



Community Colleges Operating Baccalaureate Nursing Programs

Background

Over the last 20 years, several states have given community colleges (CCs) the authority to grant baccalaureate degrees in areas of high need, including education, nursing, and engineering technologies. In 2005, AACN examined this issue and composed a position statement: [Baccalaureate Nursing Programs Offered by Community Colleges](#). The statement supports efforts to expand the availability of baccalaureate nursing programs and increase the number of baccalaureate-prepared nurses nationwide. It also highlights the rigorous process required to transition from an associate degree granting institution to a baccalaureate degree granting institution, including accreditation reviews and a charge to design these programs using the competencies outlined in AACN's publication [The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice](#). AACN is aware member institutions are engaging in conversations about this issue in their states, and this brief provides context for continued dialogue.

Though many states (n=22) allow community colleges to offer a baccalaureate degree in at least 1 major, only 7 states have BSN programs.

Have there been any recent developments AACN members should be aware of?

Below are examples of recent developments in four states that help provide a broader contextual lens. In Florida, the state legislature has placed a moratorium on new four-year programs at community colleges.¹ The state of California recently granted community colleges the authority to develop and award baccalaureate degrees, however, they may not duplicate any degree currently offered at other California public colleges and universities (California State University or University of California systems).¹ In Michigan, nursing is excluded from the list of programs approved to be offered in CCs, though the legislature recently introduced an amendment to include nursing.² Finally, Maryland introduced HB212 this year to consider allowing the College of Southern Maryland to offer upper level undergraduate courses and to award bachelor's degrees, but the bill clearly states that "community colleges are not authorized to offer upper level undergraduate courses or bachelor's degrees."³

Varying state laws have required that community colleges change their structure and may no longer be designated as CCs. For the purposes of this document, the term community college is used given this wide variation. For clarification on institutional changes to the college's name/structure, see Table 1.

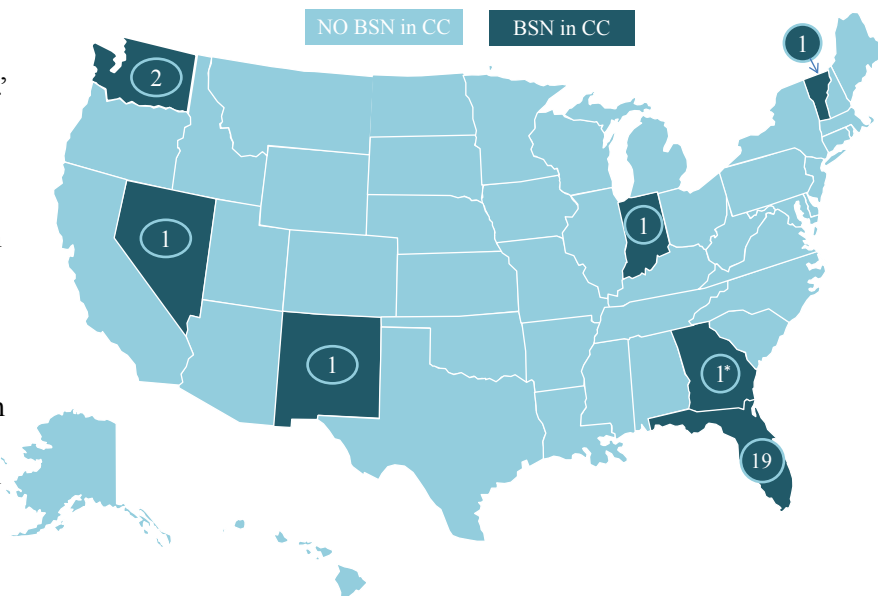
Compiling valid data on CCs that have transitioned into baccalaureate degree granting institutions is challenging at best. AACN utilized a list of programs from the Community College Baccalaureate Association (CCBA)⁴ followed by internet research into each of the programs listed to confirm details regarding their operation and accreditation (see Table 1). To note, most of the schools that are listed were known as community or junior colleges just 15 years ago. Some states, such as Florida have made a conscious effort to overhaul their state systems by lifting their "community" colleges to "state" colleges, though the majority of the degrees awarded are typically at the Associate's level.

