

MINUTES OF THE VIDEOCONFERENCE MEETING
NEBRASKA CENTER FOR NURSING
July 24, 2020

Call to Order

The meeting of the Nebraska Center for Nursing (CFN) Board was called to order by Lisa Walters, Chair, on July 24, 2020, at 9:33 a.m. The central meeting location was at the Licensure Unit Conference Room, Nebraska State Office Building, 301 Centennial Mall South, 1st Floor, Lincoln NE 68508. Members participated via videoconference. Copies of the agenda were distributed in advance to the Board members, posted outside the Licensure Unit within the Nebraska State Office Building, and posted on the Department of Health and Human Services website. Staff announced the location of a current copy of the Open Meetings Act within the room.

Roll Call

The following Board members answered roll call via teleconference:

- Tamara Allen
- Sheila Bjerrum
- Lina Bostwick
- Kathy Bowman
- Charity Ebert
- Rhonda Ehly
- Christi Glesmann
- Kathy Harrison
- Joan Nelson
- Lisa Walters
- Laura Weber

The following Board member joined the meeting after roll call: Beth Burbach.

The following Board members were absent: Suzanne Deyke and Dorothy Scrivner.

The following staff were also in attendance during all or part of the meeting:

- Ann Oertwich, *Program Manager (via teleconference)*
- Kathy Hoebelheinrich, *Nursing Practice Consultant*
- Sherri Joyner, *Health Licensing Coordinator*
- Juan Ramirez, PhD, *Independent Consultant (via teleconference)*

Adoption of the Agenda

Motion: Bostwick made the motion, seconded by Allen, to adopt the agenda for the July 24, 2020, meeting of the Nebraska Center for Nursing Board.

Voting Yes: Allen, Bjerrum, Bostwick, Bowman, Burbach, Ebert, Ehly, Glesmann, Harrison, Nelson, Walters, and Weber. Voting No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Deyke and Scrivner. Motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion: Glesmann made the motion, seconded by Weber, to approve the minutes of the May 1, 2020, meeting of the Center for Nursing Board.

Voting Yes: Allen, Bjerrum, Bostwick, Bowman, Burbach, Ebert, Ehly, Glesmann, Harrison, Nelson, Walters, and Weber. Voting No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Deyke and Scrivner. Motion carried.

These minutes were approved by the Nebraska
Center for Nursing Board on September 25, 2020.

Budget

Oertwich reported that the Board of Nursing has approved the Center for Nursing's allocation request for the 2020-2021 fiscal year contingent upon receiving a report on how the Center spent its 2019-2020 allocation. Oertwich reported that she plans to prepare a reconciliation report for the Board of Nursing when she returns to the office on August 3, 2020. Oertwich explained that the Center's budget comes from licensure fees and that the Board of Nursing approves an allocation for the Center annually. The Center did not spend all of its allocation in 2019-2020 largely due to cancellation of in-person meetings due to COVID-19. Bostwick asked if the Center could donate unspent funds to the Foundation. Oertwich and Walters did not think a transfer was feasible. Oertwich noted that it was important to keep a clear delineation between the Center and the Foundation, and that emphasizing their separate identities might become more important as the Foundation grows and becomes more active.

Nebraska Action Coalition (NAC)

Bostwick reported that the Foundation Board looked closely at the Nebraska Action Coalition's proposal that NAC become part of the Foundation. The Foundation decided not to accept NAC's offer. They noted that NAC does great work and they hope that this work will continue. Currently, however, NAC is funded by a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant and by the monies that must be raised to match the grant. The Foundation Board did not think it had the time or resources that would allow the Foundation to raise the required matching funds. Also, a major donor to NAC in recent years has been a non-health care related business, and those donations may have stemmed from personal connections rather than a sustained interest in NAC's work.

The Nebraska Action Coalition's annual fall conference is scheduled for November 6, 2020. In recent years, the Center for Nursing has helped sponsor the conference.

Motion: Bostwick made the motion, seconded by Ebert, to approve donating \$500.00 to the Nebraska Action Coalition for sponsorship of the NAC annual conference.

Voting Yes: Allen, Bjerrum, Bostwick, Bowman, Burbach, Ebert, Ehly, Glesmann, Harrison, Nelson, Walters, and Weber. Voting No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Deyke and Scrivner. Motion carried.

Center for Nursing Foundation Report

Bostwick reported that the Foundation currently has 145 applications for the Center for Nursing license plate. They recently sent out publicity packets with items that can be displayed in nursing stations, and these packets seems to have generated additional interest in the plates.

Bostwick also reported that the Foundation has received IRB (Institution Review Board) approval to conduct research on the needs of rural nurses. They have distributed a survey to RNs and APRNs and have already received 261 responses, which is higher than their expected response rate. Preliminary responses from RNs seem to indicate that they would like more resources for obstetric emergencies, geriatrics, and mental health. Among APRNs, diabetes, drug abuse, and heart disease were identified as areas where more training resources were needed. Responses to the survey also indicated concerns about availability of PPE (personal protective equipment). Ramirez said that approximately 20% of nurses in rural hospitals indicated that they don't have enough PPE.

National Forum Annual Conference

The 2020 annual meeting of the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers was held virtually in June. Ramirez and Hoebelheinrich listened to many of the presentations. Hoebelheinrich reported that there was a lot of discussion specific to COVID-19 and a lot of data regarding patient satisfaction and quality of care. Another topic covered, according to Ramirez, was technology, particularly the ease of use of technology by a new user. Ramirez also reported that the Utah Center for Nursing has been able to obtain an impressive amount of data by matching licensure data with unemployment data.

