

The Western Massachusetts

Nursing Collaborative

Advancing Nursing  *Addressing Critical Needs*

**WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS
NURSING COLLABORATIVE
STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2023**

2020
THE YEAR OF THE NURSE AND MIDWIFE



Nursing Collaborative

Advancing Nursing  Addressing Critical Needs

Dear Colleagues,

We are writing you to present the 2020-2023 Western Massachusetts Nursing Collaborative (WMNC) Strategic Plan. This plan was discussed and written prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, it has incorporated new nursing workforce issues facing our community as the WMNC moves forward.

As the pandemic spread, our local colleges and universities transitioned nursing instruction to strictly online and implemented alternative clinical practice experiences. The healthcare organizations rapidly cross-trained and deployed their nurses to provide well-needed clinical care to COVID-19 positive patients. In response, the WMNC increased its regular meetings (by ZOOM) of education and practice partners to discuss the evolving challenges and identify new strategies to improve the education, employment and retention of the nursing workforce.

The increasing opportunities and challenges in nursing education and employment has long been at the core of the programs and practices executed by the WMNC. As our society readjusts to additional financial burdens brought about by COVID-19, the WMNC anticipates additional challenges going forward for both recruitment and retention of employees as well as new and current nursing students. The strategic goals outlined for this implementation cycle builds on the previous years of partnership with our two- and four-year academic institutions, healthcare service organizations, workforce development boards, minority nursing and community organizations.

The World Health Organization in declaring 2020 the **Year of the Nurse and the Midwife**, states:

Nurses and midwives play a vital role in providing health services. These are the people who devote their lives to caring for mothers and children; giving lifesaving immunizations and health advice; looking after older people and generally meeting everyday essential health needs. They are often, the first and only point of care in their communities. The world needs 9 million more nurses and midwives if it is to achieve universal health coverage by 2030.

A recognition that is always well deserved, but today more than ever.

After 14 years of existence, the WMNC remains committed to supporting our nursing education and practice partners to help meet the nursing workforce challenges today, and in the future. We invite you to read our new Strategic Plan and identify areas you can help us to support our mission.

Thank you for your past support and we look forward to working with you in the future.

Diane Brunelle

Diane Brunelle, MSN, RN, BC-NEA
Co-Chair, Inception & Member Emeritus

Nancy Craig-Williams

Nancy Craig-Williams, PhD, MS, RN
Co-Chair, Member Emeritus

WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS NURSING COLLABORATIVE

Academic Partners

- American International College
- Bay Path University
- Elms College
- Greenfield Community College
- Holyoke Community College
- Springfield Technical Community College
- University of Massachusetts, Amherst
- Westfield State University

Service Partners

- Baystate Health
- Behavioral Health Network
- Caring Health Center
- Cooley Dickinson Hospital
- Genesis Health/Heritage Hall
- Holyoke Medical Center
- Trinity Health OF New England – Mercy Medical Center

Local Chapter Associations

- Western MA Chapter of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses
- Western Massachusetts National Black Nurses Association

Trade Associations

- Massachusetts Senior Care Association

Workforce Development

- MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board

Strategic Goals & Objectives 2020 - 2023

1. Increase retention of new nurses in all healthcare settings
 - *Objective 1: Expand the use of evidence-based retention programs*
 - *Objective 2: Increase access to professional advancement opportunities*
2. Ensure nurses have the competencies and full scope of practice to meet the health needs of the community
 - *Objective 1: Increase hiring in high demand settings*
 - *Objective 2: Integrate high priority competencies*
3. Increase the diversity of the nursing workforce
 - *Objective 1: Increase enrollment, retention, graduation, licensure and employment of diverse nurses*
 - *Objective 2: Participate in career pathway programs*
4. Increase the number of nurses with advanced degrees
 - *Objective 1: Promote accelerated educational pathways*
 - *Objective 2: Increase financial support and promote academic progression*
5. Increase nursing faculty in Western MA
 - *Objective 1: Motivate nurses to explore faculty roles*
 - *Objective 2: Utilize innovative compensation strategies*
 - *Objective 3: Increase recruitment and retention*
6. Sustain the partnership
 - *Objective 1: Include more cross-continuum partners*
 - *Objective 2: Leverage partner co-investment and funding strategies*
 - *Objective 3: Align with national and statewide nursing organizations*

