

NORTH DAKOTA

Partners in Nursing

Gerontology Consortium Project



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Challenges in Gerontology

The expected growth of the older population in the U.S. over the next 50 years will have an unprecedented impact on the U.S. healthcare system, especially supply and demand for healthcare workers. Older adults will be better educated, have easier access to information and more socioeconomic resources. As they age, older adults will use more and different health services than younger people. The projected demand for health services from older adults is probably an underestimation of their need for services, along with their ability to find or pay for services.

Gerontology nurses take on challenging but also extremely rewarding work. These nurses address physical, psychological, social, cultural and family concerns, as well as promote health and emphasize successful aging across the continuum of care settings. Gerontology nurses fill needed roles in education, research, policy and leadership.



The Center for Health Workforce Studies has stated the demand for healthcare workers who serve older adults will surpass the supply because most healthcare professionals receive limited education on providing geriatric care. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) has noted challenges to the preparation of a geriatric workforce due to lack of faculty, inconsistent curricula, and few training opportunities. As a result, the IOM has made recommendations to increase the geriatric workforce.

Healthcare provider shortages can negatively impact healthcare quality and access to healthcare services. Shortages can also increase stress on available providers and contribute to higher healthcare costs by increasing the use of overtime pay and expensive temporary personnel. While workforce shortages are a challenge for the entire healthcare system, they are likely to be most severe in rural areas of the United States, where healthcare workers generally choose not to live and practice. North Dakota is among the most rural and frontier areas of the country, and the state's aging population presents a significant challenge.

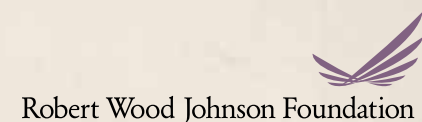
North Dakota ranks number two nationally in the proportion of residents 85 years of age and older, and ranks the 12th highest percentage being 65 years and older. North Dakota's median age (38.8) ranks ninth overall and is higher than the national median age of 36.2. Approximately 85% of the counties have a median age higher than the state average.

North Dakota's demographics pose emerging challenges to ensure an adequate urban and rural nursing workforce. In 2014, there were 93 Certified Practical Nurse graduates, 82 Associate Degree Practical Nurses, and 499 Baccalaureate program graduates. Of the 175 Practical Nurse graduates 95.2% were licensed in North Dakota. Of the 611 Registered Nurse graduates, 88.4% were licensed in ND. The next 10 years it is projected that statewide RN/APRN supply will continue to meet demand (Moulton & Howe, 2013). As of 2010 and for the next years, it is projected that there will be a striking statewide shortage of LPNs when compared to demand including high and low demand estimates of demand (Moulton & Howe, 2013).

North Dakota Partners in Nursing Gerontology Consortium Project

In September 2010, Dakota Medical Foundation and North Dakota State University (NDSU) Department of Nursing were chosen to receive a two-year, \$250,000 grant from Partners Investing in Nursing's Future (PIN) to address nursing workforce shortages specific to gerontology in North Dakota. Initiated and primarily funded by the Robert Wood Johnson and Northwest Health Foundations, Dakota Medical Foundation also provided \$250,000 in match funding for this project. NDSU Department of Nursing and Dakota Medical were one of nine grant recipients nationwide.

The PIN program is a unique national initiative to help find innovative ways to create an adequate nursing workforce appropriate in size and equipped with the specific skills necessary to meet the changing demands of the 21st century patient population. The program provides assistance to local and regional philanthropies to act as catalysts in their own communities and develop strategies for creating and sustaining a viable nursing workforce.



Project Mission, Goals and Objectives

The mission of the North Dakota Partners in Nursing Gerontology Consortium Project is to enhance the quality of care of older adults by improving access to a well-prepared and available gerontology nursing workforce necessary to meet their needs.

The organizational structure used to implement the project and achieve its mission includes the full consortium of partners that meets regularly and smaller work groups formed around the main goals and objectives of the project:

Nursing Education Goal:

Nursing students, faculty and the current gerontology nursing workforce will have access to the best possible gerontology nursing education.

Positive Image Goal:

Younger people and those seeking second careers will have a positive image of gerontology nursing and will understand the opportunities in education, clinical practice, leadership, research and careers in gerontology nursing.

Recruitment Goal:

High school students, especially rural and diverse high school students, will be motivated and prepared to pursue a career in nursing and be interested in caring for older adults.

Sustainability Goal:

The North Dakota Partners in Nursing Gerontology Consortium and its activities will be sustained beyond the grant timeframe.

