Demand for Nurses: The Roller Coaster Ride

Just a short time ago, heralded was a dire shortage of nurses and schools expanded entry programs to the best of their capacity. Between 2008 and 2011, national enrollments for BSN went from about 138K to about 160K in AACN member schools. We were on a roller coaster upswing or peak in demand for nurses. Then over the hump, we seemed to hurdle towards a dip as the economic recession evolved. Practicing RNs delayed retirement, 're-uped' from part time to full time and RNs rejoined the workforce. New graduates – even 'WildCAT' nurses – found that it took more time to find entry positions and were worried about their futures. A parent of a 'WildCAT' nurse e-mailed me in March and after thanking me for the great education his daughter received, said:

“She took her boards in January, passed on her first attempt and is now a true red and blue RN. So far so good, now the problem – she cannot find a nursing job in this town, nor Phoenix. Everyone she applies to tells her you need a year or more working experience.” He asked for my advice (challenging call)!

I suggested 'patience' and considering context (not that comforting). In national statistics (at least as fast as we can gather them), overall only about 25% of colleges graduates had a position upon graduating as compared to 65% of nurse graduates of whom 89% had positions within four to six months, although supposedly lower in the west. A more substantial suggestion was to access the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation website with tips and tools for seeking new careers in nursing at: http://www.newcareersinnursing.org/scholars/career-central/tools. In the Q & A section, advice for new graduates included broadening beyond hospitals as workplaces; instead consider "community health centers, nursing homes, schools, physician offices, urgent care clinics, insurance corporations, government, and even correctional facilities". They also post career snapshots for more ideas. I suggested volunteering in healthcare (does not pay the bills though); mostly because if people get to know a person and their competence, they will slip 'a known' into the next available position or sometimes create a position – not to mention that it keep fleshing out a resume until one finds a position. And finally I suggested networking with as many practicing RNs as possible.

But hang on roller coaster riders – I think we are passing through the dip and are grinding up the next RN Demand rise. On March 9, 2012, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that job growth in the healthcare sector was outpacing the growth realized in 2011, accounting for one in five new jobs created. Published in the January 2012 issue of the American Journal of Medical Quality, a shortage of RNs is projected to spread across the country between 2009 and 2030, and forecasted to be most intense in the South and the West. http://ajm.sagepub.com. Watch out for the 'nurse demand' roller coaster ride to level out and become a flat express train ride racing toward time. With the baby boomers aging, the push for greater health care coverage and the aging RN workforce, the need for RNs will be ever expanding – once more turning up worries about meeting demands. Never a dull moment for nursing – roller coaster ride or not!

Joan L. Shaver
PhD, RN, FAAN
Professor and Dean

"WILDCAT" NEWS FLASH!
Making Dreams Come True – Again!

Once again, the critical importance to our students of scholarship support was brought home – on March 20th at the annual Scholarship Appreciation Tea. Recognizing our generous benefactors and connecting them with the appreciative students that they support is synergy at its best.

Two BSN students, Katherine Stradling and Nicole Monasmith shared personal stories about choosing nursing careers and the huge difference scholarship support made in pursuing their professional dreams. Dorothy McDonald, with her husband Ron standing by, spoke about their daughter, Jennifer, who entered the UA in 1988 and at the end of her first semester was diagnosed with a condition that claimed her life in 1992. Grateful for the ensuing loving nursing care and UA support, the McDonalds created the Jennifer S. McDonald Memorial Scholarship to help UA nursing students accomplish their dreams.

As student enrollments grow and tuition rises, the needs keep expanding. If you want to be in the highly gratifying position of scholarship donor, please contact Judith Brown at jbrown@nursing.arizona.edu or (520) 626-2512.
Shining the Light on Rural Health

Did you know that 11% of Arizona citizens live in rural areas and 22% of them live in poverty (compared to 17% living in poverty in urban areas)? The healthcare needs of our rural citizens are a challenge that Jason T. Shuffitt, DNP, FNP-BC, clinical assistant professor, Community and Systems Health Science Division, enthusiastically is embracing in his new role as Director of the College of Nursing Rural Health Professions Program. High on his priority list is to expand rural inter-professional educational opportunities and collaborate with other rural health leaders in the AHSC Colleges.

Dr. Shuffitt said, "Our program will be focused on creating a community of nurse practitioners (with doctoral degrees) who can provide comprehensive primary care to rural Arizonans."

Dr. Shuffitt has expertise in family practice and health information science. Before joining the faculty, he served as the clinical manager and sole provider in a Kentucky rural health clinic providing acute and episodic care to more than 1,000 patients. In addition to his rural practice, Dr. Shuffitt spent several years as an advanced practice nurse in an emergency department and served as chief information officer for a multi-site federally qualified health-care center.

Arizona Border Health/Enfermera de Salud Fronteriza

A year ago a group of Arizona nurses whose practice, research and service encompasses US-Mexican border health issues began a dialogue with the Arizona Nurses Association (AzNA) — about bringing a strong nursing perspective to this challenging healthcare domain. Created was the Border Health Nurses/Enfermera de Salud Fronteriza Chapter 18, Arizona Nurses Association, Inc.

Chapter 18 activities are targeted to education and advocacy for more resources and attention being paid to this domain. The American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics provides guidance to Chapter members and Arizona nurses as they plan for ways to positively influence US-Mexico immigration and healthcare issues.

