



Oklahoma Nurses Association 2009 House of Delegates Resolution

Subject: Educational Advancement for Registered Nurses
Introduced by: BSN in Ten Task Force and the ONA Board of Directors

SUMMARY: This action report recommends increasing the level of education required for continued registration as a registered nurse by requiring registered nurses (RNs) to attain a baccalaureate degree in nursing within ten years after initial licensure, while maintaining the multiple entry points into the profession. The purpose of requiring the baccalaureate degree for continued registration as a registered nurse is to be responsive to meet the increasingly complex health care needs of the residents of the US. Registered nurses currently licensed or enrolled in a nursing program would be grandparented.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

WHEREAS, since 1965, the ANA has supported the baccalaureate degree in nursing as preparation for entry into nursing practice; and

WHEREAS, ONA included the baccalaureate degree in nursing as preparation for entry into nursing practice in the Master Plan for Nursing approved in 1980, and

WHEREAS, the issue of educational advancement of registered nurses is of national relevance and a number of other state nurses associations and national nursing organizations have expressed interest in this issue; and

WHEREAS, the changing health care environment and consumer expectations emphasize the need to reevaluate nursing education; and

WHEREAS, ONA recognizes the value of all entry levels into the nursing profession and does not propose to eliminate any of those choices; and

WHEREAS, a strong foundation in the liberal arts and sciences strengthens the student's analytical and critical thinking skills which are needed for safe, culturally competent care; and these skills, which are further developed through baccalaureate programs, better prepare registered nurses to seek process improvements that address medical errors and other challenges in the healthcare delivery system; and

WHEREAS, in a report to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice urged that two-thirds of the basic nurse workforce hold baccalaureate or higher degrees in nursing by 2010; and

WHEREAS, numerous options, including accelerated RN/BS programs, distance learning programs, on-line programs and "college" at work-site programs, exist for registered nurses to more easily achieve a baccalaureate degree in nursing; and

WHEREAS, the current faculty nursing shortage is negatively impacting the ability to educate future nurses; and

WHEREAS, requiring all registered nurses to achieve a baccalaureate degree will significantly enlarge the pool of potential nursing faculty; and

WHEREAS, while continuing professional education is encouraged for all registered nurses, only future graduates of diploma or associate degree programs would be required to meet the academic requirement of a baccalaureate degree in nursing within 10 years of initial licensure.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Oklahoma Nurses Association will:

Advocate for our healthcare consumers by affirming the need for an increased number registered nurses with a baccalaureate degree are needed to address the ongoing challenges of an increasingly complex health care delivery system and a critical nursing faculty shortage; and

Support initiatives to require registered nurses (RNs) to obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing within ten years after initial licensure, exempting (grand-parenting) those individuals who are licensed or are enrolled as a student in a nursing program at the time legislation is enacted; and

Advocate for and promote legislative and educational activities that support higher educational degrees in nursing.

Implementation Steps

- Educate nurses and other constituent groups regarding the importance of BSN in Ten.
- Collaborate with schools of nursing to remove barriers for Registered Nurses furthering their education - including redundancy of content, means of delivery and access
 - RN – BSN/Masters/Doctoral
- Advocate for all nursing educational funding
- Promote Financial Incentives for BSN
- Develop and support legislative initiatives to require registered nurses (RNs) to obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing within ten years after initial licensure.