GOAL 1: INCREASE THE RETENTION OF NEW NURSES IN ALL HEALTHCARE SETTINGS

Integral to the new nurse's experience in a clinical practice setting is the nature of the interaction, coaching and mentorship the nurse receives from his or her preceptor. The WMNC plans to evaluate the preceptor's role and the new orientation process; since these elements are fundamental to the organization's retention of new nurses. Additionally, the millennial workforce has different life priorities from previous generations and high career aspirations with a more immediate need to fulfill these career goals. The WMNC identifies selective strategies to promote job satisfaction for preceptors, students and new employees.

Objective 1: Expand the use of evidence-based retention programs and strategies such as nurse residency, career coaching, apprenticeships, and preceptorship programs across all care settings

Strategies:

1. Develop strategies to support and increase the frequency of preceptor and clinical faculty trainings across the region, especially in long-term care and home care settings
2. Develop initiatives that promote collaborative work practices between clinical preceptors and faculty, encourage reciprocal mentoring and coaching
3. Recognize and support preceptors in their role as mentors and coaches of new nurses
 - Promote an outlet for emotional support
 - Find ways to promote work-life balance
 - Find ways to promote inter-team dependency
4. Identify and define common preceptor competencies
5. Promote early entry of graduate nurses into the workforce
6. Support new nurses entering the workforce during the coronavirus pandemic
7. Conduct needs assessment with preceptors in post-acute and home care settings. Use the results of the needs assessment to inform recruitment and retention techniques of new preceptors

Objective 2: Promote continuous learning, professional advancement, and provide career planning support and guidance

Strategies:

1. Equip nurse leaders, managers and preceptors with the competencies to guide nurses' professional development plans
2. Assess current professional advancement practices in service organizations. Collate and disseminate best practices across the region
3. Provide opportunities for nurses to interact with other nurses in different specialties. Develop voluntary, unpaid opportunities for nurses to shadow on alternative units, and open unit-based staff meetings to other nurses and disciplines
4. Promote opportunities for nurses to engage in interprofessional discussions and huddles
5. Identify training needs to improve skills and competencies
6. Promote specialty certificates as a professional advancement opportunity for incumbent nurses
7. Promote quicker access to new departments, units and settings

GOAL 2: ENSURE THE NURSING WORKFORCE HAS THE COMPETENCIES AND FULL SCOPE OF PRACTICE TO MEET THE CHANGING HEALTH NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

Hiring trends for nurses is rapidly changing across the industry and healthcare teams are changing as care delivery changes. The overall healthcare model and delivery system is in a process of constant change. New trends include a growing demand to care for a population with an increasing need for mental health and substance abuse interventions. Healthcare organizations are finding new ways to care for patients and engage their workforce. The WMNC is strategically positioned to identify, develop and assess specialized training and education programs to support schools of nursing and healthcare delivery organizations.

Objective 1: Increase the hiring and retention of nurses in high demand settings, such as long-term care service and supports, community, mental and behavioral health services, as well as in specialized care settings, including operating rooms, intensive care, and ambulatory care units

Strategies:

1. Collect and analyze vacancy data from service providers with high vacancy trends
2. Develop a communication and implementation plan to educate faculty and students on industry hiring and care delivery trends
3. Promote and deliver nursing clinical education in all care settings
4. Identify qualified preceptors to deliver nursing education
5. Develop and maintain relationships with providers focused on increasing clinical education and post-graduation employment in high need settings
6. Design and implement clinical placement scenarios and case studies for nurses in all care settings
7. Provide regional preceptor trainings on a regular basis
8. Develop and implement a preceptor award and or acknowledgment program

Objective 2: Integrate high priority competencies into academic and service educational programs

Strategies:

