatest difference was in acceptance of nursing and non-nursing credits and no waiting list to enroll. Location was ranked as very important by almost half of RN and LPN students.

Figure 2: Factors Ranked as Very Important by Students



Employment and Education Plans

- **Employment Plans**

- Of RN students 98% plan to work immediately after graduation with 56% planning to work in North Dakota, 24% in Minnesota and 6% in Montana. A few RN students (8%) plan to work in other states. 21% plan to work in rural areas and 87% plan to work full-time.

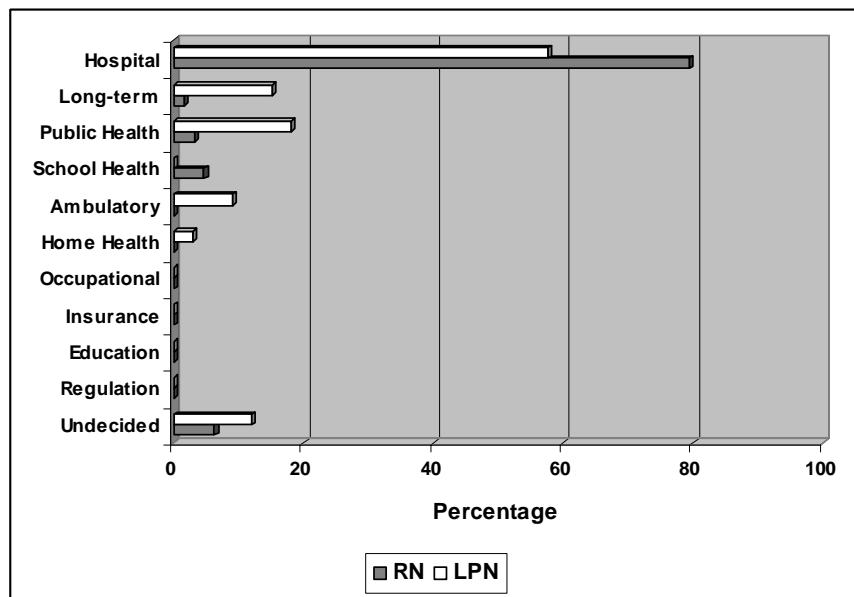
57% of LPN students plan to work immediately after graduation with 70% planning to work in North Dakota, 12% in Minnesota, 6% in South Dakota and 3% in Montana. A few LPN students (9%) plan to work in other states. 36% plan to work in rural areas and 73% plan to work full-time.

- Of RN students who plan to work immediately, 80% plan to work in hospitals, 2% in long term care, 3% in public/community health, 5% in school health and 6% were undecided. None of the RN students planned to seek employment in ambulatory care, home health care, nursing education, occupational health, insurance company or regulation.

Of the LPN students who plan to work immediately, 58% plan to work in hospitals, 15% in long term care, 9% in ambulatory care, 3% in home health care, 18% in public/community health and 12% were undecided. None of the LPN students planned to work in nursing education, occupational health, school health, insurance company or regulation.

The planned employment of students is in figure 3. More RN students plan to seek employment in hospitals and school health compared to LPN students. More LPN students plan to work in long-term care, public health, ambulatory care and home health than RN students.

Figure 3: Planned Employment Settings



- **Education Plans**


Of RN students 44% plan to pursue more education. Most RN students (57%) plan to pursue more education within a few years. In the Minnesota RN student survey 47% of students plan to pursue more education within a few years. Of those students planning more education, 89% plan to attend a master’s degree program with no students planning to attend a doctoral program. One RN student indicated that they would attend a teaching graduate program. Most RN students plan to attend a certified nurse anesthetist (38%) or a nurse practitioner program (35%) with fewer students planning to enter a clinical nurse specialist program (21%) or certified nurse midwife program (7%).

Of LPN students 71% plan to pursue more education. Most LPN students (73%) plan to start an educational program immediately after graduation with 20% planning to start within a few years. 93% of LPN students plan to attend a RN bachelor's degree program, 17% plan to attend a Master's degree program. 43% of those students planning to attend a Master's degree program plan to attend a nurse practitioner program, 14% a clinical nurse specialist program, 14% a certified nurse midwife program and 29% a certified nurse anesthetist program. 10% of LPN students indicated that they planned to attend a RN associates degree program. 10% of LPN students indicated that they plan to attend an educational program outside of nursing. These programs included medical doctor, physician assistant and x-ray technician.

