



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AACN Position Statement: Academic Progression in Nursing: Moving Together Toward a Highly Educated Nursing Workforce

About the Position Statement

- In July 2016, the AACN Board of Directors created the Academic Progression Task Force to consider models for academic progression in light of workforce needs with an emphasis on maintaining high quality standards in academic programs. The task force was charged with creating a position statement that articulates AACN's commitment to creating a more highly educated nursing workforce and answering the Institute of Medicine's call for increasing the number of baccalaureate-prepared registered nurses.
- The task force met over the course of 18 months and collected a variety of input from the AACN Board of Directors, AACN members, and number of stakeholder organizations representing nursing education, research, and practice. More than 250 individual comments were received on the draft statement.

Why This Statement Matters to AACN Member Schools

- The statement outlines AACN's position that academic progression from associate degree and diploma programs should end in a program leading to a baccalaureate degree (or entry level master's degree) offered by an accredited four-year college or university.
- A footnote clarifying that "four-year college or university" includes those programs at member schools that offer upper division coursework leading to the conferring of a baccalaureate degree. This definition was added in response to AACN member input at the October 2018 Business Meeting.
- AACN considered using the Carnegie Classification system to identify baccalaureate degree granting institutions, but member schools offering the baccalaureate fall into more than a dozen categories, which could be confusing for legislators, students, the public, and other stakeholders.
- The new position statement provides added support to member schools in states moving to offer community-college based baccalaureate programs, which could impact limited resources (funding, faculty, clinical placement sites, etc.). Without this statement, schools do not have official language from AACN to support the position that academic progression initiatives that culminate in baccalaureate degrees be offered by accredited four-year colleges and universities.
- This new statement does not replace AACN's long-standing position titled *The Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing as Minimal Preparation for Professional Practice* (2000). We strongly believe that registered nurses should enter the profession with a baccalaureate degree and encourage all nurses to advance their education to better serve patients.