Development of a Nurse Faculty Recruitment and Retention Plan
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In order to address increasing concern regarding an emerging nurse faculty shortage in North Dakota, the Dakota Medical Foundation (DMF) initiated a project to explore and make recommendations in three specific areas of the nurse faculty workforce pipeline:

1) Attract more prospective nurse faculty into targeted educational programs
2) Facilitate further development of structure and content of faculty education opportunities
3) Increase retention of current and new nursing faculty

The project, implemented through a contract with the University of North Dakota’s Center for Rural Health (CRH), yielded a set of strategies and action plans for each of the three steps. The final product included an extensive literature search and related synthesis, interviews of nurse faculty from the region, and a facilitated dialogue with representatives of eight nursing education programs along with nursing clinical leaders from the Eastern part of North Dakota.

Plan Development Steps

Objective 1: Identify models and strategies that nurse leaders from both academic and clinical practice could consider for adapting and/or adoption in North Dakota.

The CRH conducted a national scan of nurse faculty preparation programs (e.g., Oklahoma’s rural nurse educator program). A comprehensive report was developed reflecting all model programs found throughout the United States. The report included a synthesis of these programs grouped under these primary strategies: accelerated education programs, hospital-based partnerships, and financial assistance programs.

Objective 2: Identify local nurse educators’ ideas regarding effective strategies to recruit, educate and retain nurse educators.

A total of 16 faculty from 8 nursing education programs in the region were interviewed. They were asked about a number of issues ranging from the structure and utility of mentorship to information technology applications in use to outreach courses to faculty workshops. They were also asked for their ideas about strategies that could advance the production and retention of nurse faculty.

The results of objectives 1 and 2 may be found in a report entitled “Nurse Faculty Recruitment and Retention Project” which has been posted on the Center for Rural Health website at unrhealth.org.

Objective 3: Create a set of priority strategies and related actions that will yield increased participation in the nurse faculty workforce.

Twenty-one key stakeholders convened including nursing education leaders from seven college and universities and clinical leaders from eight health care facilities. Prior to the meeting, participants received the synthesis of models and the summary of interviews of nurse educators. Meeting participants were asked to share strategies currently employed to prepare, recruit and retain nurse faculty and identify new ones that would be appropriate in North Dakota. Short and long-term strategies associated with each of the faculty workforce pipeline steps were generated and barriers were identified that would need to be overcome to implement identified strategies.

To continue this effort, workgroups were established to pursue additional refinement of activities related to each of the pipeline steps. Each workgroup was convened via teleconference calls. The strategies and related plans that were developed were distributed to several nurse leadership groups in North Dakota, including the North Dakota Nurses Association Board, the Fargo/Moorhead Nursing Consortium, the North Dakota Board of Nursing, the North Dakota Nurse Leadership Council, the North Dakota State Nursing Education Consortium and the North Dakota Nurse Career Lattice program. Each group expressed their support of the plan and each volunteered to work on a piece of the plan.