

Walk This Way: Graduating Associate Degree Nurses Utilizing an Innovative Academic/Practice Partnership for a High School Dual Enrollment Program

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Executive Summary

The global nursing shortage continues to strain healthcare, especially in economically disadvantaged areas. Recruitment in these areas is difficult despite local colleges being at capacity enrollment for nursing programs leaving a discrepancy between the supply and the demand for quality nurses. To further exacerbate the problem, intelligent and capable high school students may not be able to attend college to earn a nursing degree due to socioeconomic factors such as a lack of access to funds and demands to help support the immediate family. A review of the literature reveals very few attempts at creating dual enrollment programs for entrance into healthcare professions; they are, however, limited to allied health, health technologies, and licensed vocational nursing.

High school dual enrollment programs have proven successful in South Texas where over 12,500 students are currently enrolled (South Texas College, 2014) and dual enrollment student success rates are higher than traditional community college students (PSJA ISD, 2014; Woodcock, 2013). In an effort to engage these motivated students and help meet the demand for quality nurses, a proposal has been made to local community partners to develop a high school dual enrollment nursing program. This program is unique in that upon high school graduation the dual enrollment students are concurrently awarded an Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN).

The creation of public and private community partnerships connect a community college, local school districts, a regional education service center, and a health system with the goal of cultivating a continuous pipeline of professional nurses to fill nursing vacancies. Moreover, much like in an apprenticeship, this program allows students to have practice experiences thus building a relationship with their future employer. Innovative and evidence-based teaching strategies such as use of clinical simulation experiences (Richardson, Gilmartin & Fulmer, 2012), structured and scaffolded integrative clinical experiences (Nielsen, Noone, Voss, & Mathews, 2013), and dedicated education units (Mulready-Shick et al., 2013) are incorporated. All partners and the community at large benefit from such a program as it positively impacts this underserved region by providing health, economic, and financial benefits.

Scope of Problem

The nursing shortage has been well document both in the United States and globally (AACN, 2014; Buchan, O' May, & Dussault, 2013; World Health Organization, 2010). It is estimated that by 2030 the nursing shortage in the United States will grow to almost one million registered nurses (Jurascheck, Zhang, Ranganathan, & Vernon, 2012). While it is difficult to compare the nursing shortage worldwide, there are indications that a global problem exists. According to the World Health Organization (2010), over 70% of the 77 member states indicate a shortage of nurses. The nursing shortage is a multi-factorial issue and will require solutions in multiple forms.