1. Promote standardized geriatric competencies throughout academic and service educational programs
2. Create more student nurse employment and clinical opportunities in non-acute care settings
3. Explore expanding MA Senior Care Foundation's Faculty Institute for Gerontological Nursing (FIGN) to service-based educators
4. Participate in the Pioneer Valley Inter-Professional Education Collaborative (PV-IPEC) interprofessional educational forums for academic institutions and service providers
5. Participate in Baystate Health and the University of Massachusetts Medical School Interprofessional Health Equity Incubator
6. Develop and share common IPE simulation experiences in academic and service settings

GOAL 3: INCREASE THE DIVERSITY OF THE NURSING WORKFORCE IN WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

The nursing workforce needs to reflect the communities in Hampden, Franklin and Hampshire counties. This requires an increase in the ethnic and racial makeup of nurses in all care delivery settings. The WMNC is committed to taking deliberate steps to transform training and educational programs to include additional supports for diverse groups, based on their unique needs. This might also mean partnering with other groups to implement researched-based strategies to increase recruitment and retention of diverse nurses, ultimately leading to a culturally competent delivery of care for consumers and a healthier community.

Objective 1: Increase enrollment, retention, graduation, licensure and employment of diverse nurses in the region

Strategies:

1. Aggregate schools of nursing's diversity activities and initiatives and share best practices
2. Promote the unique strengths of diverse graduate nurses, placing emphasis on the commonalities and direct connections with the consumers they serve
3. Evaluate current interventions to determine unanticipated gaps and make changes to meet the needs of minority students
4. Engage minority nursing and student groups in the planning and implementing of new initiatives
5. Track consistent diversity metrics for all academic programs and years

Objective 2: Participate in middle and high school career pathway programs to increase the number of diverse students prepared to complete a nursing program

Strategies:

1. Facilitate the development and implementation of career exposure programs for middle and high school students
2. Plan and actualize education and career fairs with a specific focus on reaching urban communities and diverse students

3. Establish different methods to effectively communicate with and provide academic programs that are relevant to the needs of and accessible to students from diverse backgrounds
4. Share best practices of existing health science career pathway programs across the partnership's network

GOAL 4: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF NURSES IN THE REGION WITH A BSN/BS IN NURSING OR ADVANCED DEGREE

The number of advanced degree programs for nurses have increased in the region. Nurses are provided with many advanced degree and degree completion options, such as:

- Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)
- RN to BSN
- Accelerated Second Degree in Nursing
- Nursing Administrator Concentration
- Nursing Educator Concentration
- Master of Science: Clinical Nurse Leader (*Online*), Master of Science in Nursing Education Concentration (*Online*), Post Master's Certificate Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) Concentration
- Doctor of Nursing Practice: Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) (*Online*)
- DNP in Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (*Online*)
- Health Systems Innovation and Leadership (HSIL) (*Online*)
- Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) (*Online*)

As a result of these expansive degree offerings, the WMNC sees a need to recruit and engage more service providers to increase the number of clinical placement sites and preceptors to teach students, new and returning nurses and develop incentives such as tuition reimbursement programs, developing and promoting career ladders and making information on advanced degrees accessible to all incumbent workers.

Objective 1: Promote accelerated pathways for new and incumbent nurses to advance their education

Strategies:

1. Host educational information sessions annually
2. Develop a communication and outreach plan that reaches a broader, more diverse audience
3. Provide up to date educational pathways information on the Partnership website (westernmasshealthcareers.org)
4. Develop and implement regional programs that provides “continuous learning and professional development”¹
5. Develop strategies to increase clinical placements and employment opportunities for nurse practitioners

Objective 2: Increase financial support, such as “tuition reimbursement, school loan forgiveness as well as monetary and other incentives”² that promote academic progression

Strategies:

1. Query academic and service providers to identify scholarships and incentives offered to students and employees
2. Gather resources on funding opportunities and planning tools for nurses advancing their education
3. Develop a list of resources and planning tools for financing nursing education
4. Embed opportunities for growth at all levels by providing clear and actionable information on career ladders, tuition assistance, etc.

GOAL 5: INCREASE THE SUPPLY AND DIVERSITY OF NURSING FACULTY IN WESTERN MA

The WMNC supports the need to create a welcoming and exciting environment combined with adequate compensation to attract new and highly qualified faculty, while leveraging and expanding current nurse faculty trainings and recruitment methods. The Collaborative recognizes the need to promote clinical faculty roles as a viable career option.

