



MARYLAND ACTION COALITION

Creating a Healthier Maryland

FUTURE OF NURSING™ CAMPAIGN FOR ACTION

Optimizing Maryland's Nursing Workforce by Preparing Nursing Students to Meet Future Health Care Needs Through Community Colleges Associate to Bachelor's Degree

Mona Weber, MS, RN

Abstract

Background: Community Colleges give students the opportunity to petition into nursing programs who may not have had the ability to go to school due to family and working obligations. Gaining an Associate Degree in Nursing gives them the ability to join the workforce at a quicker pace than a four-year institution.

Objectives: At the College of Southern Maryland (CSM) pathways towards a bachelor's degree in nursing (BSN) are presented to prospective nursing students during their first semester of schooling before they petition. This gives them the opportunity to take the non-nursing course requirements for their Bachelor of Science before beginning CSM's Nursing program.

Methods: Once accepted into a nursing cohort students can either be admitted to a four-year institution (ATB - Associate's to Bachelor's Degree in Nursing- if they have completed the BSN's criteria), may be taking their upper-level nursing courses as a visiting student (dual enrollment - if admissions criteria are meet) or, can be provisionally accepted into a BSN university before they graduate or begin their BSN program after they graduate. This allows them to finish their degree program faster than they would in a four-year institution while working as a nurse.

Results: Nursing involves lifelong learning. Making nursing students aware that healthcare is constantly changing will optimize their expectations in the working field. Being exposed early in their schooling regarding the expectation that they will need to complete the BSN keeps them on track toward advancement in their career. Taking upper-level online courses with experienced nurses will give the ADN students access to getting a clearer work expectation and having the ability to learn from those that are already working in the field.

Acknowledgment: Special thanks to the NSP II Project, the Associate to Bachelor's Nursing Pathway has been made possible through the generous support of the Nursing Support II Grants from the Maryland Higher Education Commission under the auspices of the State of Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission.