Nurse Executives’ Perceptions of Barriers & Facilitators of Reaching an 80% BSN Workforce in Rural Kansas

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Disclaimer
Nurse Executives’ Perceptions

• Introduction
  ▫ IOM recommends 80% BSN workforce by 2020
  ▫ Better patient outcomes are linked to nurses educated at the BSN or higher
  ▫ Nurse executives responsible for a safe, high quality environment
  ▫ Nurse executives in rural communities face unique challenges
Nurse Executives’ Perceptions

• Capstone Purpose (two-fold)
  ▫ To identify perceived barriers and facilitators for nurse executives in implementing changes that will promote reaching an 80% BSN workforce;
  ▫ To identify the nurse executives’ current and desired RN educational staff mix
Nurse Executives’ Perceptions

- **Methodology**
  - Qualitative descriptive design
  - Purposive sample of eight CAHs in Kansas
  - Nurse executives in director/chief nurse position in selected CAHs were invited to participate
  - Semi-structured interviews
  - Inductive qualitative thematic analysis used to analyze the interview data
Nurse Executives’ Perceptions

• Results
  ▫ What are the barriers to achieving a higher percentage of baccalaureate-prepared nurses in their hospital in Kansas?
  ▫ Five themes emerged
    • Limited finances
    • Life that gets in the way
    • Don’t see the value
    • Nurses are comfortable with where they are
    • Rural challenges
Nurse Executives’ Perceptions

• Results
  ▫ Limited finances
    • Limited tuition assistance available
    • Lack of state funding for RN-BSN students
  ▫ “…if we were in a financial position that we could offer tuition reimbursement at our little hospital, I’m sure we would. But we are not and we are not alone. Most of the time our operating margins are in the red. So there’s not anything we can do to incur another expense.”
Nurse Executives’ Perceptions

• Results
  ▫ Life that gets in the way
    ▫ “Often what I hear is people would like to go back and get educated at either the BSN level or Master’s level, but they have life that gets in the way. They’ve gotten married, they have children, and they have a full-time work commitment. And so combined, there’s not much time left for furthering their education. So they kind of stop, because life gets in the way.”
Nurse Executives’ Perceptions

• Results
  ▫ Don’t see the value
    • Scope of practice unchanged
    • BSN is for those in leadership
    • “They really don’t see the benefit of going back to get a BSN...how it is really going to help them be a better nurse? I don’t think we have a clear picture painted for them of why it’s going to benefit our patients as they move forward.”
Nurse Executives’ Perceptions

• Results

  ▫ Nurses are comfortable with where they are

  ▫ “They’re just comfortable where they’re at. They’re never going to work anywhere else. They’re not going to move outside of (county). They’re just kind of settled where they’re at...I think it’s in all of our rural communities.”

  ▫ “We have a few nurses who are very boxed in. They don’t want to leave their comfort zone of the floor. They’re pretty nervous to take TNCC or learn the ER to become more advanced in their skill sets because they don’t want to know those things because they would have to use those things.”
Nurse Executives’ Perceptions

• Results
  ▫ Rural challenges
    • Difficult to recruit to rural Kansas
    • Geographically separated from BSN programs
    • “I have six full-time positions open that I am filling currently with contract staff...short of pirating from one another, we can’t fill our spots.”
    • “For us its location because we’re a good hour and a half from a facility...to do clinicals, those are four hours away.”
Nurse Executives’ Perceptions

• Results
  ▫ What are the facilitators to achieving a higher percentage of BSN-prepared nurses in their hospitals in rural Kansas?
  ▫ Five themes emerged
    • Increase funding for nurses in rural communities
    • Require mandate for BSN with time limits
    • Educate on the value of the BSN degree
    • Develop mentoring and role modeling programs
    • Offer a variety of BSN program options
Nurse Executives’ Perceptions

• Results
  ▫ Increase funding for nurses in rural communities
    ▫ “I’d definitely have to have some sort of scholarship program or an agreement for those nurses to have with our facility to help them attain that and then also have some sort of pay scale...a pay increase that would go with that because here, that is what motivates...I feel like that’s what motivates our staff, its pay.”
    ▫ “I know that the government does offer some assistance and they offer loan forgiveness for some critical access areas...”
Nurse Executives’ Perceptions

• Results

  ▫ Require mandate for BSN with time limits
    ▫ “My perception of nursing is we need to quit looking at it as a technical vocation and start viewing it as a profession. And to be profession, in my opinion, you need to have the education, which to me starts at the baccalaureate level...I know it sounds harsh, but on the other hand, what other profession allow you to enter at the two year level and then hopes that you go on to get further education?”
    ▫ “There does need to be a mandate that maybe they should, okay in ten years you need to have your BSN...having gone through a BSN program myself, I do feel that we would have much stronger nurses if we had that mandate.”
Nurse Executives’ Perceptions

• Results
  ▫ Educate on the value of the BSN degree
  ▫ “I think number one we’d have to start with education on why it’s important, why we support the fact that we need to move toward this...and then again...have a structured plan on how we’re going to help them.”
Nurse Executives’ Perceptions

• Results
  ▫ Develop mentoring and role modeling programs
  ▫ “If we have BSNs or MSNs or whatever the case may be, but nurses that have further education and they are role modeling the professionalism that they learned in those advanced classes, then that can become contagious, I really do believe that.”
  ▫ “I know we offer a lot of mentoring and guidance for that new level nurse…if there’s any way to strengthen that level of knowledge of the nurse prior to coming on the job…probably with communication and leadership and really being an overall well rounded employee....”
Nurse Executives’ Perceptions

• Results
  ▫ Offer a variety of BSN program options
  ▫ “(Medical) Center is working on a collaborative...to offer the BSN program on the community college campus through collaboration with a four year university...I think that’s amazing because if these individuals out here...have a opportunity to obtain their BSH in that same campus, I think they would do it or look seriously at it.”
Nurse Executives’ Perceptions

• Results
  ▫ What is the current educational staff mix in the CAH?
  ▫ What is the educational staff mix goal in the CAH?
  ▫ Results related to the educational staff mix were incomplete
    • May have opted to decline this section
    • Methods not suitable for them to report
    • May not have been reasonably available to participants
Nurse Executives’ Perceptions

• Discussion
  ▫ Findings highlight significant barriers nurse executives face in rural communities in increasing the percentage of nurses with BSN
  ▫ Findings are consistent with previous studies
    • Time, cost, geographical location and perceived value
    • Cost and time away from family are well cited in literature
Nurse Executives’ Perceptions

• Implications for Education, Policy & Nursing
  ▫ The findings from this study seem to demonstrate a greater emphasis on the benefits of additional education to the nurse
  ▫ A strong focus is placed on the incremental increase in the nurses’ compensation, rather than the benefit to the patient, the organization and the overall community
Nurse Executives’ Perceptions

• Implications for Education, Policy & Nursing
  ▫ Unintended consequences of increased interest in Magnet and demand for BSN may shift nurses away from rural communities
  ▫ State mandate for BSN with time limits should be on the table
  ▫ Consideration of cost / benefit ratio of tuition assistance with improved patient outcomes
  ▫ Expand collaborative education-practice partnerships
  ▫ Action Coalition initiatives that support advancing education, removing barriers and developing leadership
Nurse Executives’ Perceptions

- Conclusions
  - Patient care needs are more complex
  - Rural communities present with unique challenges
  - BSN are better equipped to problem-solve, demonstrate leadership and provide evidence-based care
  - Understanding barriers and the facilitators intended to increase percentage of BSN will improve patient outcomes
References