- **Factors in Choosing a Nursing Career**

Table 2 lists several factors that students may have considered when choosing a nursing career. Students were asked to rank each factor from not important to more important; the percent of students indicating each rank for each factor is presented in the table.

Table 2: Importance of Factors in Choosing Nursing Career

Factors	% Not Important								% More Important	
	RN	LPN	RN	LPN	RN	LPN	RN	LPN	RN	LPN
Parent Opinion	19	22	19	19	22	26	29	24	10	9
Teacher Opinion	32	24	16	31	38	29	11	12	2	3
Someone in Health Care Opinion	13	10	10	5	13	19	35	48	29	17
Availability of nursing jobs	5	2	0	0	6	5	25	43	62	50
Availability of near nursing jobs	10	3	2	2	11	16	30	33	46	45
Salary potential	3	3	2	0	10	5	35	33	48	57
Education program length	2	5	8	0	30	29	38	31	19	33
Cost of education	6	5	13	5	25	31	38	26	14	31
Personal attraction to career	0	2	3	0	6	9	25	17	64	71
Opportunity to make a difference	0	2	0	0	3	0	19	12	76	84

Note. Numbers are percentage of students who ranked each factor.

RN students considered the opportunity to make a difference (76%) and personal attraction to career (64%) as the most important factors. RN students considered teacher opinion (32%) and parent opinion as factors that were not important.

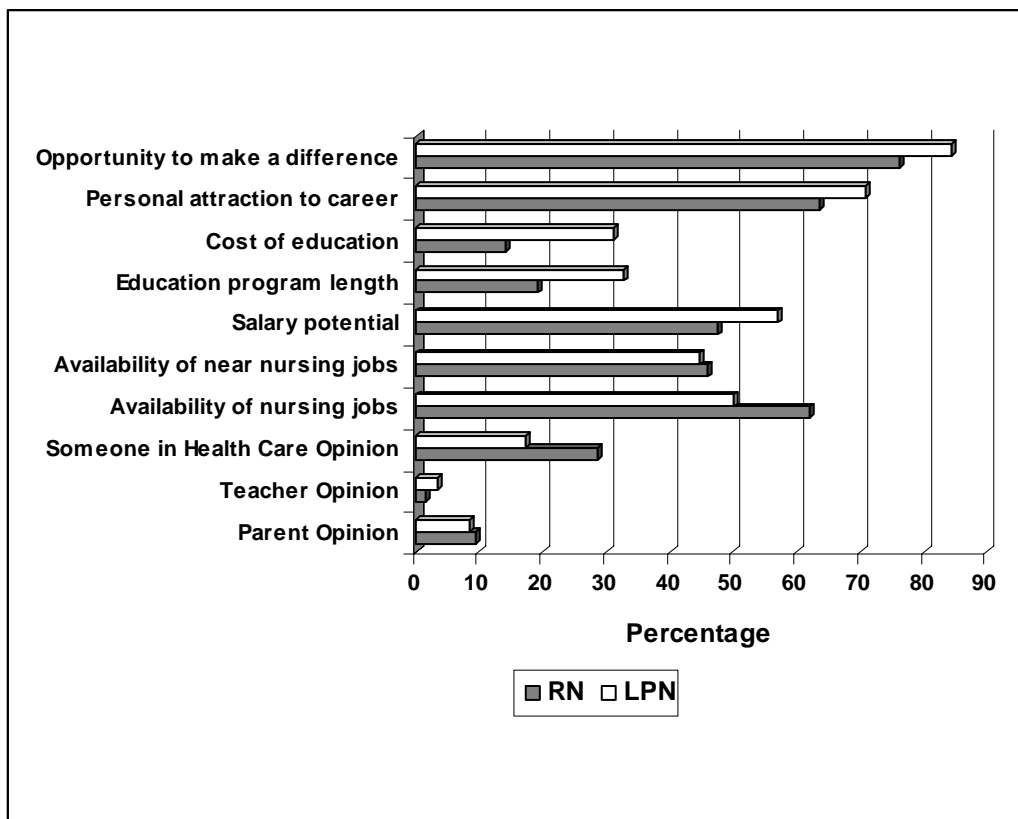
LPN students also chose opportunity to make a difference (84%) and personal attraction to career (71%) as important factors. LPN students also considered teacher opinion (24%) and parent opinion (22%) as factors that are not important.

