

MINUTES OF THE VIDEOCONFERENCE MEETING
NEBRASKA CENTER FOR NURSING
September 25, 2020

Call to Order

The meeting of the Nebraska Center for Nursing (CFN) Board was called to order by Lisa Walters, Chair, on September 25, 2020, at 9:32 a.m. The central meeting location was at the Nebraska State Office Building, Room 5D, 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
- Lina Bostwick
- Kathy Bowman
- Suzanne Deyke
- Rhonda Ehly
- Christi Glesmann
- Dorothy Scrivner
- Lisa Walters
- Laura Weber

The following Board members were absent: Sheila Bjerrum, Beth Burbach, Charity Ebert, Kathy Harrison, and Joan Nelson.

The following staff were also in attendance:

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

Adoption of the Agenda

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

Voting Yes: Allen, Bostwick, Bowman, Deyke, Ehly, Glesmann, Scrivner, Walters, and Weber.

Voting No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Bjerrum, Burbach, Ebert, Harrison, and Nelson.

Motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion: Allen made the motion, seconded by Scrivner, to approve the minutes of the July 24, 2020, meeting of the Center for Nursing Board.

Voting Yes: Allen, Bostwick, Bowman, Deyke, Ehly, Glesmann, Scrivner, Walters, and Weber.

Voting No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Bjerrum, Burbach, Ebert, Harrison, and Nelson.

Motion carried.

These minutes were approved by the Nebraska
Center for Nursing Board on December 4, 2020.

Social Media Reports

Walters noted that the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers has updated its website [<https://www.nursingworkforcecenters.org>]. She has found the updated information very helpful and encouraged members to look at the site to view the available resources. Glesmann said that a link to the National Forum website will be added to the Center's Facebook page. Glesmann reported that the most popular posts on the Facebook page are those that deal with the Center for Nursing's specialty license plate. Posts on the license plate are shared and liked approximately two to three times more often than posts on other topics.

Nebraska Action Coalition (NAC)

The Nebraska Action Coalition's annual fall conference will be held virtually on November 6, 2020. The Center for Nursing is a co-sponsor. Deyke reported that the theme of the conference is "2020 Year of the Nurse: The Power of Influence." Deyke summarized the conference's agenda, which will include the introduction of NAC's new Executive Director, a speech from State Senator Sue Crawford, presentations on trauma, implicit bias, and COVID-19, and the announcement of the winners of NAC's 40 Under 40 awards.

Center for Nursing Foundation Report

Bostwick reported that approximately 60% of the Foundation current balance derives from pre-payments for the Center's specialty license plate. The Foundation's Treasurer will deliver the Foundation's accounting records to a Certified Public Accountant for a financial compilation, a process that the Foundation will have done every three years to ensure that its records are accurate. The Foundation continues to work on its study on the needs of rural nurses, with Bostwick, Ramirez, and Theresa Delahoyde meeting approximately once a week to work on the project. On the license plates, Bostwick said that the Foundation needs around 87 more applications in order to start production. An ad for the license plate has been placed in the Nebraska Nurses Association's newsletter, and they also plan to run an ad in the Nebraska Hospital Association's newsletter.

Impact of COVID-19 on Nursing Licensure

Oertwich reported that RN and APRN renewals have been postponed due to COVID-10. The expiration date on RN and APRN licenses has been changed from October 31, 2020, to December 31, 2020, but the latter expiration date is not permanent. After the Governor's emergency declaration is lifted, RNs and APRNs will be mailed renewal notices. The expiration date will be set for 90 days after the notices are mailed. RNs and APRNs will also be able to request a waiver of the continuing competency requirements if they are not able to meet the requirements due to circumstances beyond their control.

Reznicek reported that all temporary provisional licenses will expire on December 31, 2020. These provisional licenses, which were authorized by an Executive Order signed in March 2020, have been issued to LPNs and RNs who have graduated from LPN and RN programs but have not yet taken NCLEX. Another Executive Order signed in June 2020 authorized the waiver of the examination requirement only through December 31, 2020.

Biennial Report

Ramirez presented on the Center's 2020 Biennial Report. The report is based on workforce surveys that were completed by RNs during the 2018 renewal cycle and by LPNs during the 2019 renewal

cycle. Ramirez reported that there are 11 counties in Nebraska with no RNs and 9 counties with no LPNs. These numbers have been fairly consistent for the previous 20 years. Overall, Nebraska has a higher number of RNs per capita compared to the United States as a whole. This statistic, however, is largely attributable to high numbers of RNs in the Omaha and Lincoln urban areas. 80 out of 93 counties in Nebraska actually have a lower number of RNs per capita than the national average. Compared to RNs, LPNs are more evenly distributed across the state. 17% of LPNs work in rural counties, but only 8% of RNs do. (About 20% of Nebraskans live in rural counties.)

