



Increasing Diversity in Nursing: A Case Study in Support of Improving Outcomes in Minority Students by Strengthening Nursing Programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)/Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs)

Maija Anderson, DNP, APRN; Pawn Johnson-Hunter, MS, RN

There is consensus that recruitment of underrepresented groups into nursing continues to be a priority as minorities comprise 37% of the U.S. population while only accounting for 19% of the registered nurse workforce.

While the most recent statistics reveal a significant increase when compared to statistics from 1980, ethnic minorities remain underrepresented in the nursing workforce relative to their numbers in the general population. Compounding the issue is the fact that the numbers of minorities enrolled in nursing education are still not sufficient to meet the health care workforce diversity future needs.

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) suggests that by placing a greater emphasis on making the nursing workforce more diverse, particularly in the areas of gender, race and ethnicity, not only would health outcomes improve - resulting in a reduction in health costs, but that workforce demand would be met as well.

Historically Black Colleges/Universities (HBCUs)/Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), once the principal means for providing postsecondary education to Black Americans, now represent a vital component of American higher education for students from all backgrounds. One of the many challenges facing minority nursing students attending HBCUs/MSIs is in achieving first-time success on the NCLEX-RN. The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) are the repository for individual and nursing program results on the NCLEX-RN exam. NCSBN provides state Boards of Nursing with the aggregate results for nursing programs. To date, NCSBN nor any State Board of Nursing has mined the first-time candidate NCLEX-RN results to compare the NCLEX-RN pass rates for students attending HBCUs/MSIs to those attending Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs). A recent study did find that without considering other predictors, the odds of a non-minority student passing the NCLEX-RN® was 4.18 times that of a minority student regardless of institution. While the scope of the most recent study cited was limited, descriptive statistics yielded the following results: The first-time pass rate of non-minorities was 90.51%; the first-time pass rate for black graduates was 76.7% and the first-time pass rates for Hispanics was the lowest at 60.0%.

The discussion focuses on factors that serve as a challenge to minority students attending HBCUs/MSIs relative to this particular outcome, strategies that have been put in place to mitigate them, and how we move forward on a larger scale to sustain success.