^{1,2} *Nursing Summit 2019 Follow-up Survey Report*. Organization of Nurse Leaders MA, RI, NH, CT, VT, November 2019.

Objective 1: Recruit, motivate, and attract diverse nurses to explore faculty role

Strategies:

1. Determine faculty diversity goals as aligned with the demographics of Western MA
2. Identify diverse individuals in service settings who have shown excellence in precepting and or education, and invest in these individuals through professional development trainings and joint appointments

Objective 2: Identify and utilize innovative funding and employment strategies to support and increase faculty roles

Strategies:

1. Increase funding sources to support faculty roles
2. Explore joint appointments between all service settings and schools
3. Encourage and support the development of Dedicated Education Units (DEUs) between nursing programs and service providers

Objective 3: Increase recruitment and retention of clinical faculty

Strategies:

1. Promote and utilize the MA Department of Higher Education Nursing Faculty Database
2. Develop a standardized method of measuring clinical faculty retention
3. Develop and promote professional development for adjunct faculty

GOAL 6: SUSTAIN THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS TO IMPLEMENT ITS GOALS

The sustainability of the collaborative is dependent on the ongoing commitment and co-investment of its service and education partners. MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board is the intermediary and backbone organization that provides staff support and facilitates the regional membership to Centralized Nursing Clinical Placement System.

Together, the members of the WMNC constantly work to expand the collaborative to engage the participation of partners who are representative of all care settings and impact the health of the community. The implementation of the strategic plan goals requires the full participation of its members and the broader community.

Objective 1: Expand the Healthcare Workforce Partnership to include members from service settings and associations

Strategies:

1. Identify and recruit additional partnership members
2. Recruit members representing trade and chapter organizations
3. Consistently implement the established outreach strategy and onboarding process for new members

Objective 2: Leverage partner co-investment funding in nursing from the public and private sector

Strategies:

1. Increase leveraged investment and funding from public and private sources
2. Identify and obtain new public and private sector funding aligned with the collaborative's mission

Objective 3: Align with recognized national and state-wide nursing organizations

Strategies:

1. Increase coordination and alignment of initiatives, grant funding and other resources
2. Implement promising practices and innovative approaches to nursing education and continued professional development

For more information on the Western MA Nursing Collaborative, visit:
<http://westernmasshealthcareers.org/about/nursing-collaborative>

As a public health nurse working in the community, I learned how important community engagement is, and how much we needed each other. When the pandemic was at its height, the fear of the unknown was palpable in the air. I found myself doing more than mitigating the spread of the disease, I found myself providing guidance and emotional support to the people I spoke with. I connected with people on a deeper level, people expressed feeling reassured when they found out I was a nurse. People wanted to talk about what they were experiencing while sick, some people were so sick they could not even talk, but they wanted to share. I don't think anyone of us will ever forget this period of time. I think I was at the right place, at the right time and for the right reasons.

Anne Mistivar, RN BSN., MSN

Public Health Nurse

President of Western Mass Black Nurses

WMNC members share their personal reflections during the COVID-19 pandemic

COVID 19- We will adapt, overcome, and rise united, together. I am grateful for my healthcare family. Those that remained on the front lines every day. Scared. Exhausted. Unsure. Heartbroken for our patients and their families. So many of us felt that when you walk into the room and see a patient who is weak, scared, and in need of us nothing else mattered. We are present and we are here for you! You can count on us! Above all else, we have a call as healthcare providers to take care of others and ensure essential services remain for those in need. To remain present to care for those that need us and for each other. We DID IT and we will continue to do it because that is what we do-we heal as best as we can and we stay present. As we care for our patients holistically, we recognize that families needed us too -- virtually. We found a way to be "present while having to be apart" in so many heartbreaking situations. Healthcare professionals found a way through the darkness. I have never been more proud to be a nurse than during these times. I am humbled by my healthcare family that made countless sacrifices to ensure patients and their families were cared for compassionately during this pandemic! We are in this together and we will remain long after this crisis resolves.

Carlene Bailey MS, RN-BC

Director of Patient Experience

Valley Health Systems

We Have To Be Smarter Than COVID19

We were in a very challenging time and so more than ever, we needed to be hypervigilant about how we listened to stories, nurtured and healed all of our people. We wanted to see our people. We wanted to see for ourselves person to person during this crucial time how they looked, hear how they were feeling, see and hear for ourselves. We are healers, this is what we do. It is unfortunate that we had reached a point because of the COVID 19 outbreak that these face-to-face, seeing and hearing visits were no longer safe for many patients or for us. We had to use our clinical brains and our compassionate clinical hearts to work on ways to safely stay clinically active in the lives of our patients. We are fortunate now to have the ability through technology to see our patients face to face, hear their stories, touch their lives and to heal.

Bonnie H. Paddleford, MS, PA-C
Director Clinical Integration and Optimization
Caring Health Center

I have been overwhelmed and inspired by the leadership, teamwork, collaboration and innovation that has taken place during this pandemic.

The strategic planning and implementation of safety measures, policies, procedures, education, training and treatment in a very short amount of time with very limited resources to meet the needs of our community and our colleagues has been exhausting but has brought us together in ways we never imagined. We need to continue to take care of each other like never before!

Melissa Kline, MSN, RN
Manager, Nursing Education and Professional Practice
Mercy Medical Center

In this COVID-19 pandemic era from the ambulatory setting perspective has established a new "norm." The presence of masks, social distancing in all community settings; as stores open at 6AM to accommodate the elderly. The home visit is replaced by a phone call, telemedicine or video appointments. The absence of food on the shelves in most stores, temperatures upon entering work, and the presence of (PPE). The new norm is to focus on social determinants of health; calling a cab or Uber to go to an appointment is not an available option. The sound of chatter, laughter and children checking in for appointments is deeply missed.

Gloria M. Wilson, MSN, RN
ACO Nurse Care Manager
Baystate Mason Square Neighborhood Health Center

During this time of COVID, I have been in awe of the human spirit! The love and care that has been brought out in people has been inspiring. I have also felt some guilt. Having been a bedside nurse for many years, I felt like I should have been on the front line. However, I also realized that as nurse educators we were in an important position to help our front line. We needed to help graduate competent, professional nurses! My faculty and team rose to the challenge and I am so proud of them all. I work with an incredible group of professionals! Without their hard work, long hours, creativity, and perseverance, we wouldn't have been able to graduate the STCC Nursing Class of 2020. They went above and beyond, supporting students and reminding them they could "do it" when they felt they couldn't study one more thing!

Following their "graduation, we all reflected on the multitude of changes in teaching methodology and evaluation. We found great benefit to their integration. The benefits were being echoed by colleagues across the state. As we all work toward "A New Normal", we move forward with new tools in the hope to provide more effective ways for us to develop the quality nurses we so desire to produce! As we all work and plan coming semesters, we also wait in anticipation to confirm that these changes helped to transform our nursing graduates into becoming the professionals they have worked so hard to become. I am hopeful that as this COVID storm passes, we will all begin to see the fruits of our labor.

