Indiana University
School of Nursing

Determining the Regional Need for A Masters Nursing Program

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Introduction/Background

A rising infant mortality rate, increasing prevalence of diabetes, and deadly drug crisis are some of the factors contributing to Indiana's overall health ranking of 39th among 50 states (United Health Foundation, 2016). Health disparities are particularly evident in the state's predominantly rural Southwest Central region. With no graduate nursing programs in the 11 county area, educational preparation among local RNs reflects some of the lowest in the state (Table 1.)

Table 1: Southwest Central Indiana Population and Nurse Workforce Characteristics					
Indiana County	Population	Rurality	RN's with at least BS degree	APRN FTE	Resident/ APRN FTE
Brown	15,242	Urban	28.6%	2	7621
Crawford	10,713	Rural	23.1%	1.2	8927.5
Daviess	31,648	Rural	30.1%	11	2877.
Dubois	41,889	Rural	42.2%	24.8	1689.1
Greene	33,165	Rural	29.5%	5.6	5922.3
Lawrence	46,134	Rural	29.8%	13.8	3343.0
Martin	10,334	Rural	21.4%	2	5167.0
Monroe	137,974	Urban	51.9%	85.6	1611.8
Orange	19,840	Rural	37.5%	6.42	3100
Owen	21,575	Urban	36.4%	2	10787.5
Washington	28,262	Urban	27.6%	4	7065.5

Source: Sheff, Z.T., Nowak, A.L., Maxey, H., Norwood, C., Randolph, C., & Kelley, T.M. (2015).

Indiana University (2014) strategic plan included initiatives to improve the health of the communities served, including the creation of a regional academic health center with an accompanying need to increase the expertise of nurses in the local workforce.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to explore the feasibility of offering a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program with a community health specialty track on the Core School of Nursing Bloomington campus. As part of the decision-making process, a needs assessment was completed with the specific aims of determining the:
1. extent of prospective student interest in enrolling in a MSN graduate degree program on the regional campus
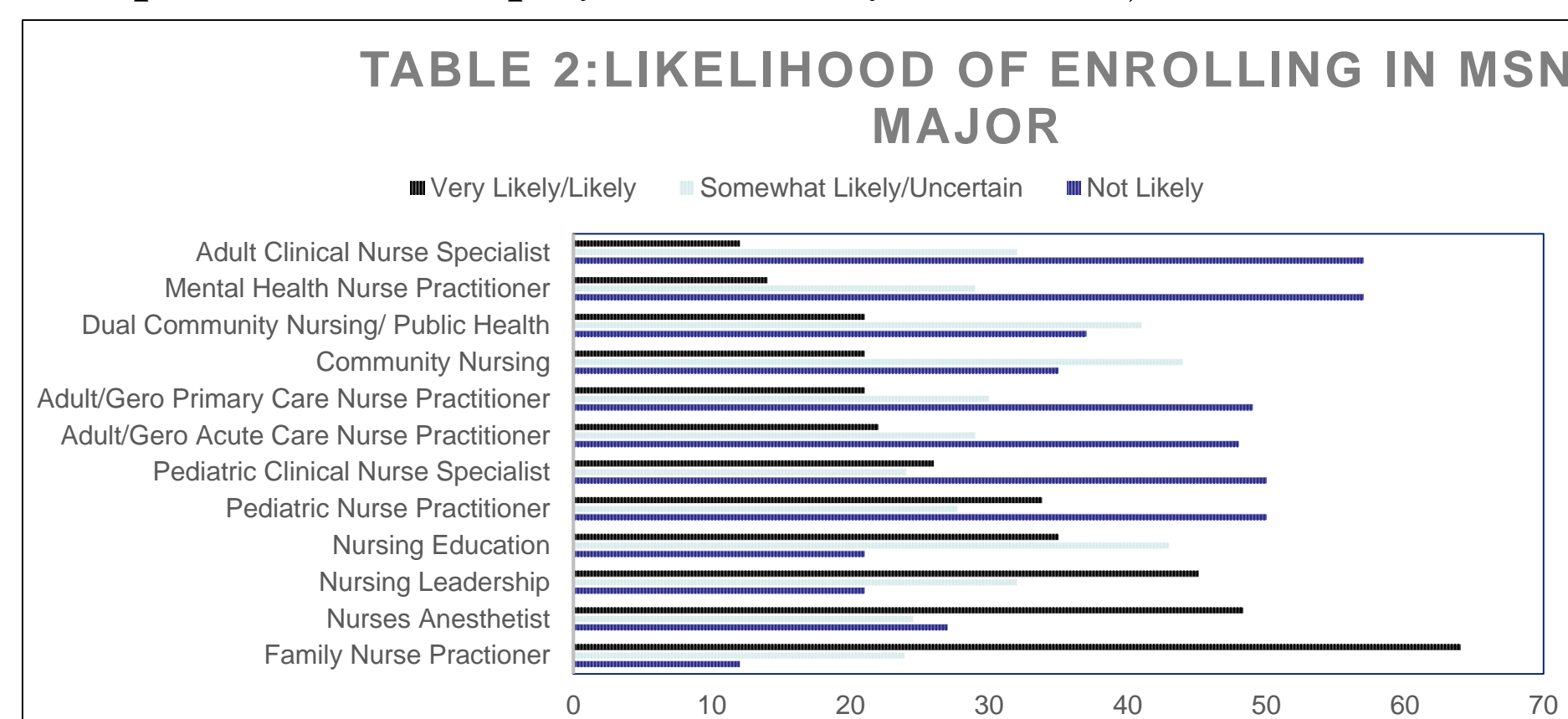2. which MSN specialty majors should be offered based upon prospective student feedback.

Methods

A team of stakeholders created a 23- item tool to address interest in enrolling in selected MSN tracks if offered on the regional campus(figure). Links to the anonymous Redcap survey were sent to:

- 197 current SON students
- 471 SON alumni
- 52 2016 SON graduates
- 700 RNs at the local partner hospital
- 6 county school nurses

The survey remained open between December 9, 2016 and January 14, 2017.

Figure

Results

Of the 175 respondents, 116 indicated that they were interested or very interested in enrolling in an MSN program on the regional campus. Table 2 displays interest by MSN major.

TABLE 2: LIKELIHOOD OF ENROLLING IN MSN MAJOR

Conclusions

- While the community health option was initially desired by administration as it would meet the perceived health needs of the region, prospective student data did not support it as a viable offering.
- Among the participants likely to remain in Southern Indiana the strongest interest was for majors in:
  1. Family nurse practitioner (M=2.69/4)
  2. Nursing education (M=2.23/4)
  3. Nurse Anesthetist (M=2.07/4)
  4. Nursing Leadership (M=2.07/4)
- Offering top choices of a family nurse practitioner or nursing education track potentially diverted students from the main SON campus.
- The next step is to design a shared resource model can be created between the Bloomington and Indianapolis campuses to offer the family nurse practitioner and nursing education specialty tracks.

References

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