

Nursing Collaborative
Advancing Nursing  Addressing Critical Needs



STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2026

The *Western Massachusetts Nursing Collaborative (WMNC)* is a coalition of nurse leaders from academia and healthcare service organizations focused on the critical role the nursing workforce plays in the delivery of quality of care. Established in 2006, the WMNC is working to ensure Western Massachusetts has an adequate supply of high quality, diverse nurses to meet the healthcare needs in our region.

Strategic Goals & Objectives 2024-2026

- 1. Increase retention in all healthcare settings**
 - Objective A: Expand evidence-based retention programs
 - Objective B: Increase access to professional advancement opportunities
- 2. Ensure nurses have the competencies and full scope of practice to meet the health needs of the community**
 - Objective A: Increase hiring in high demand settings
 - Objective C: Integrate high priority competencies into educational programs
- 3. Increase the number of nurses with advanced degrees**
 - Objective A: Promote accelerated educational pathways
 - Objective C: Increase knowledge of financing options
- 4. Increase nursing faculty in Western MA**
 - Objective A: Motivate nurses to explore faculty roles
 - Objective B: Utilize innovative compensation strategies
 - Objective C: Increase recruitment and retention
- 5. Increase the diversity of the nursing workforce**
 - Objective A: Increase employment of nurses of diverse backgrounds
 - Objective B: Prepare student of diverse backgrounds for the rigors of nursing programs
- 6. Sustain the partnership**
 - Objective A: Retain membership supports and investments
 - Objective B: Leverage partner co-investment and funding

Academic Partners

- American International College
- Bay Path University
- Elms College
- Greenfield Community College
- Holyoke Community College
- Springfield Technical Community College
- University of Massachusetts, Amherst
- Westfield State University

Service Partners

- Agawam Rehab
- Baystate Health
- Caring Health Center
- Cooley Dickinson Hospital
- Holyoke Medical Center
- Trinity Health Of New England – Mercy Medical Center

Local Chapter Associations

- Western Massachusetts National Black Nurses Association

Trade Associations

- Massachusetts Senior Care Association

Workforce Development

- MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board

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GOAL 1: Increase the retention of new nurses in all healthcare settings

Objective A: Expand the use of evidence-based retention programs and strategies such as nurse residency, career coaching, registered apprenticeships, and preceptorships across all care settings

Strategies:

1. Encourage and support the development of and maintain flexible work schedules
2. Encourage and support the development of new and updated on-boarding curricula
3. Promote early entry of graduate nurses into the workforce
4. Develop initiatives that promote collaborative work practices between clinical preceptors and faculty and encourage reciprocal mentoring and coaching
5. Develop strategies to support and increase the frequency of preceptor and clinical faculty trainings across the region, especially in long-term care and home care settings
6. Identify and define common preceptor competencies
7. Recognize and support preceptors in their role as mentors and coaches of new nurses

Objective B: Promote continuous learning, professional advancement, and provide career planning support and guidance to nurses in all settings and at all levels of their careers

Strategies:

1. Equip nurse leaders, managers and preceptors with the competencies to guide nurses' identify skills gaps and refer staff to educators for guidance with professional development plans
2. Assess current professional advancement practices in service organizations. Collate and disseminate best practices across the region
3. Provide opportunities for nurses to interact with other nurses in different specialties.
4. Promote opportunities for nurses to engage in interprofessional discussions and huddles
5. Identify training needs to improve skills and competencies
6. Promote specialty certificates as a professional advancement opportunity for incumbent nurses
7. Promote and support new graduates transition to specialty care units and all care settings

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GOAL 2: Ensure the nursing workforce has the competencies, clinical judgement, and full scope of practice to meet the changing health needs of the community

Objective A: Increase the hiring and retention of nurses in high demand settings, such as long-term care service and supports, community health, mental and behavioral health services, med-surge as well as in specialized care settings, including operating rooms, intensive care, and ambulatory care units

Strategies:

1. Promote and deliver nursing clinical education in all care settings
2. Provide regional preceptor trainings on a regular basis
3. Develop a communication and implementation plan to educate faculty and students on industry hiring and care delivery trends
4. Identify qualified preceptors to deliver nursing education
5. Develop and maintain relationships with providers focused on increasing clinical education and post-graduation employment in high need settings
6. Design and implement clinical placement scenarios and case studies for nurses in all care settings