Nurses are asked to please consider joining Chapter 18 to promote nursing practice that is compassionate and respectful of the inherent dignity, worth and uniqueness for every individual in every context. For further information or Chapter 18 membership requests, please contact Marilyn Morris McEwen at mmcemewen@nursing.arizona.edu or (520) 626-6926.

Sheppard Honored as Fellow in the American Academy of NPs

Being honored by her peers, Kate Sheppard, PhD, RN, FNP, PMHNP-BC, clinical assistant professor, is being inducted as a Fellow in the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (June 22, 2012 in Orlando FL.). Among her career-long accomplishments, she is being recognized for enhancing community health outcomes by implementing a unique pre-hospital life-support system in rural northeastern California as well as developing a student mentorship program, highly effective in attracting nurse practitioners (NPs) to practice in under-resourced rural communities.

Dr. Sheppard serves as a critical incident stress management counselor, working with healthcare providers to modulate their physical and mental reactions to traumatic or distressing patient encounters so as to be more effective therapeutically. As a leading NP educator she also has developed a unique mental-health curriculum that extends skills in mental health assessment and management.
**ENVIISON**

**Seeding New Research**

With funds from generous gifts to *The Laurence B. Emmons Research* fund, Kristen Archbold, PhD, RN, assistant professor, received a $20,000 grant, and Jason Shuffitt, DNP, FNP-BC, clinical assistant professor, received a $4,500 grant to advance their research programs. *Emmons Research* grants are designed to help faculty complete pilot work in advance of applying to major extramural sources.

Already funded for five years by the National Institutes of Health/National Heart Lung and Blood Institute for a study entitled, *Brain Imaging Analyses of the Cortical Effects of Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) in School-aged Children*, Dr. Archbold will pursue expansion. This includes performing MRI scans on her participants to visually profile brain development changes after ventilator treatment for preventing OSA breathing stop episodes or drops in oxygen during sleep.

**Dr. Shuffitt has a project, Development of a Customized Clinical Content Management Mobile Application**, addressed to the need for putting user-friendly integrated clinical information and documentation in the hands of clinicians. He is developing an e-application to help nurse practitioners under the recently passed healthcare bill meet ‘meaningful use criteria’ – a set of criteria to be met for healthcare providers to show that they are using the electronic health record as an effective tool in their practices.

**LinkIN! Community and Professional Councils Gearing Up!**

Comprised of community members who are cancer survivors or a family member of a survivor, the **LinkIN! Community Advisory Council** met for the first time on April 12, 2012. This Council and the **LinkIN! Professional Advisory Council** meet twice a year. Check out both **LinkIN!** Advisory Councils at our website: [www.linkin.nursing.arizona.edu](http://www.linkin.nursing.arizona.edu) – click on About Us.

**COMMUNITY CANCER CONNECTIONS**

**LinkIN!**

*UA NURSING & HEALTH ASSOCIATES*

Controversial in some minds is use of the term ‘survivor’ – some council members favor it while others do not. See a video done by Susie Leigh, BSN, (Class of 1969), a nursing cancer specialist and Professional Advisory Council member, to gain insights into the origin of ‘cancer survivor.’ **LinkIN!** website: [www.linkin.nursing.arizona.edu](http://www.linkin.nursing.arizona.edu) – click on Survivorship and then on Comments on Survivorship.

**ENGAGE**

**1st Annual Black and White Ball**

In February 2012, health science students across professions held the first annual **Black and White Ball** at the Savoy Opera House. Sponsored by the **Student Nurses at the University of Arizona (SNUA), MedCats Making Change (MMC), Latino Medical Students Association (LMSA) and Asian Pacific America Medical Students Association (APAMSA)**, a gala time was had.

Over $7,700 was raised for a local Tucson charity: **Kick Cancer for Stephen**. The event was named the **Black and White Ball** in honor of Stephen’s favorite sport, soccer. After losing Stephen to Fibrolamellar Hepatocellular Carcinoma, the parents of **Stephen Palencia** took action to fight childhood cancer and founded the **Kick Cancer for Stephen Foundation**. The goals are to provide age appropriate activities for teenage patients in hospital and help fund pediatric cancer research.

**Linking Students to Race for the Cure**

On behalf of the **LinkIN! Community Cancer Connections** program, a team of 15 students participated in the **Susan G. Komen of Southern AZ Tucson 2012 Race for the Cure** on March 25th. Consisting of five pre-nursing student members of **Professional Achievements in Nursing (PAIN)**, five current students in the **Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)** program and five students in the **Master’s Entry to the Profession of Nursing (MEPN)** program, the College was energetically represented.

To raise entry-fee money, a **Pocket Change Challenge** with collection bottles labeled for each group, allowed faculty and staff associates to choose their preferred student group to financially support, using their pocket (or purse) change. A percentage night fund raiser through Sweet Tomatoes restaurant also was held.
March 3rd Inaugural Learning Intensive Inspires!


In a series of town halls attendees dialogued about emerging trends following talks from Dean Joan L. Shaver, PhD, RN, FAAN and 2010/2011 Alumna of the Year Jennifer Mensik, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FACHE, (class of 2006), administrator, Nursing and Patient Care Services at St. Luke's in the Boise Idaho Area. Insights into advancing the caring dimensions of nursing practice was inspired by presentations from Kristen Swanson, PhD, RN, FAAN, dean and alumni distinguished professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and 2011/2012 Alumna of the Year Jean Baruch, PhD, RN, (class of 2010) Beads of Courage CEO and Founder.

Next year’s Learning Intensive is already in the planning stage – don’t miss it! Photos are available at: www.facebook.com/uaconalumni