

Building a Nursing Workforce with a 3-Way Win: Hospital, Student & Nursing Program

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The U.S. nursing workforce decreased precipitously by >100,000 nurses for the first time in 40 years, with the sharpest decline among nurses <35 years.

Nurses are leaving the workforce in numbers much higher than anticipated due to the COVID pandemic, rising acuity of patients, and alternatives to hospital employment.

RNs are currently the most sought-after healthcare workers; moreover, interest in nursing as a career is on the rise.

Tens of thousands of qualified students are turned away from nursing programs due to faculty shortages, caps on clinical placements, lack of instructional space, & other factors.

Solving the nursing workforce shortage is critical; reduction in qualified nurses increases nurse-to-patient ratios which can lead to errors and inadequate patient monitoring.

Research shows that adequate staffing levels can lead to lower patient mortality, shorter hospital stays, and a reduced incidence of adverse patient events.

These improvements in patient outcomes bring significant cost savings to healthcare institutions and taxpayers.

The Program

Following the guiding principles developed by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and American Organization for Nursing Leadership, the University of Tennessee College of Nursing (UT-CON) and Medical Center (UTMC) have established the BSN Scholars Program with the overarching goal to build a sustainable nursing workforce model.

This goal is achieved by providing nursing students with full tuition for their last 4 semesters and an accelerated pathway to graduation in exchange for a 3-year work commitment. Classes are held in a state-of-the-art new facility, modeled after UTMC and most clinical rotations are at UTMC.



Outcomes & Impact

By 2028, 450 additional UT-CON graduate nurses will be employed by UTMC, thus eliminating the need for expensive temporary nursing staff

Reduced transition to practice time enhances the UTMC financial model

Scholars hired as PCAs will reduce current shortage

Graduate nurses will have increased knowledge upon hire with hospital-based systems, unit culture, employment expectations, role familiarity, and forging relationships with other healthcare team members

Scholars will have the opportunity to be educated in specialty clinical rotations

Opportunities to operationalize QSEN competencies recognizing the culture of safety as impacted by both system effectiveness and individual performance

Less student debt

Positive profit margin for the nursing program that will be used to support a nurse-managed clinic in an underserved community