

National Commission on VA Nursing



May 12, 2004

Final Report Presentation

National Museum of Women in the Arts

Commission Charge

PL 107-135, Sec. 142, Duties specified as:

Assessment: The Commission shall

1. Consider legislative and organizational policy changes to enhance the recruitment and retention of nurses and other nursing personnel by the Department of Veterans Affairs; and
2. Assess the future of the nursing profession within the Department.

Charge continued

- b) Recommendations: The Commission shall
 - Recommend legislative and organizational policy changes to enhance the recruitment and retention of nurses and other nursing personnel by the Department of Veterans Affairs

Commission Members

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Commission Advisors

- Michael Good, M.D.
 - Former Chief of Staff, Gainesville, FL VAMC
- Lucretia M. McClenney, MSN, RN, C N A
 - Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning
- Enrique Mendez Jr., M.D.
 - Retired Major General, U.S. Army Medical Corp
- Marla Salmon, Sc.D, RN, FAAN
 - Dean, Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing, Emory University

Commission Work Plan

- Develop a future state description for VA nursing.
- Assess the current status of VA Nursing.
- Identify and synthesize models of nursing excellence from the literature and national reports.
- Identify the gap between the idealized future state of VA and the current status of VA nursing.
- Submit recommendations to achieve the future state that will assure the availability of a qualified nursing workforce.

Creation of Future State for VA

- Identified characteristics of an environment that would retain and attract the most qualified health care professionals.
- Link care of veterans to the work of nursing.

Future State of VA Nursing

“VA Nursing is a dynamic diverse group of honored, respected, and compassionate professionals. VA is the leader in the creation of an organizational culture where excellence in Nursing is valued as essential for quality health care to those who have served America.”

Assessment of VA Nursing

- Reviewed data on nursing recruitment and retention.
- Received and reviewed previous reports: CARES Commission,
 - A Call to Action
 - VA Nursing Strategic Plan
 - Nursing satisfaction data
 - Staffing Reports
 - Retention Reports
 - Organizational structure data
 - Annual reports on Nurse Pay Adjustments

Status of VHA Nursing

- Total number of Nursing Staff
 - RN, N=>36,000 **Avg Age:** 47.4 yrs
 - LPN, N=>9,000 **Avg Age:** 45.4 yrs
 - NA, N=>8,000 **Avg Age:** 45.5 yrs
- Staff Diversity
 - Males, N=14.28%
 - Minorities, N=32.0%

*FY02 Data

Work of the Commission

- Oral and Written Testimony
- Fax Line
- Web Site Feedback
- Telephone Interviews
- Nursing Leadership Forum
- Staffing Survey
- Satisfaction Survey Review
- VHA Reports Review

Identified Best Practices to Retain and Recruit Nurses

- Reviewed the literature, including all published reports and recommendations to address and prevent cyclical nursing shortages.
- Identified key drivers for the retention and recruitment of nursing personnel.
- Delineated specific actions for VA to retain and recruit nurses and achieve the desired future state.

Review of Health Care and Nursing Literature

- IOM Crossing the Quality Chasm
- IOM Keeping Patients Safe; Transforming the Work Environment of Nurses
- IOM Report Health Professions Education
- The American Nursing Shortage
- In Our Hands, American Hospital Assoc.
- JCAHO Nursing at the Crossroads

Identify gaps between current and future state of VA Nursing

- Conduct hearings to receive testimony from VA nursing personnel.
- Conduct focused interviews among VA facilities with varying staff satisfaction and turnover rates.
- Solicit feedback from website from VA personnel.
- Publish fax line and encourage written testimony regarding current status and recommendations for the future of VA.

Key Drivers to Retain and Recruit Nurses

- Leadership
- Work Environment
- Fair Compensation
- Research/Innovation
- Professional Development
- Respect and Recognition
- Technology
- Others as identified in VA Nursing Strategic Plan and Call to Action.

Organizational Recommendations

- Leadership
 - The facility nurse executive should have line authority, responsibility, and accountability for nursing practice and personnel.
 - The facility nurse executive should be a member of the executive body at VISN and facility levels.
 - VHA should clearly define Nurse Qualification Standards to facilitate consistent interpretation across VA.

Organizational Recommendations

- Leadership
 - The facility nurse executive should be accountable for (a) the effective performance of nurse managers, (b) leadership development of all nursing staff, (c) development and implementation of clinical leadership roles at the point of care, and (d) compliance with standardized Nurse Professional Standards Boards (NPSB) protocols.

Organizational Recommendations

- Professional Development
 - VHA should structure career development opportunities to assure that every nurse in VHA can actualize his or her goals within one or more career paths with the opportunity for professional growth and advancement.

