

Nursing Education Research Conference 2020

RN to BSN Completion: Barriers and Challenges Faced by African American Nurses

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Purpose:

The purpose of this study was to identify and assess the challenges and barriers faced by African-American Associate Degree Nurses as they struggle to return to school to complete their Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree. The Institute of Medicine has mandated that by 2020, eighty percent of registered nurses hold a Bachelor of Science in nursing degree. Currently, about half of registered nurses working in the United States of America are prepared at the Associate Degree or diploma level. This study will identify barriers and challenges that are significant and unique to African American Nurses seeking to complete a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing.

Methods:

"BSN-in-10" legislation is being considered in many states as a method of increasing the number of Bachelor's prepared nurses, which would require newly licensed Associate degree or Diploma nurses to earn a Bachelor's degree within 10 years of initial licensure. Studies evaluating the motivators and barriers to returning to school to get a Bachelor's degree have primarily been conducted with participants who are already attending a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing completion program and have failed to focus on the unique barriers faced by African American nurses.

This quantitative study targeted approximately 150 African American nurses who were either members of the Central Florida Black Nurses Association or nurses living in Central Florida holding a Florida license. The primary investigator used a nine item questionnaire to elicit data from which themes would be identified. A paper questionnaire was hand delivered and collected from the Central Florida Black Nurses Association with very little return. A follow-up survey monkey was used to collect data from African American Nurses in Central Florida through a mailing list obtained from the Florida Board of Nursing.

Results:

Of the 150 nurses targeted, there were a total of 58 (n=58) respondents, over a 6 month period, with 31% being African American, 55% Caucasian, and 13% were either Asian, Hispanic or other. Of the respondents, 95% were women, and 5% were men. Six primary themes were identified as barriers to completing a Bachelor's degree: Age, Finance, Family, Energy, Time and Access.

Conclusion:

African American nurses identified finances and family as significant barrier to returning to school to complete a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing. Financial disparities continue to be a challenge for African American nurses who hold an Associate degree,

and who aspire to complete a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing. The proportion of African American nurses with financial barriers (47%) is significantly higher than Caucasian nurses with financial barriers (17%) in the same demographic area. Higher education institutions continue to strive toward implementation of programs to identify and eradicate disparities that appear to be racially bias.

Title:

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Keywords:

ADN to BSN Degree, African American Nurses and Challenges and Barriers

Abstract Summary:

As Associate Degree Nurses across the United States of America struggle with challenges and barriers that deter them from returning to school for a Bachelor's Degree completion, this study reveals challenges and barriers that are unique to African American Nurses in Central Florida as they strive to return to school.

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