Nationally, the average age for RNs is increasing. Ramirez does not see this trend in Nebraska. LPNs in Nebraska, however, are on average four years older than they were 10 years ago. For both RNs and LPNs, there is a significant generation shift in the past two years, with millennials increasing from 20% to 30% of the Nebraska nursing workforce.

The percentage of males in the Nebraska nursing workforce is still lower than the national average. For RNs, the percentage of male RNs in Nebraska has slowly increased during the previous 10 years. For LPNs, there was a slight decrease from 2017 to 2019.

During the past 18 years, the percentage of minority RNs in Nebraska has increased from 3.1% to 7.0%. For LPNs, the percentage from 2003 to 2019 increased from 4.6% to 13.0%. Glesmann asked if data for minority RNs could include educational level, noting that the information might help nursing programs develop more representative faculties. Ramirez said he would try to break out the data.

In Nebraska 67.6% of RNs have a bachelor's degree or higher, which is higher than the national average. At one time, there was a goal for 80% of RNs to have a bachelor's degree by 2020. Ramirez said that he thinks only two states have met that goal.

In the past ten years, average nursing income has increased 20% for RNs in Nebraska and 24% for LPNs. Nurses also report high levels of satisfaction with nursing as a career, and satisfaction levels have increased consistently during the previous 20 years.

Ramirez's projection is that by 2024 there will be a shortage of 5,436 nurses in Nebraska, with 70% of the unfilled positions located in the Omaha and Lincoln areas. Ramirez noted that given the impact of COVID-19, data from 2020 workforce surveys might significantly affect the projected shortage.

Motion: Deyke made the motion, seconded by Glesmann, to approve the Center for Nursing's 2020 Biennial Report.

Voting Yes: Allen, Bostwick, Bowman, Deyke, Ehly, Glesmann, Scrivner, Walters, and Weber.

Voting No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Bjerrum, Burbach, Ebert, Harrison, and Nelson.

Motion carried.

Strategic Planning

Walters proposed that time be set aside at some point this year or early next year so that the Board could work for an extended length of time on its strategic plan. The Center's plan to hold a statewide meeting with stakeholders in order to address nursing shortages is on hold due to COVID-19. Walters suggested that the Center might focus on holding a virtual conference instead. Bostwick pointed out that a virtual event would be more accessible to nurses in rural areas, for whom time and travel costs can pose a barrier to attending conferences. Members noted that special efforts might need to be

made to ensure that attendees would still be able to network within the limitations of a videoconference. A presentation on the Foundation's rural nursing study could be included as part of the event. Bostwick and Ramirez said that they should be ready to present by the spring of 2021. Oertwich recommended obtaining approval so that attendees could use the conference as a continuing education activity. Walters suggested inviting elected officials to the meeting, either as speakers or listeners. Walters asked if groups other than the Center should be invited to join a planning committee. Bostwick and Scrivener liked the idea of inviting other groups. Walters also noted that they would need to determine the optimal number of participants for an effective virtual meeting.

Meeting Schedule

Joyner reported that she will send a poll to Board members in order to determine the Board's 2021 meeting schedule.

COVID-19 Environmental Scan

Glesmann asked Ramirez about the number of page views that the COVID-19 job listings on the Center's website have received. Ramirez said that he has not received this information. Glesmann expressed concern that the website might include outdated information and asked if they should arrange another meeting with Tom Safranek, the State Epidemiologist, about the website. Oertwich noted that Dr. Safranek's duties have recently been shifted, but that she would try to find out who would be the best person at DHHS to contact on the issue.

Bostwick reported that nursing students in her program are still able to complete clinical hours, but that fewer clinical opportunities are available in hospital settings due to an increase in COVID-19 patients.

Glesmann reported that around 10% of nursing students in her program are in quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure. Navigating synchronous online classes has also posed challenges, but Glesmann said her faculty are doing a phenomenal job. The program still has enough clinical spaces, but they currently have no clinicals in long term care facilities.

Deyke reported that her facility is preparing for the influx of influenza cases and learning how to differentiate influenza and COVID-19. They have also rented a garage structure so that they can continue to do drive-through COVID-19 testing during the winter.

Scrivener reported that the supply chain for PPE (personal protective equipment) at her facility is stable. They have had 10-12 patients with COVID-19-related inflammatory syndrome. They are also working with Test Nebraska to set up a mobile COVID-19 testing site specifically for children.

Ehly reported that they have seen an uptick in COVID-19 cases in her health district, moving the district from the yellow to orange risk level. They will need to make arrangements for indoor testing as colder weather approaches. Ehly also reported that Creighton University is no longer sponsoring an RN nursing program at Mary Lanning Hospital in Hastings, Nebraska. The hospital hopes that Bryan College of Health Science will be able to take over the program and that a traditional RN program will be available in Hastings by the fall of 2022.

Walters reported that people can help research studies by downloading a COVID Symptom Tracker app and logging any symptoms they might have. Use of the app is being promoted by Massachusetts General Hospital.

Conclusion

The meeting concluded at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sherri Joyner".

Sherri Joyner
Health Licensing Coordinator