HAWAI'I STATE CENTER FOR NURSING
Connecting Nurses. Transforming Healthcare.

Strategic Initiative - Retention of Nurses though Focused Employer-Based Specialty Training

Foundation of Work

The Hawai`i State Center for Nursing was established by the Hawai`i State Legislature in 2003 "to address nursing workforce issues" (Act 198).

[§304A-1406] Functions of the Center

The center for nursing shall:

1. Collect and analyze data and prepare and disseminate written reports and recommendations regarding the current and future status and trends of the nursing workforce;
2. Conduct research on best practice and quality outcomes;
3. Develop a plan for implementing strategies to recruit and retain nurses; and
4. Research, analyze, and report data related to the retention of the nursing workforce.

This strategic initiative addresses the Mandates Three and Four which serve to fulfill the duties and expectations as established in state law.

Demonstration of Need

In 2019, Healthcare Association of Hawai'i published the *Hawaii Healthcare Workforce Initiative 2019 Report* which surveyed Hawaii healthcare employers about job demand including number of filled positions, open positions, total positions, percent of positions that are open, as well as the rating of difficulty to fill and the average turnover rate for specific roles. For nursing, employers were asked to record their job demand by over 25 distinct nursing specialties. This report found that of specialty nursing positions, there were 463 open positions, contributing to a total of 698 nursing vacancies at that time.

In 2022, the survey was repeated. HAH then recorded a rising unfilled demand. At this time there were a recorded 999 specialty nursing open positions, contributing to a total of 1,339 total nursing vacancies in 2022. Between 2019 and 2022, the open positions for specialty nurses rose by 303, or an increase by 43% from that three-year period.

The unmet demand for specialty nurses increased by 43% from 2019 to 2022.

In response to the rapid increase in specialty demand, HSCN community partners from across the state requested a statewide strategy to support the recruitmetn and retention of specialty nurses. In April 2022, HSCN published the Assessment of Specialty Nurse Needs for Hawai'i. As described in the report, "In late 2021, several hospitals communicated to HCSN the growing need for specialty nurses, and starting in early 2022, a desire to engage in a collaborative, statewide approach to developing a solution for these needs. Specifically, they had interest in a collaborative specialty-transition-to-practice program for incumbent nurses" (page 1). The needs assessment included responses from hospital and healthcare organizations across all counties. Findings included the priority specialty nurse demands by rating of importance and the estimated sum of nurses needed, annually. At this time, it was estimated that 295 nurses would need specialty training per year in order to address the recruitment and retention needs by facility, which have distinct specialty nursing offerings based on the types of services they are certified to provide.

This report also documented that challenges to providing specialty-transition-to-practice support for these high priority areas include staffing shortages, high cost of training programs, unavailability of prospective

educators, and cost of curriculum.

In 2023, HSCN launched the Specialty Transition to Practice Program as part of the Nursing Transition to Practice Initiative. This program serves as the tactics to achieve the strategy of increasing employer-based specialty training opportunities for local licensed nurses as a mechanism to retain local nurses in their employment settings and better enable these nurses to meet the needs of their local communities.

Tactics

Increase employer-based specialty training opportunities for Hawai‘i licensed nurses.

Key Components

- **Accessible Curriculum:** Select online modules which can be delivered live or asynchronously to accommodate rural, short staffed, or multi-site training efforts.
- **Affordable Curriculum:** Secure cost-reasonable curriculum to enable scale of training and sustain ongoing efforts within organizational budgets.
- **Evidence-based Curriculum:** Ensure specialty training, in all instances possible, is accredited or developed by the specialty nursing associations which establish the gold standard for both specialty competencies and specialty education.
- **Cost Mitigation:** Secure funding for organizations to pilot the training to support engagement in the initiative and enable scale of enrollment. Explore opportunities to reduce the overall cost for the state to engage in training.

Target Population

- Nursing Employers: large nursing employers across the islands include acute care hospitals and post-acute (long-term care, rehabilitation, home health) hospitals.
- Nurses: licensed practical and registered nurses in Hawai‘i who are employed by local nursing employers and lack the education and training that qualify them for specialty nursing roles.

Timeline

- Phase 1: Needs Assessment (2021-2022): Establish need for specialty training
- Phase 2: Curriculum and Delivery Selection (2023): Identify curriculum offerings and delivery strategy
- Phase 3: Implementation Pilot (2023-2025) Launch pilot with employers for on-the-job nurse training
- Phase 4: Evaluation and Refinement (2025): Evaluate effectiveness and ongoing demand. Adjust strategies as needed.
- Phase 5: Sustainability Planning (2026): Evaluate 2-year effectiveness and continuing need. Roll to sustainability plan pending outcome data.

Outcomes

- Reduce vacancies in specialty nursing areas across nursing employers
- Reduce turnover rates in specialty nursing areas across nursing employers
- Increase education and training of Hawai‘i licensed nurses

Impact

- Short-Term
    - (Regional) Increase number of nurses trained in high-demand and under-supplied specialty nursing areas at individual employer sites based on regional need and organizational nursing specialties provided.
    - (Regional) Decrease in number of vacancies in high-demand and under-supplied specialty nursing areas at individual employer sites.
    - (Statewide) Decrease the number of unfilled vacancies in specialty nursing areas.
    - (Statewide) Decrease in number of statewide nurses who report to HSCN intent to leave in their current position in the next 12-months on the HSCN Nursing Workforce Supply Survey.

- Long-Term
    - Decrease in chronic-reliance on travel nurse services to fill specialty nursing demand in Hawai‘i.
    - Increase in number of nurses who report to HSCN intent to stay in their current job for the next five-years on the HSCN Nursing Workforce Supply Survey.

Evaluation Metrics

- Number of individuals trained by specialty area
- Number of individuals trained by employer
- Vacancy number by nursing specialty, statewide
- Turnover rate by nursing specialty, statewide
- HSCN Nursing Workforce Supply Job Satisfaction, Near-Term Retention and Likelihood of Leaving the State questions.

Sustainability Plan

- Partner with local nursing employers to select a curriculum and delivery mechanism that is accessible, affordable, and evidence-based.
- Use partner preferences to mobilize engagement and adoption of tactics.
- Seek grants and funding opportunities to enable piloting, establish budgetary requirements for ongoing program management and provide ongoing support.
- Align strategic initiative with other statewide workforce development initiatives to optimize activities and amplify outcomes.

By focusing on these elements, the initiative aims to create lasting improvements in community health and build a foundation for growing and maintaining the specialty nursing population in this state.