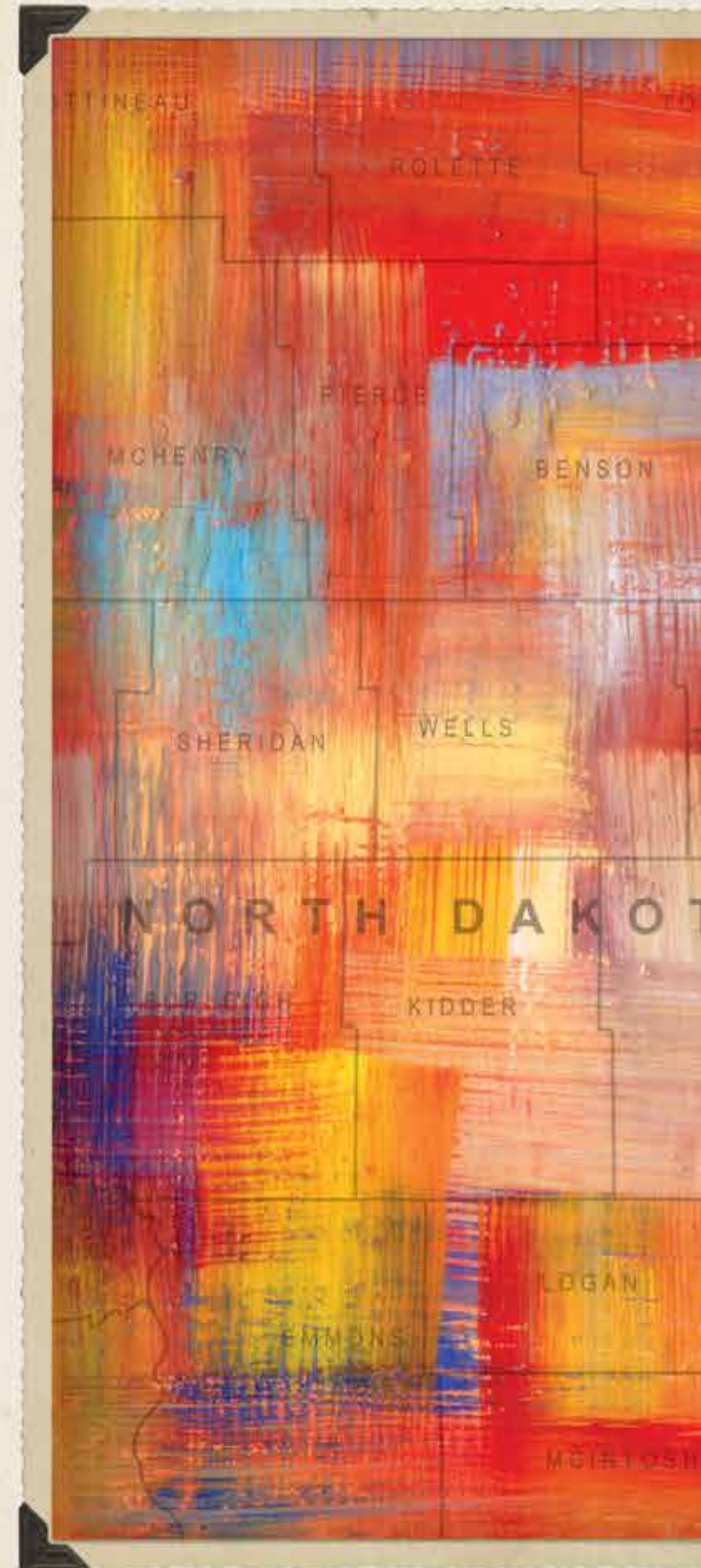


In June 2014, consortium members completed a written survey developed by the NDSU Center for Social Research to provide feedback on the success of the PIN project, with respect to the core concepts and goals. Twelve of 16 members took the survey at the June 16 consortium meeting in Bismarck, and an additional 10 of 18 members completed the survey online, for a total response rate of 65 percent.

For core concepts: On a scale of 1 (not successful at all) to 5 (very successful), respondents gave the consortium a 4.73 mean ranking for collaboration, 4.71 for communication, 4.57 for conflict resolution, and 3.89 for impact on policy. Respondents were also given the opportunity to submit comments about what could have been done differently.

For project goals: On the same 1 to 5 scale, respondents gave the consortium a 4.27 mean ranking for nursing education, 4.24 for positive image, 4.00 for recruitment, and 3.91 for sustainability. Members also favorably responded that the consortium's diverse partnership is a necessary component in addressing the issues of geriatric nursing, with 81 percent calling it "very necessary", for a mean score of 4.76.