This question was derived from the North Dakota Healthcare Association Healthcare Career Perceptions study (2002). In this study, high school students ranked personal attraction to the field, opinion or experience of someone in the field, salary potential and availability of jobs as important when considering their career. RN and LPN students also selected personal attraction to career as important, but did not rank salary potential

and availability of jobs as highly as high school students. Consistent with RN and LPN students, the opinions and experience of teachers or counselors received the lowest rankings by high school students.

The percent of students indicating each of the factors as more important in choosing nursing as a career is displayed in figure 4. RN students more frequently ranked the availability of nursing jobs, availability of nearby nursing jobs, parent opinion and the opinion of someone in health care than LPN students. The greatest difference in factors RN and LPN students considered were the opportunity to make a difference, personal attraction to the career, cost of education, education program length, salary potential and teacher opinion, which LPN students cited more frequently than RN students.

Figure 4: Factors for Choosing Nursing Ranked as More Important



Nursing Shortage Solutions

Students were asked to think of possible solutions to address nursing shortages, and to identify the best solution. Suggestions by the 121 RN and LPN nursing students fell into five themes:

- **Increase salary or wages.** 45% recommended increasing the amount of pay. Several students felt that by increased pay would lead to decreased shortage and thereby lighten workload, leading to a better work environment.

- **Improve benefits and the work environment.** 41% suggested improving benefits such as bonuses, career ladder programs, more travel programs, more opportunities for LPNs, pay raises and a North Dakota-wide wage and benefits scale that is reflective of work. Suggestions for improving the work environment includes improving the treatment of LPNs and other lower-level nurses by upper-level nurses, more equality among nurses, more respect and appreciation, reduction in paperwork in order to provide more hands-on patient care, elimination of mandatory stays, finding strategies to decrease burnout, more positive feedback from employers, peers, staff and patients and stress workshops.
- **Improve recruitment efforts.** 26% felt that improving recruitment efforts including presenting nursing as a career opportunity to elementary and high school students especially educating students on the different opportunities available in nursing, utilizing career days, having positive male and female role models, modifying the image of nursing to one of technical skill, television commercials showing nurses in practice and commenting on their career and encouraging potential nurses to obtain a CNA first so they can learn more about nursing.
- **Make changes in education programs.** 22% recommended changes in education programs. This included reducing the number of years required to get LPN and RN licensure, increasing acceptance and overall enrollment in nursing programs, designing non-traditional programs (at your own pace or 1 course at a time evening programs), combined LPN and RN programs (like Dickinson State University) so that students can work and get experience while completing their education and reduce requirements to enter programs.
- **Increase availability of student loans and financial aid.** 17% felt that increased availability of student loans and financial aid would help ease a shortage. Suggestions included more government funding for Native American students, loan or tuition reimbursement in exchange for agreement to work at a particular facility and more scholarships or grants.

Discussion Results

Students indicated they chose nursing as a career because of job availability (RN: 40%; LPN: 19%), interest in medicine and health care (RN: 29%; LPN: 31%), wanting to help people (RN: 41%; LPN: 41%) and influence by family members who are nurses (RN: 16%).

Five themes emerged through the remaining discussion including promotion and recruitment, job satisfaction and retention, education, barriers to working in North Dakota barriers to working in rural areas.

- **Promotion and Recruitment**
 - Many RN (38%) and LPN (31%) students felt that the nursing profession should be promoted to students in elementary through high school. Suggestions included having nurses go to elementary school classes to expose children early to the nursing profession and to continue this exposure in high school with career fairs (nurses representing a variety of fields), health career classes in which students

could receive CNA training or job shadow nurses to gain exposure. LPN students suggested having tours in healthcare facilities including nursing homes.

- A few RN students felt that high school counselors should receive training so they could encourage students to go into a wide variety of nursing fields. LPN students suggested school nurses would lead to more exposure of the nursing field.
- RN (29%) and LPN (33%) students felt that improving the image of nursing was important in promotion and recruitment. Suggestions included portrayal of male nurses in commercials, posters and television programs, making people aware of availability of many different types of nursing opportunities, and portraying the nursing profession in a more positive fashion (i.e. less focus on impending shortages). LPN students also suggested that LPN level nurses should be included in advertising (commercials and posters). A few LPN students suggested that having more “masculine-looking” attire available would help attract more males.