There are 26 RN-BSN programs in community colleges, and they account for less than 4% of all RN-BSN programs.

By the Numbers

Currently, seven states have a total of 26 community colleges operating RN-BSN programs: Florida (19), Indiana (1), Georgia (1), Nevada (1), New Mexico (1), Vermont (1) and Washington (2). Four of these programs have not completed the accreditation process and have applicant and/or candidacy status with the Accrediting Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) or Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). According to the AACN 2014-15 enrollment and graduations report, 679 schools offer an RN-BSN program, which means that currently 3.8% (n=26) of the existing RN-BSN programs are located in CCs. Additionally, the College of Coastal Georgia is the only CC that also operates an entry-level or pre-licensure program.

26 Community Colleges in 7 States are Operating RN-BSN Programs:
FL, GA*, IN, NM, NV, VT, WA



*The College of Coastal Georgia also operates an entry-level BSN program.

Table 1: CCs Operating Baccalaureate Nursing Programs

State	School Name 2000	School Name 2015	Program	Accreditation
FL	Junior College of Broward County	Broward College	RN-BSN	ACEN
FL	Chipola Junior College	Chipola College	RN-BSN	ACEN
FL	Central Florida Community College	College of Central Florida	RN-BSN	ACEN—candidacy
FL	Daytona Beach Junior College	◆Daytona State College	RN-BSN	ACEN
FL	Edison Junior College	◆Florida Southwestern State College	RN-BSN	ACEN
FL	Lake City Community College	Florida Gateway College	RN-BSN	CCNE—applicant
FL	Florida Community College at Jacksonville	◆Florida State College at Jacksonville	RN-BSN	ACEN
FL	Gulf Coast Community College	Gulf Coast State College	RN-BSN	CCNE
FL	Indian River Community College	◆Indian River State College	RN-BSN	ACEN
FL	Miami-Dade Community College	◆Miami Dade College	RN-BSN	ACEN
FL	Okaloosa-Walton Community College	Northwest Florida State College	RN-BSN	CCNE
FL	Palm Beach Community College	Palm Beach State College	RN-BSN	ACEN
FL	Pasco Hernando Community College	◆Pasco Hernando State College	RN-BSN	CCNE—applicant
FL	Pensacola Junior College	◆Pensacola State College	RN-BSN	CCNE—applicant
FL	Polk Community College	Polk State College	RN-BSN	ACEN
FL	Santa Fe College	◆Santa Fe College	RN-BSN	CCNE
FL	St. Johns River Community College	St. Johns River State College	RN-BSN	ACEN
FL	St. Petersburg Junior College	◆St. Petersburg College	RN-BSN	CCNE
FL	Manatee Community College	State College of Florida, Manatee	RN-BSN	ACEN
GA	Coastal Georgia Community College	◆College of Coastal Georgia	RN-BSN & BSN	ACEN
IN	Vincennes University	Vincennes University	RN-BSN	ACEN
NV	Northern Nevada Community College	Great Basin College	RN-BSN	ACEN
NM	Northern New Mexico Community College	◆Northern New Mexico College	RN-BSN	CCNE
VT	Vermont Technical College	Vermont Technical College	RN-BSN	ACEN
WA	Bellevue Community College	◆Bellevue College	RN-BSN	CCNE
WA	Olympic College	◆Olympic College	RN-BSN	CCNE

¹ Smith, A. (20 April 2015). Fighting for 4-year degrees. *Inside Higher Education*. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/04/20/challenges-remain-community-colleges-offering-bachelors-degrees>

² VanHulle, L. (13 July 2015). Turf war: Community colleges want to offer more 4-year degrees. *Bridge*. Retrieved from <http://bridgemi.com/2015/07/turf-war-community-colleges-want-to-offer-more-4-year-degrees/>

³ Higher Education—College of Southern Maryland—Bachelor’s Degree Programs, H.R. 212 (2015). Retrieved from <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2015RS/bills/hb/hb0212f.pdf>

⁴ Community College Baccalaureate Association (2015). *Conferring Institutions*. Retrieved from <http://www.accbd.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Conferring-Institutions.pdf>

◆Denotes AACN Member School