


Accelerating the Transition from Academia to Practice During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Challenges and Opportunities for Schools of Nursing



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NURSING EDUCATION IN LOUISIANA AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- February/March - Hospitals began denying schools of nursing opportunities for clinical experiences due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - February/March – Schools of nursing requesting guidance from the Louisiana State Board of Nursing (LSBN) regarding feasible options for clinical experiences for their students.
 - March 12th - Louisiana Council of Administrators of Nursing Education (LACANE) Virtual Meeting where initial plans for closure of schools of nursing was discussed.
 - March 18th – the President of the Louisiana Organization of Nursing Leaders (LONL) reaches out to its Board members by creating an email thread to enhance communication with nursing experts/administrators with questions, best practices, etc. as they lead their teams through these uncharted times.
 - March 23rd - Gov. John Bel Edwards issued a statewide “stay at home” directive, ordering all 4.6 million people in Louisiana to stay at home starting at 5 p.m. on Monday, March 23 unless they’re performing an essential task like getting food or medicine.
 - March 23rd – Louisiana Council of Administrators of Nursing Education (LACANE) Virtual Meeting with the Louisiana Hospital Association CEO - Topic: Nursing School Assistance with COVID-19.
 - March 26th – representatives from the Louisiana Board of Regents request a virtual meeting with the Director of the Louisiana Center for Nursing to discuss data related to potential Spring 2020 graduates
 - March 30th – PhD Student Virtual Dissertation Defense
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TRANSITIONING TO ONLINE EDUCATION

- Post-secondary education - closing of physical buildings.
- Transitioning to 100% online education – learning curve for faculty and students.
- Seeking available options for clinical experiences for students (e.g., simulation and available products to provide virtual experiences for students).
- Simulation - activities in classroom or clinical settings that mimic the reality of a clinical environment and are designed to demonstrate procedures, decision-making and critical thinking through techniques such as role-playing and the use of devices such as interactive videos or mannequins. A simulation may be very detailed and closely simulate reality, or it can be a grouping of components that are combined to provide some semblance of reality.
- Validation of student assessment and competency was key to any decisions that were made by educational nursing programs keeping in mind that nursing is a clinically based profession with the ultimate goal of preparing graduates to practice competently and safely in the provision of quality care.

REGULATORY WAIVERS THAT ALLOWED NURSING STUDENTS AND GRADUATES TO ASSIST IN MEETING THE NURSING WORKFORCE DEMAND DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- Pre-nursing licensure students were given the opportunity to return to clinical rotations in the hospital setting.
- Due to stay at home orders Pearson Vue testing centers were closed which delayed new graduates from receiving their license to practice as a RN.
- The Board of Nursing (BON), through emergency rules, extended the expiration of a temporary permit or reinstated an expired permit during the public health emergency for graduates who have not taken the NCLEX-RN under prescribed provisions. Any permit extended or reinstated in accordance with the public health emergency exception will be valid for 120 days and may be extended for additional 90-day increments upon written request and as determined appropriate and necessary by the board.
- Gov. John Bel Edwards, along with the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU) and the Louisiana State Board of Nursing, sent a request to nursing schools to consider early graduation for senior nursing students to help strengthen the nursing workforce.
- Pre-graduation RN Applicant Disaster Permit - The BON may issue pre-graduation RN applicant disaster permits to nursing students currently enrolled in their last semester of a nursing education program approved by the board during a public health emergency, and for such periods thereafter as approved by the board.

SUPPORTING NURSING STUDENTS AND NEW GRADUATES DURING THESE UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

- “We’re nervous, we’re excited,” said graduating senior Alexis Miles. “We’re just getting ready to get into the workforce and into the pandemic and really make a difference. But we are just really nervous on how is this going to impact us.”
- “Since we’re so short of nurses and everything is so needed right now, are they going to throw us just kind of in there? That’s some of what my classmates were saying,” Miles said. “But I’m sure our facilities will take care of us. It’s kind of something, I don’t want to say you like signed up for it, but it’s kind of something I picked, so I’m not scared about it. I’m more anxious to see what will happen.”

Spring 2020 Nursing Graduate from SOWELA Technical Community College School of Nursing and Allied Health



FINDINGS FROM THE LOUISIANA CENTER FOR NURSING 2019 NEWLY LICENSED RN SURVEY

NEWLY LICENSED RNs

- “The residency program should be available for all brand new RN grads. There is too much that gets left behind or out in a three month orientation with different preceptors.”
- “We are desperately short of nurses and new grads are being shoved through orientation and then expected to pick up 60+ hours a week “to help the unit.” Expect to learn to say no because your empathetic personality as a nurse will be heavily played on “for the needs of the unit”, forget about your own needs.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implement accredited comprehensive nurse residency programs across the state that will allow for a seamless transition from academia to practice for NLRNs.
- Develop collaborative innovative academic-practice partnerships between pre-RN nursing programs in universities and community colleges and healthcare systems that will create an environment that allows the NLRN to attain the critical thinking, clinical, communication and professional skills that are needed to become a safe, effective, compassionate member of the nursing profession.

Thank You!
Happy Nurses Week and
Happy 200th Birthday to Ms. Florence
Nightingale!