Additional comments received through the survey indicated that members generally viewed the consortium's collaboration, plan of action and steps of implementation in a very positive light.



Programs

The success of the project has been largely due to the commitment and involvement of nearly 50 consortium partners from across North Dakota. Videos, brochures and newsletters have been produced to promote the positive aspects of nursing and raise awareness of the project's mission to enhance nursing recruitment and education. Most importantly, group members have facilitated numerous activities that further the goals and objectives of the project, including the following notable programs and events.



Adventures In Nursing

Adventures In Nursing is an educational event co-sponsored by the NDSU Nursing Student Association. The event gives dozens of area fourth grade students the opportunity to engage in a variety of stations taught by nursing students. The children learn how to properly wash their hands, how to listen to the heart and lungs, how to take blood pressure, and how to find pulses. They also learn about sensory changes and conditions that may affect older adults. One of the most popular activities revolves around seeing how patients are lifted into their beds, and then allowing the children to operate the lift controls under nursing student supervision.

The first Adventures In Nursing event was held March 31, 2012 at North Dakota State University, and was held again at the same location on March 23, 2013.

This outreach learning opportunity stresses the importance of science as elementary students grow up and go to high school. The hope is that introducing them to the nursing field at an early age might motivate them to consider it as a career option. Evaluations have indicated that nearly 75% of fourth graders were significantly more interested in nursing after attending the event.



Summer Nurse Camp Edventure

The Summer Nurse Camp Edventure is designed for students from rural North Dakota high schools who are interested in learning more about nursing as a career. Students participate in hands-on activities, work with a high-tech patient simulator, job shadow in a variety of clinical settings, talk to current nursing students, tour local health facilities and schools of nursing, and learn about opportunities in the nursing profession.

The first Summer Nurse Camp Edventure was held June 18-21, 2012 in Bismarck, North Dakota, and the following year in the same location, June 17-20, 2013.

Through exposure to nursing experiences, students may decide to pursue a nursing career, specifically geriatric nursing, thereby helping to address a national and statewide nursing shortage. High school students who have attended the camp have reported on surveys that they found the experiences enjoyable, helpful and informative.



Health Careers Edventure

The Health Careers Edventures (HCE) program was offered to 15- to 20-year-old American Indian students from the Spirit Lake Nation in Fort Totten, North Dakota. A total of 10 students, with career interests ranging from nursing to oncology to physical therapy, attended the event from July 14-18, 2014.

During the 5-day program, students heard from several speakers, engaged in team building exercises, tested for health career interests, traveled to Grand Forks and Fargo for presentations from UND and NDSU faculty and students, and toured hospitals in Devils Lake. The program offered short-term success in increasing student interest in health careers, and also provided positive networking for medical professionals willing to mentor students with an interest in healthcare.



Adopt-A-Grandparent

The Adopt-A-Grandparent Program is intended to help students develop meaningful relationships with elders in their community, and to learn about the many career opportunities in healthcare. The program bridges the gap between generations by providing the chance for older adults to learn about current trends and for students to better understand the past. This exchange ultimately promotes a sense of well-being and satisfaction for elders, as well as a feeling of confidence in the younger generation.

The program has been promoted to long-term facilities, encouraging them to reach out to daycares, scout groups, church groups, 4-H clubs, and local schools. Participating groups typically conduct visits with two or three students per adult, who enjoy activities together such as arts and crafts, baking, multi-media and technology, and learning about each other's childhood interests and environments.

The intergenerational relationships formed through this program have given both the child and older adult a sense of purpose, provided an opportunity to learn new skills, helped alleviate fears children may have of the elderly, invigorated and energized older adults, and filled a void for children who do not have grandparents in their lives, and helped keep family stories and history alive.

Facilitated Learning To Advance Geriatrics (FLAG)

The Facilitated Learning to Advance Geriatrics (FLAG) is a nationally recognized faculty development program, designed for faculty in schools of nursing (associate and higher degree programs), doctoral nursing students, advanced practice nurses and staff nurse educators who want to develop or increase their expertise in teaching geriatric nursing. FLAG is a yearlong program that includes a summer institute and mentored professional development in teaching geriatric nursing. The training is offered by the Minnesota Hartford Center for Geriatric Nursing Excellence, University of Minnesota School of Nursing.

The North Dakota Partners in Nursing Gerontology Consortium Project is aimed at strengthening gerontology education for faculty, nursing students and practicing nurses. Because FLAG is an excellent opportunity for faculty to enhance their gerontology teaching skills and to obtain access to quality teaching resources, the PIN project provided financial support for two faculty members to attend the FLAG summer institute on August 8-12, 2011, at the University of Minnesota campus in Minneapolis. Nine faculty members representing seven North Dakota Schools of Nursing attended the institute on August 6-9, 2012.