Organizational Recommendations

- Professional Development
 - VHA should establish national policy guidelines for schools of nursing comparable to the medical school model in policy memorandum #2 and actively promote nursing school affiliations.

Legislative/Organizational Recommendations

- Professional Development
 - VHA should assure that the VA's Health Professionals Education Assistance Program is funded equitably with other federal programs such as military scholarships.

Organizational Recommendations

- Work Environment
 - VHA should develop, test, and adopt nationwide staffing standards that assure adequate nursing resources and support services to achieve excellence in patient care and desired outcomes.
 - VHA should review the recommendations outlined in the Institute of Medicine report, *Keeping Patients Safe: Transforming the Work Environment of Nurses*, to determine specific strategies for implementation across VHA

Organizational Recommendations

- Respect and Recognition.
 - VHA should expand recognition of achievement and performance in nursing service.
 - VHA should create a sense of value and culture of mutual respect for nursing through all levels of VHA to include physicians and other colleagues, management, and stakeholders.

Organizational Recommendations

- Fair Compensation
 - VHA should amend Title 38 to establish procedures for assuring that RN locality pay policies are competitive with local RN employer markets.
 - VHA should strengthen human resources systems and departments to develop an active hiring and recruiting process for nursing staff that is consistent, to the extent possible, across facilities and VISNs.

Legislative/Organizational Recommendations

- Fair Compensation
 - VHA should change hiring and compensation policies to promote recruitment and retention of licensed practical nurses and nursing assistants.

Organizational Recommendations

- Technology

- VHA should give priority to the continued rollout of the VA Nursing Outcomes Database (VANOD) as the data repository for nursing performance standards and the evaluation of effective patient care delivery models.
- VHA should engage experts to evaluate and redesign nursing work processes to enhance patient care quality, improve efficiency and decrease nurse turnover through the use of technology.

Organizational Recommendations

- Technology
 - The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the VA should partner in applying findings from information systems and technology research projects into patient care delivery.

Organizational Recommendations

- Research/Innovation
 - VHA should establish a Center for Excellence in Quality Nursing Care to create and implement a research agenda consistent with the VA mission.

Developing New Roles to Support New Care Delivery Models

- Coordination of Care Across Settings
- Remote Delivery of Care
- Telephone/Internet Video
- Disease State Management
- Population Health

New Roles for VA Nursing

- Nurses at the bedside with specialty certification.
- Geriatric Resource Nurses
- Disease Management nurses
- Care coordinators
- Advance Practice Nurses with privileges
- Nurse Hospitalists
- Nurse Clinical Leaders managing a staff of professional and technical staff to provide effective and efficient care.

Future Roles

- Clinical Nurse Leader
 - Point of care delivery to individuals/groups and/or populations.
 - Coordinate the health care team.
 - Accountability for patient outcomes
 - Outcomes based practice

Future Roles

- Tele-Health Nurse Practitioner (CHF; Cardiac Rehab; Diabetes Care; Preventive Care)
- Internet "Ask A Nurse"
- Teaching Chronically Ill Patients
 - Maintain and Improve Health and Quality of Life

Transformational Nurse Leaders

- Accountable nurse leaders throughout the organization responsible for :
- Creating and sustaining trust.
- Actively managing change processes.
- Involving staff in decision making.
- Maintaining a learning organization
- Balance efficiency and reliability (safety)
 - IOM, 2004

Implementation Plan

- VHA should establish national policy guidelines for schools of nursing comparable to the medical school model in policy memorandum number 2 and actively promote nursing school affiliations

Implementation Strategies	Accountability	Timeline and Deliverable	Metrics
Secure comparable financial support for nursing education	Under Secretary for Health	January 2005	VHA funding allocated

Implementation Plan

- VHA should develop, test, and adopt nationwide staffing standards that assure adequate nursing resources and support services to achieve excellence in patient care and desired outcomes.

Implementation Strategies	Accountability	Timeline and Deliverable	Metrics
<p>Develop and test staffing standard that includes a technology driven acuity system linked to staffing data and other variables</p>	<p>Under Secretary for Health</p> <p>Office of Nursing Service</p> <p>*Organizational</p>	<p>December 2005</p>	<p>Evidence of staffing standard with data on relationships among factors included in standard; evidence of cost estimates for implementation</p>

The Future of VA Nursing



- VA Nursing is strong, viable and committed to excellence in patient care.
- Adopting the recommendations made today will enable VA nursing to remain strong and meet the needs of America's veterans.

Acknowledgements

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- Commission Advisors
- Report Reviewers
- Ex-Officio Member, Cathy Rick, FACHE, RN, CNAA, Chief Nursing Officer, Department of Veteran Affairs
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