Objective B: Integrate high priority competencies into academic and service educational programs

Strategies:

1. Promote standardized geriatric, health equity, mental health competencies throughout academic and service educational programs
2. Create more student nurse employment and clinical placement opportunities in high demand settings
3. Identify and share preceptor and adjunct faculty competencies
4. Participate in the Pioneer Valley Inter-Professional Education Collaborative (PV-IPEC) interprofessional educational forums for academic institutions and service providers
5. Develop and share common IPE simulation experiences in academic and service settings
6. Provide professional development opportunities for adjunct faculty
7. Equip nurses with the information and resources to guide professional development

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GOAL 3: Increase the number of nurses in the region with a BSN/BS in nursing or advanced degree

Objective A: Promote accelerated pathways for new and incumbent nurses to advance their education

Strategies:

1. Host educational information sessions annually
2. Develop a communication and outreach plan that reaches a broader, more diverse audience
3. Provide up to date educational pathways information on the Partnership website:
westernmasshealthcareers.org
4. Develop strategies to increase clinical placements and employment opportunities for nurse practitioners

Objective B: Increase financial support, such as tuition reimbursement, school loan forgiveness as well as monetary and other incentives that promote academic progression

Strategies:

1. Query academic and service providers to identify scholarships and incentives offered to students and employees
2. Gather resources on funding opportunities and planning tools for nurses advancing their education
3. Develop a list of resources and planning tools for financing nursing education
4. Embed opportunities for growth at all levels by providing clear and actionable information on career ladders, tuition assistance, etc.
5. Increase the awareness of financing options to increase academic progression

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GOAL 4: Increase the supply and diversity of nursing faculty in Western Massachusetts

Objective A: Recruit, motivate, and attract diverse nurses to explore faculty role

Strategies:

1. Determine faculty diversity goals as aligned with the demographics of Western MA
2. Identify diverse individuals in service settings who have shown excellence in precepting and or education, and invest in these individuals through professional development trainings and joint appointments

Objective B: Identify and utilize innovative funding and employment strategies to support and increase faculty roles

Strategies:

1. Increase funding sources to support faculty roles
2. Explore joint appointments between all service settings and schools
3. Encourage and support the development of Dedicated Education Units (DEUs) between nursing programs and service providers

Objective C: Increase recruitment and retention of clinical faculty

Strategies:

1. Develop a standardized method of measuring clinical faculty retention
2. Develop and promote professional development for adjunct faculty

GOAL 5: Increase the diversity of the nursing workforce in western Massachusetts

Objective 1: Increase enrollment, retention, graduation, licensure and employment of diverse nurses in the region

Strategies:

1. Aggregate schools of nursing's diversity activities and initiatives and share best practices
2. Evaluate current interventions to determine anticipated gaps and make changes to meet the needs of diverse students
3. Engage diverse nursing and student groups in the planning and implementing of new initiatives
4. Track consistent diversity metrics for all academic programs and years

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Objective B: Develop and implement nursing career programs for middle and high school students to increase the number of diverse students prepared to select a career in nursing

Strategies:

1. Facilitate the development and implementation of career exposure programs for middle and high school students
2. Plan and actualize education and career fairs with a specific focus on reaching urban communities and diverse students
3. Establish different methods to effectively communicate with and provide academic programs that are relevant to the needs of and accessible to students from diverse backgrounds
4. Share best practices of existing health science career pathway programs across the partnership's network

GOAL 6: Sustain the growth and development of the Healthcare Workforce Partnership of Western Massachusetts to implement its goals

Objective A: Retain membership supports and investments to maintain partnership activities

Strategies:

1. Identify and recruit additional Partnership members
2. Consistently implement the established outreach strategy and onboarding process for new members

Objective B: Leverage partner co-investment funding from the public and private sector

Strategies:

1. Increase coordination and alignment of initiatives, grant funding and other resources
2. Identify and obtain new public and private sector funding aligned with the WMNC's mission

Read about “COVID-19’s Impact on New Graduate Nurses”.

A WMNC report.