- **Job Satisfaction and Retention**

- Many RN (48%) and LPN (47%) students thought that improving the work environment would result in better retention and job satisfaction. Problems with the work environment included too many patients assigned to a nurse resulting in increased stress and less direct patient care, a stressful work environment, staffing concerns including working long shifts and mandatory stays, a physically demanding work environment, excessive paperwork and exposure to infectious diseases.
- RN and LPN students suggested increasing pay and benefits including sign-on bonuses and tuition reimbursement, having more equipment available, improving teamwork, increasing recognition and respect from physicians and other staff members. In addition, the LPN students recommended having no restriction on age for tuition reimbursement, having a magnet facility designated in North Dakota and reducing the amount of politics that nurses experience.

- **Education**

- A few RN (5%) and LPN (9%) students suggested that more online or long distance programs were needed but 6% of RN and 5% of LPN students saw problems with these programs including access, difficulty learning in an interactive video network (IVN) situation, concerns about program quality including getting adequate clinical experience and transferability of credits.
- A few RN (13%) and LPN (5%) students thought that their program was too difficult with too much emphasis on science and mathematics courses, not enough emphasis on technical skills and little time for employment while enrolled in their program. Suggestions included allowing students to progress on different tracks (i.e. slower program or spring and fall admissions) and designing programs for older students with children.

- A few RN (8%) and LPN (24%) students felt that there should be more nursing programs with larger class sizes and more faculty. LPN students suggested more programs in rural areas, programs within health care facilities such as nursing homes and classes offered to high school students. A few RN students (8%) felt that nursing faculty should have a background in education in order to ensure they are effective teachers. A few RN (2%) and LPN (3%) students felt that the current education requirements (2 year LPN and 4 year RN) should remain unchanged and that they were a benefit. Whereas, some RN (2%) and LPN (9%) students felt that the education requirements should be reduced.
 - A few RN (11%) and LPN (2%) students felt that they did not have enough clinical experience. Suggestions included having more LPN to RN programs like Dickinson State University so they could work and gain clinical experience as an LPN while obtaining their 4-year degree and have more input in their clinical placements. Few of the students had any clinical experience in rural areas.
 - Some LPN (5%) students would like to have more laptop computers and technology available during their program.
- **Barriers to Working in North Dakota**
 - Many RN (44%) and LPN (30%) students plan to work outside North Dakota. Reasons for leaving North Dakota included lack of unions and protection of nurses, more pay, job opportunities and benefits including tuition and continuing education reimbursement, availability of newer technology, lower patient loads. In addition, some LPN students felt that other states have more cultural diversity and they would be able to work in areas they are not allowed to in North Dakota (i.e. labor and delivery). Suggestions included offering tuition reimbursement programs in exchange for working, and increasing pay.
 - Students staying in North Dakota indicated that they have family here, there is a lower cost of living, it is a safe place to raise a family and the availability of a good education program.
- **Barriers to Working in Rural Areas**
 - For RN (21%) and LPN (36%) students planning to work in rural areas, reasons included: rural areas have a peaceful, safe environment, are more likely to offer student loan reimbursement, more autonomy, a broad nursing experience and they would get to know their patients. Some students indicated interest in work in a larger hospital for a few years to gain experience and then would consider working in a rural area.
 - The reasons given by students who do not plan to work in a rural area include: interest in living in a big city and working in a large hospital with a lot of critical cases, lack of jobs for spouses, lack of new technology, little cultural diversity and that the rural community was scary and unfamiliar. LPN students suggested that making educational programs available in rural areas and having a travel program

where nurses spent some time in a rural area and then worked in an urban hospital might draw more nurses to rural areas.

Student Focus Group Method

Student focus groups were held at four RN nursing programs (Dickinson State University, Minot State University, Tri-College University, University of North Dakota) and four LPN nursing programs (Dickinson State University, ND State College of Science, Northwest Technical College, United Tribes Technical College). These programs were chosen to represent approximately the four quadrants of the state.

Each nursing program department chair was asked if their program would be willing to participate. The chair then arranged a time for a one hour focus group with a class of senior level students in the RN programs and sophomore level students in the LPN programs. Nursing students near the end of their training were included in this study as they may be more likely to be thinking about where to work and about nursing workforce issues.