The program doubled the number of FLAG-trained faculty in North Dakota. Attendees reported that all aspects of the FLAG training were very valuable to their teaching, with almost all indicating they were likely to use current theoretical approaches, evidence-based practices, and new resources and technical strategies in teaching and curriculum development.

Geriatric Education for Reframing Outcomes (GERO) Nursing Conference

On April 11, 2014, the project hosted the Geriatric Education for Reframing Outcomes (GERO) Nursing Conference at Dakota Medical Foundation in Fargo. A total of 132 people attended the conference and represented a wide variety of nursing specialties, including hospital, long-term care, assisted living, nursing education, public health and nursing students.

Presenters and panelists from around the region provided valuable information and engaged the attendees in group discussions as they covered several topics critical to the field of gerontology:

- The importance of competencies and their impact on outcomes on quality of life and quality of nursing care with older adults. Small group exercises were conducted during the sessions as attendees covered different competencies related to working with older adults.
- The use of evidence-based Interact tools, freely available interventions that can reduce heart failure readmissions. The Interact Program includes communication, decision support, advance care planning and quality improvement tools. The presentations also covered clinical assessment and classification of heart failure and the need for multiple assessment approaches.

- Depression, dementia and delirium including etiology and different pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions. An open discussion was encouraged to consider different behavior management ideas.
- Learning to increase results by working together as a team in an activity and panel titled "It Takes a Village." Panelists talked about designing a mentoring program, determining what they want the students to learn while they are there, and how to orientate students and engage them in their own learning.

The vast majority of attendees indicated they are likely to incorporate policy or procedural changes in their organization following the GERO conference. Many said they would educate others – nursing staff, families and caregivers, elderly population, students – while others valued the information to improve their competencies and planned to apply it to day-to-day practice. Attendees were very satisfied with the conference and indicated it was a great way to meet and interact with other professionals in the nursing field.



PIN Video Series

An additional effort to promote gerontology nursing was the production of a video series on the subject. North Dakota nurses – working with older adults in a variety of clinical settings – were recruited, interviewed and recorded for the development of four videos:

- A 45-second video to be used as a Public Service Announcement.
- 1-minute and 4-minute videos appropriate for school guidance counselors to share with students.
- A full 20-minute video to be used primarily in classroom settings.

The DVD is entitled "Nursing: Making a Difference in People's Lives".

Certification Stipends

Currently, nine practicing nurses have received a \$500 stipend from the PIN project to obtain their gerontology nursing certification and eight successfully completed. A survey of the participants is currently in progress, and funding is available for another 16 nurses to complete the prep course.



Continued Efforts

There is a strong commitment among Consortium partners to continue the work of the PIN project, fully understanding the great need for nurses who are properly prepared to care for North Dakota's rapidly aging population. The Consortium partners and executive council are actively engaged in the sustainability planning process.

The Consortium, in conjunction with Dakota Medical Foundation, continued its mission beyond the initial two-year time frame for the project for an additional two years to date, due to the conservative expenditure of funds and the notable success achieved through the project's programs.

Thank You Project Partners!

Bethany Homes
Bismarck Public Schools-Health Careers Academy
Bismarck State College
Cankdeska Cikana Community College
Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas
Dakota College Bottineau
Dakota Medical Foundation
Dakota Nursing Program
Dickinson State University
Elim Rehab and Care Center
Fort Berthold Community College
Good Samaritan Society-Mott
Howe Enterprises
Jamestown College
Lake Region State College
LaMoure County Health Department
Medcenter One College of Nursing
Migrant Health Services, Inc.
Minot State University
National Assoc. Directors of Nursing Administration
ND AARP
ND Board of Nursing
ND Center for Nursing
ND Nurses Association
ND Hospital Association
ND Department of Health
ND Home Care Association
ND Mental Health of America
ND Department of Commerce
ND Long Term Care Association
ND Department of Human Services
ND Area Health Education Center
ND Department of Career and Technical Education
NDSU Extension
North Dakota State College of Science
North Dakota State University
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Sanford Health, Fargo
SIA Marketing & Insurance
Sitting Bull College
United Tribes Technical College
University of Mary
Williston State College



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For information contact Keely Ihry, Strategic Initiatives Lead, DMF at keelyihry@dakmed.org / 701-356-2668 or Loretta Heuer, PhD, RN, FAAN at loretta.heuer@ndsu.edu / 701-231-8205.