Lisa Fugiel MSN, RN-BC

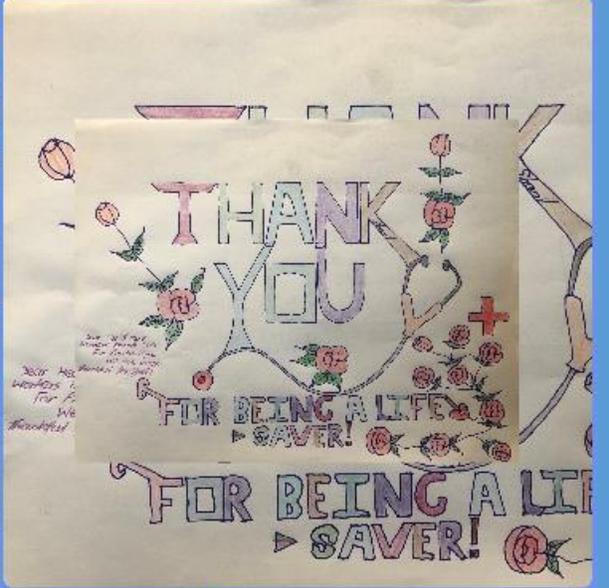
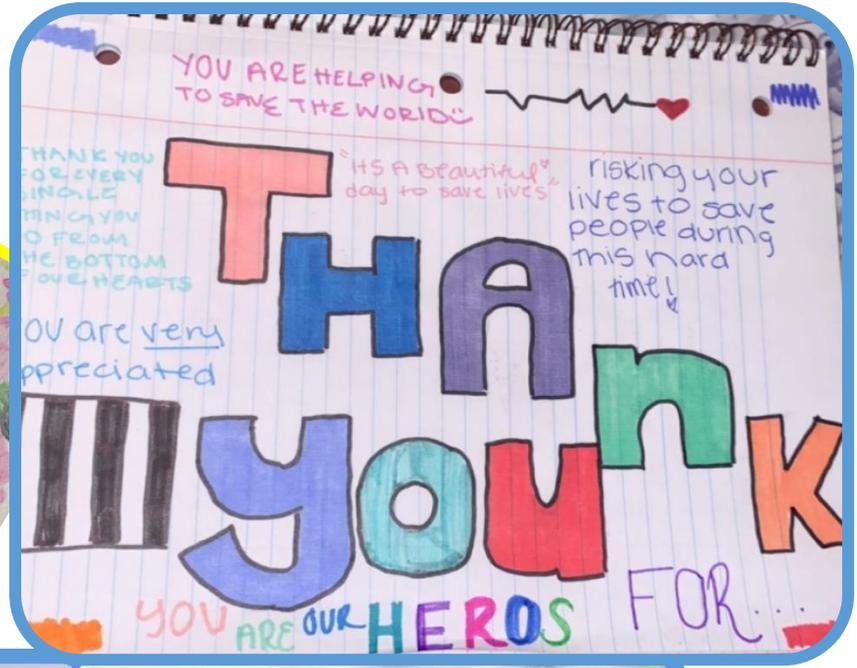
Assistant Dean of School of Health & Patient Simulation (SHPS)/Director of Nursing
Springfield Technical Community College

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a life changing event in our history. I have never seen such collaboration both professionally and personally. Within the hospital, every single department has worked side by side with each other for the betterment of our patients and our community. We have been forced to think "outside the box" and have now fundamentally changed how we function in healthcare going forward. I am proud to have been a part of such innovative and transformative thinking during a time of pure uncertainty.

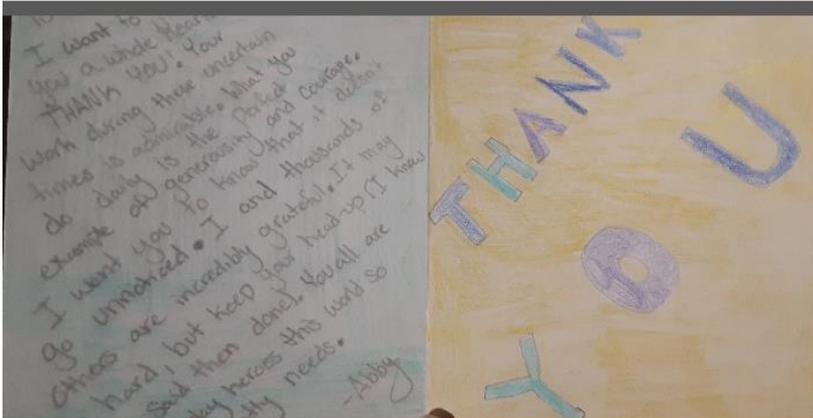
Stephanie Swan, MSN, RN, CMSRN

Manager of Nursing Education & Patient Care Float Pool
Baystate Franklin Medical Center

The WMNC joins our community



in celebrating all essential workers



Thank You to all of the first responders and frontline workers putting themselves out on the front fighting this awful virus!!!!!! Can't thank you enough for all that you do!