All focus groups occurred on location at the nursing programs and were facilitated using a set of questions in a discussion guide. Each question had several prompts (or other related questions) in order to stimulate conversation when needed. The questions asked were:

1. Let's go around the room and let everyone introduce themselves, their home town and why they chose nursing as a career.
2. What strategy do you think would be most successful in attracting others into nursing?
3. What barriers are there for students in choosing a career in nursing?
4. What barriers are there in nurses choosing to work in North Dakota?
5. Based on what you have seen in your clinical experience, what do you think gives nurses' job satisfaction?
6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the nursing field or working in North Dakota?

Each discussion was audio taped, transcribed and then major themes were determined. After the discussion (30-45 minutes) students were administered a short survey which included demographic and career goal questions. Some of the questions for the survey were derived from the National Colleagues in Caring Minimum Data Set, the Minnesota Colleagues in Caring RN Student Survey (1999) and the North Dakota Healthcare Association Healthcare Career Perceptions High School Student Survey (2002).

Student Focus Group Schedule Fall 2002

September 23	Minot State University (RN)
October 10	Northwest Technical College (LPN)
October 14	Dickinson State University (RN)
October 15	Dickinson State University (LPN)
October 17	ND State College of Science (LPN)
December 2	Tri-College University (RN)
December 10	University of North Dakota (RN)

References

Minnesota Colleagues in Caring Project (Fall, 1999). Students in Registered Nurse Programs, Nursing Student Survey. <http://www.mnnursing.org/data/studentrn.html>.

North Dakota Healthcare Association (Feb.-Apr 2002). Healthcare Career Perceptions High School Student Survey. Bismarck, ND.

Spratley, E., Johnson, A., Sochalski, J., Fritz, M. & Spencer, W. (2000). The Registered Nurse Population: Findings for The National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses. Health Resources and Service Administration, Bureau of Health Professions, Division of Nursing.

Nursing Student Focus Group Survey

1. Fill in the year of your birth Year born _____
2. Check your Racial/ethnic group

<input type="checkbox"/> White, not of Hispanic origin	<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic	<input type="checkbox"/> Black, not of Hispanic origin
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Pacific Islander	<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-racial	<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaskan Native
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		
3. Please indicate your gender Male Female
4. What is your marital status? Married Divorced Single
 Is your spouse or significant other employed? Yes No N/A
 If yes, in what city are they employed? City _____
5. Do you have children? Yes No
 If yes, how many children do you have? Currently expecting 1 or 2 3 or 4 5 +
6. Are you currently employed? Yes No
 If yes, how many hours per week are you currently working? _____
 Are you currently employed in the nursing profession? Yes No
7. In the 2002-2003 school year, what year in college are you classified as?
 Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior
8. How many credits are you currently enrolled for? _____ credits
 Are these semester or quarter credits? semester quarter
9. What is your cumulative G.P.A.? _____ What is your nursing G.P.A.? _____
10. How are your tuition and fees being financed? *Mark all that apply.*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal and family resources
<input type="checkbox"/>	Employer tuition reimbursement plan (including VA employer tuition plan)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal traineeship, scholarship, or grant
<input type="checkbox"/>	Federally assisted loan
<input type="checkbox"/>	State or local government loan or scholarship
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-government scholarship, loan, or grant
<input type="checkbox"/>	University teaching or research fellowship
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other resources

11. Please rate how important each of these factors were in your decision to attend your current education program?

	Did not Consider	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Cost	1	2	3	4
Location	1	2	3	4
Duration	1	2	3	4
Reputation	1	2	3	4
Acceptance of Nursing credits	1	2	3	4
Acceptance of non-nursing credits	1	2	3	4
Career ladder opportunity to pursue additional nurse training	1	2	3	4
No waiting list to enroll	1	2	3	4

12. What do you plan to do after graduation? Please check JUST one and also answer any applicable questions under your choice.