Ramirez noted that after 9/11, there was a large increase in the number of people in their twenties entering the nursing workforce. After the recession of 2008, a large number of nurses in their fifties returned to the workforce. Ramirez expects that the COVID-19 pandemic will result in big changes to nursing demographics, but he is not certain what those changes will be. Walters noted that there seems to be an uptick in persons interested in becoming nurses, but she is concerned that schools will need to turn away good candidates due to lack of clinical placement sites. Hoebelheinrich said she has heard a lot of concerns about nurses leaving the workforce due to COVID-19.

10:25 a.m. Meeting went into recess.

10:33 a.m. Meeting reconvened

Impact of COVID-19 on Nursing Licensure

In early April all NCLEX testing locations were closed due to COVID-19, making it difficult for nurse licensure applicants to test. The Nebraska State Patrol also stopped taking fingerprints for nursing applicants and did not resume until late May. Under Executive Order 20-10, provisional licenses are being issued to new nursing graduates who have met all application requirements except results of the NCLEX exam and the fingerprint-based criminal background check. Oertwich reported that almost all Pearson VUE testing locations for the NCLEX exam have reopened with social distancing rules in place. NCLEX testing availability is now at 90% of the pre-COVID-19 capacity.

Oertwich reported that RN renewals will be postponed until after the Governor lifts the COVID-19 emergency declaration. Renewal notices will be mailed out within 30 days after the emergency is lifted, and renewal will be due 90 days thereafter. RNs will have an option to request a waiver of continuing education and practice hour requirements. Oertwich said that the expiration date on RN licenses will probably be changed to December 31, 2020.

Social Media Reports

Glesmann reported that the Center for Nursing's Facebook page has 1,100 followers. She would like to get a higher number, particularly given the number of nurses in Nebraska. Responses to posts generally come from a core group of followers, but Glesmann noted that some posts do get a response from a wider audience.

Board Reappointments and Vacancies

Oertwich reported that she was told by the Department staff person responsible for coordinating board appointments that it was not known when the Governor would make appointments to the Center for Nursing Board. Oertwich said she was told that members who are currently on the Board can stay on the Board until a successor is appointed.

COVID-19 Environmental Scan

Ehly reported that her district has no inpatient admissions related to COVID-19. The positivity test rate, however, is creeping up, and the turn-around time for test results is increasing from 2-3 days to 5 days. Her group is currently conducting debriefings on what went well and what didn't in their initial response to the pandemic, and how they can improve.

Ebert reported that her organization has received some COVID-positive patients for in-home care services. Despite receiving a large shipment of PPE, there is a perception among some staff that PPE supplies are insufficient. Some staff members are using FMLA leave due to anxiety about working with patients who might be COVID-19 positive. Another issue her organization is facing is navigating the rules in place at assisted living facilities that limit visitors. Each assisted living facility seems to have a different interpretation of the rules for visitors, which can pose a challenge for home health care staff and hospice workers who have clients in these facilities.

Bostwick reported that her facility is seeing an increase in admissions for diabetes-related amputations and other conditions that may have been prevented by visits to primary care providers. In the nursing school, clinicals will occur, but they might be required to provide PPE to students doing off-site clinicals. All general education courses will be taught via distance education. For in-person courses, faculty will teach more classes in order to have adequate social distancing.

Weber reported that her organization is being impacted by protocols that require a 14-day quarantine period for people who are exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID-19. Even if an employee tests negative for COVID-19, they are still expected to self-quarantine if they had an exposure.

Bjerrum, who is an interim director at a long term care facility, reported that her facility is implementing baseline testing of their staff. Because all hospice patients have conditions that could potentially be COVID-19 symptoms, they are required to keep hospice patients in lock-down conditions, which will create additional hardships as the holiday season approaches. Another challenge her facility faces is finding enough staff. Bjerrum noted that staffing agencies are reducing the pool of nurses available in rural areas because rural facilities cannot match the higher wages paid by staffing agencies. Her facility uses nurses from staffing agencies out of necessity, but if a nurse wants to stay, they cannot afford to buy out the contract.

Burbach, noting that her program often sends students to do clinicals at long term care facilities, expressed concerns about State policies that limit visitors at these facilities. Burbach hoped waivers could be instituted to allow nursing students to do clinicals at long term care facilities. Burbach also noted that some students are reluctant to do clinicals due to health concerns. Her program thinks in-person clinicals are important, however, and students who cannot do in-person clinicals may need to take a leave of absence from the program until the COVID-19 situation improves.

Bjerrum said that long term care facilities are concerned that they will face penalties if they allow nursing students into their facilities. She noted that some facilities in rural areas are overwhelmed by the fines and penalties that are imposed on them when they do not have the resources to comply with all rules.

Glesmann reported that her school is requiring clinicals for all nursing students. Students are required to wear masks at all times, and instructors will screen students before they see patients. Students who have been exposed to COVID-19 can do a maximum of 20% of their clinicals using simulations. Students who need to miss more than 20% of clinicals will need to take an incomplete. Her program is also working to make sure that students who missed the acute care portions of their clinicals have the support they need to get caught up. Glesmann noted that many of their students are single-parents, creating extra challenges for those whose children require homeschooling.

Next Steps

Walters asked that the Center's Biennial Report be placed on the agenda for the Board's next meeting on September 25, 2020. She would also like to restart strategic planning.

The meeting concluded at 11:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Sherri Joyner
Health Licensing Coordinator