



## Facts about the Shortage of Nurses in Virginia

***By 2020, one in three Virginians will not receive the health care needed because of the shortage of registered nurses.***

- The demand for full-time equivalent nurses will be 69,600 and the actual number of employed nurses will remain relatively constant at 47,000<sup>1</sup>. This is a 32% shortfall.

### ***Nurses Save Lives***

- Researchers estimated that, for every 1,000 hospital patients, an increase of one full-time RN per day could save five lives in ICUs, five lives on medical floors and six lives in surgical units.
- Furthermore, the researchers determined that staffing one additional RN per day was associated with lower rates of hospital-acquired pneumonia, respiratory failure and cardiac arrest among ICU patients. Such an increase also could reduce hospital length of stay in ICUs and surgical units by as much as 34 percent and 31 percent, respectively." <sup>2</sup>

***Each year, the Virginia Board of Nursing licenses fewer than 2,000 newly graduated RNs from Virginia Schools of Nursing***

- Beginning in 2015, it is forecasted the number of retiring RNs will exceed the number of new RN graduates entering the workforce.

***Statewide, Schools of Nursing report a total enrollment of about 6,000 students educated in public and private colleges and universities and in hospital settings.***

- Nationally, three qualified applicants are denied admission for every student applicant accepted because of inadequate capacity in the schools. There is every reason to believe Virginia statistics are comparable.

***Increasing educational capacity requires more academically qualified faculty.***

- Currently, faculty salaries for nurse educators are not competitive with salaries of nurses in non-academic positions and settings<sup>3</sup>.
- To attract qualified faculty needed to educate and graduate more nurses, it is imperative that funds be dedicated to increase faculty salaries in for each educational setting.
- New research conducted by the Commonwealth's Department of Health Professions Healthcare Workforce Data Center Shows that one in four nursing faculty plans to retire in the next five years.
- Schools also need more classroom and clinical lab space but these will not increase capacity without additional faculty.

***The current shortage of nurses impacts nurses, patients, the vitality of Virginia's health care system, and quality of life in the Commonwealth.***

- Currently, Virginia ranks 45<sup>th</sup> in per capita supply of nurses, (down for 40<sup>th</sup> in 2004) (from 2008 Bureau of Labor statistics)
- Nurses are the intellectual capital at the bedside. Research indicates that when nurses are spread too thinly or there is lack of nurses with the appropriate skill sets, the result is an increased risk of missing early signs of a problem, or missing the problem altogether, resulting in adverse outcomes<sup>4,5</sup>.
- While nursing scholarship and loan repayment programs will increase patient access to nurses in underserved areas and help pay for those applicants who now are in schools, this investment will not increase the number of nursing students or graduates, or the number of nurses in the Commonwealth without investment in nursing faculty salaries and capacity.

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3. Nursing Spectrum (2007, September 26). Small faculty salaries play a big factor in nursing shortage. *The Nursing Spectrum*
4. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (March 2004). Hospital nursing and the quality of care. *Research in Action, Issue 14*. (Author, Rockville, MD)
5. Needleman, J., Buerhaus, P., Stewart, M., Zelevinsky, K., & Matke, S. (2006). Nurse staffing in hospitals: Is there a business case for quality? *Health Affairs*, 25(1), 204-211.

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