- Start working immediately
- a.) Where do plan to work after you graduate?
 North Dakota Minnesota South Dakota Montana
 Other (please specify _____)
- b.) Do you see yourself seeking employment in a rural area after you have completed your education? Yes No
- c.) Do you plan to work full or part-time? Full-time Part-time
- d.) Check one setting that best describes the employment setting that you would like to work in after graduation.
- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> hospital | <input type="checkbox"/> long term care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ambulatory care | <input type="checkbox"/> home health care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public/community health | <input type="checkbox"/> nursing education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> occupational health | <input type="checkbox"/> school health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> insurance company | <input type="checkbox"/> Regulation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided |
- Attend more educational training
- a.) When do you plan to start further educational training?
 Immediately In the next year Within a few years
 Considering possibilities Uncertain
- b.) Which of the following programs do you plan to pursue?
May check more than one.
 LPN associates degree
 RN bachelor's degree
 Master's degree, please check all that apply.
 Nurse practitioner Clinical Nurse specialist
 Certified nurse midwife Certified nurse anesthetist
 Doctoral degree
 Undecided Other (please specify _____)
- Other (please specify _____)

13. On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important, how important are the following factors in making a decision on choosing your career?

	Less		More		
	Important		Important		
a.) Opinion / experience from parent	1	2	3	4	5
b.) Opinion/experience from teacher/counselor	1	2	3	4	5
c.) Opinion/experience of someone in healthcare	1	2	3	4	5
d.) Availability of nursing jobs	1	2	3	4	5
e.) Availability of nursing jobs near where I live	1	2	3	4	5
e.) Salary potential in nursing field	1	2	3	4	5
f.) Length of time required to complete education	1	2	3	4	5
g.) Cost of education for chosen career	1	2	3	4	5
h.) Personal attraction to the career	1	2	3	4	5
i.) Workplace safety	1	2	3	4	5
j.) Opportunity to making a difference in people's lives	1	2	3	4	5

14. When you think of the possible solutions for nursing shortages, what is the **one** solution that you think would work the best?

15. Do have any other comments or concerns about nursing education or nursing practice?



North Dakota Nursing Student Focus Group Discussion Guide

I am passing out informed consent forms. Please read the information and then if you agree to participate today, please sign the consent form and bring it to the front of the room.

(Once all the forms have been returned.) Thank you for agreeing to participate in our discussion today. My name is Dr. Patricia Moulton, and I am facilitating this discussion as part of the North Dakota Nursing Needs Study. I will be asking you questions about why you chose nursing as a profession and we will discuss factors that may influence nurses to work in North Dakota and in particular rural areas in this state. Our whole purpose here today is for you to voice your opinions. I understand that you may not agree on all issues and I welcome all comments and thorough discussion. If I need to interrupt, it will only be to ensure that we can cover all our topics within our time frame. We can always return to a discussion if time allows. At the end of our discussion today, I will be distributing a brief questionnaire which will include space for you to write any further comments you may have. Confidentiality is an important aspect of this process and although this session is being audio taped it is only for assistance in writing a summary report and no names will be included in the report. Please use only first names when referring to yourself and refrain from using other individual's names. Does anyone have any questions? Thank you for being here and let's begin.

1. Icebreaker question: Let's go around the room and let everyone introduce Themselves, their home town and why they chose nursing as a career. I will begin.
2. What strategy do you think would be most successful in attracting others into nursing?
Prompts: Would higher salaries attract more into nursing?
Would a changing the name of the profession from nursing to something else help?
Would having educational programs more available to rural areas help?
Would presenting nursing as a career to K-12 students help?



3. What barriers are there for students in choosing a career in nursing?
Prompts: Have you heard other people say why they did not choose to go into nursing or why you should NOT go into nursing?
Can you think of any reasons why someone would not want to go into nursing?
What barriers are there for males in entering nursing and what strategies might attract more?
4. What barriers are there in nurses choosing to work in North Dakota?
Prompts: Do you know of any reasons why someone would not want to work as a nurse in North Dakota?
Are there any changes that could be made that would encourage you to work in North Dakota?
What about working in urban vs. rural areas of North Dakota?
Would you work in a rural area if you took some classes that prepared you specifically for working in rural areas?
5. Based on what you have seen in your clinical experience, what do you think gives nurses' job satisfaction?
Prompts: What decreases job satisfaction?
What changes might increase job satisfaction?
Do you think there is a difference between rural and urban areas?
6. Do you have any other comments or concerns about the nursing field or working in North Dakota?

Thank you for participating in our discussion group. I will now hand out a short questionnaire. There is a space on the bottom of the page in which you can indicate any other concerns or comments you might have. Once you complete the questionnaire, please bring it to the front of the room and you are free to go.

