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“BSN in 10” Fact Sheet

Introduction

Senator Joseph Vitale, the Chairman of the Senate Health Committee, has introduced legislation (S-620) that would require future registered professional nurses to earn a bachelor’s degree in nursing (BSN) within 10 years of initial licensure in order to re-register to practice in the state of New Jersey. Given the growing complexity of health care delivery, NJSNA believes advanced education for nursing is a necessity. The nursing profession can no longer remain the least educated of all health care professionals given the demands of care delivery and the degree to which nurses are involved in every aspect of health care delivery.

Key Points

The “BSN in 10” initiative will save patient lives and improve outcomes. Three scientific studies have now shown that patient outcomes are improved in those circumstances where patients are attended by nurses with advanced degrees. The evidence is indisputable.

This initiative is consistent with the profession’s overall commitment to encouraging RNs to advance their education and deliver the best quality care to patients.

While seeking to expand the education requirements for RNs practicing in New Jersey, this legislation recognizes associate degree (AD) and nursing diploma programs as appropriate and necessary ways to enter the profession: RNs will continue to be able to enter the profession through associate degree and diploma in nursing programs, which prepare them to take the NCLEX licensing exam to begin functioning as competent, novice nurses.

RNs will have ten years following initial licensure to attain bachelor’s degrees in nursing. If they do not complete this requirement within ten years, they can request an extension from the New Jersey Board of Nursing.

Supporting Facts

In a report to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice has recommended that two thirds of the nation’s basic nurse workforce should hold bachelor’s degrees in nursing (BSN) or higher by 2010. On its current course, New Jersey will not meet this recommendation unless drastic changes are made.

The report cited significant changes in the healthcare environment, including more complex drug therapies and treatment, rapid advances in technology and the growing population of older adults with multiple chronic conditions.

The quantity of information related to health and nursing care is expected to increase more than 32 times within the next 10 years. For example in the 1960s, RNs were expected to be familiar with 600 drugs-there are now more than 13,000 drugs on the market.

A 2003 study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (Aiken, 2003) found that a greater number of staff nurses with bachelor's degrees resulted in a decrease in patient mortality among surgical patients, improved patient outcomes and shorter lengths of stay.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do we need to legislate that newly licensed RN's in NJ need to obtain a BSN?

The purpose of this legislation is to support the delivery of the best quality care to patients in an increasingly complex health care environment. Studies, comparing patient outcomes with the educational background of nurses, demonstrate that in facilities with a greater proportion of BSN or higher educated nurses, patients have lowered mortality and adverse events.

Will currently licensed RNs in NJ without a BSN still need to attain a BSN?

No, currently licensed RNs and students who have applied to or enrolled in nursing school at the time the legislation is enacted will be exempted.

After the law takes effect will the newly licensed RNs need to enter a BSN program immediately after attaining their license?

Newly licensed RN will have 10 years following initial licensure to attain their BSN.

What happens if the licensed RN does not attain a BSN 10 years after initial licensure?

Licensed RN's can request an extension from the NJ Board of nursing. They will be granted a conditional 2 year license one time only.

Will the Associate Degree and Diploma Degree programs close as a result of this law?

No, these programs will still be accredited and enable RN's to enter the profession and prepare them to take the NCLEX exam.

Does a licensed RN in another state need to have a BSN to practice in NJ?

Licensure by endorsement of nurses who hold licenses in other states will be addressed by the Board of Nursing in the regulatory process once the bill is passed and becomes law.

Supporters of S-620

New Jersey State Nurses Association
Organization of Nurse Executives/NJ
New Jersey Hospital Association
New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute
New Jersey State School Nurses Association
VNA of Central Jersey
Forum of Nurses in Advanced Practice
Society of Psychiatric Advanced Practice Nurses
Thomas Edison State College School of Nursing
The College of New Jersey School of Nursing
Bloomfield College Division of Nursing
College of St. Elizabeth Department of Nursing
Fairleigh Dickinson University School of Nursing & Allied Health
Felician College Division of Health Sciences
New Jersey City University Nursing Department
Kean University Department of Nursing
Monmouth University Marjorie K. Unterberg School of Nursing and Health Studies
Ramapo College School of Theoretical and Applied Science
Richard Stockton College of New Jersey Division of Professional Studies
Rutgers, (Camden) Department of Nursing
Rutgers, The State University of NJ, College of Nursing
Saint Peters College Department of Nursing
Seton Hall University College of Nursing
University of Medicine & Dentistry of NJ School of Nursing
William Paterson University Department of Nursing