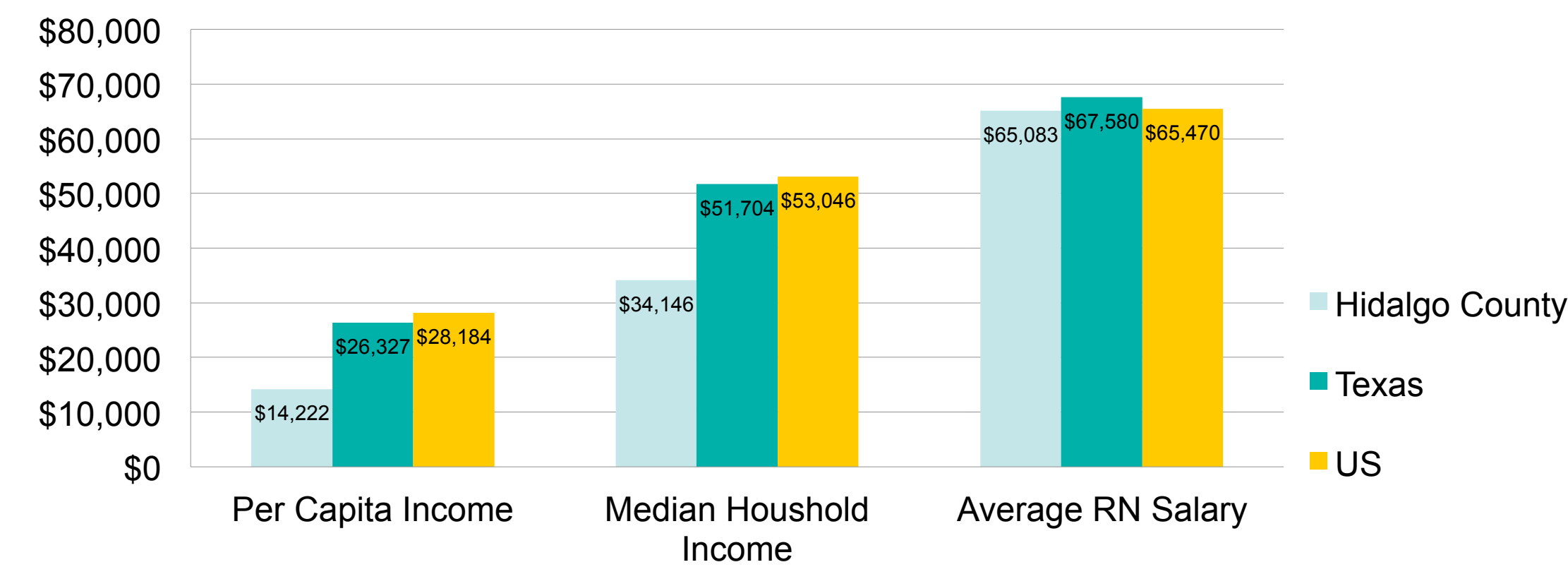
Project Objective

The objective of this project is to design innovative approach to nursing education that offers high school students the opportunity to obtain an Associate Degree in Nursing upon graduation. Such a program will change the healthcare landscape by addressing the nursing workforce shortage, recruitment, and retention. By combining an entry to practice solution with professional development support, the local community is able to realize the benefit of an adequate supply nurses while addressing the recommendation of increasing the proportion of registered nurses with a BSN degree. It will help ensure the nursing workforce is not only adequate in terms of quantity, but also in quality.

Significance

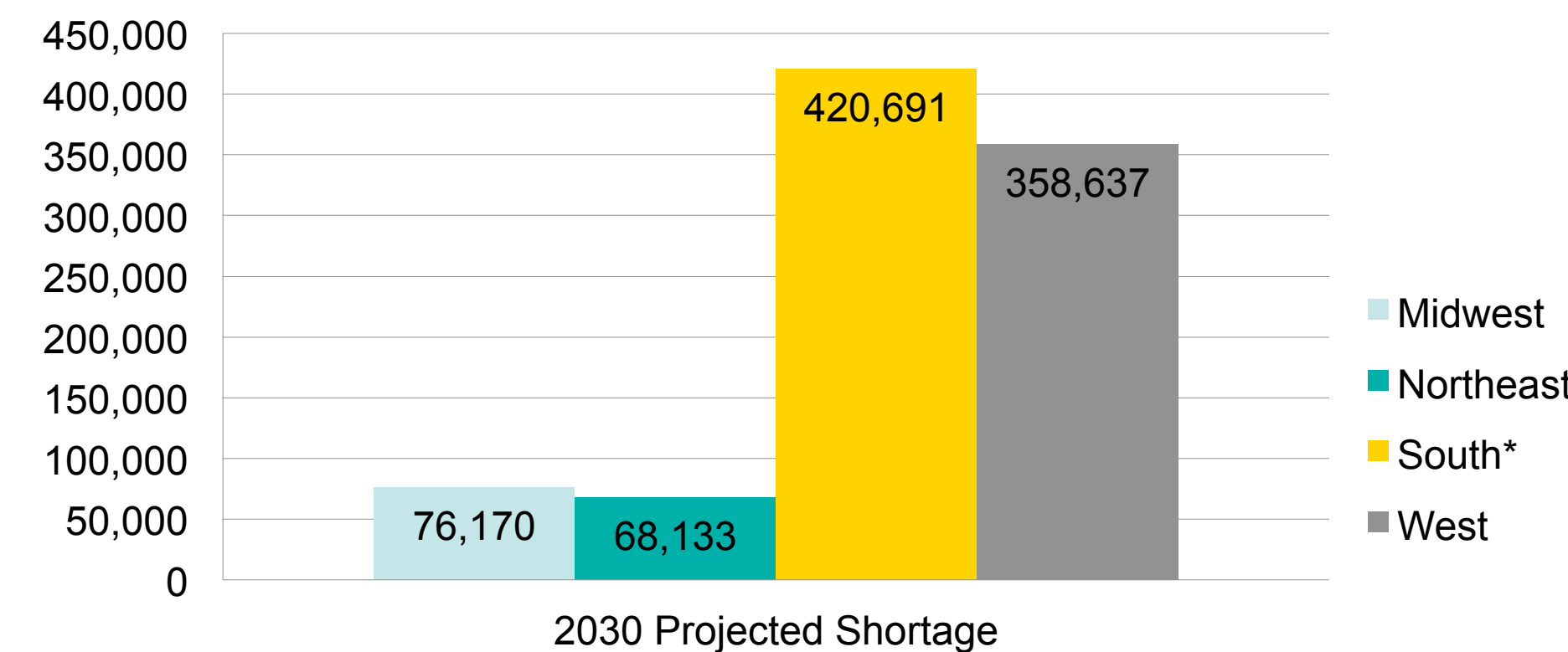
Economic Considerations

(Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014; United States Census Bureau, 2015)



Projected Nursing Shortage by US Regions

(Jurascheck, Zhang, Ranganathan, & Vernon, 2012)



Overall Goals

- Develop a high school dual enrollment program for an associate degree in nursing in collaboration with the local community college, local school districts, academic service center, and local health system/hospital.
- Develop an evaluation plan to assess the effectiveness of the high school dual enrollment program for an associate degree in nursing.

Plan of Action

- Identify key components of a successful high school dual enrollment program
 - Curriculum design
 - Required high school credits
 - Required ADN credits
 - Dual enrollment schedule considerations
 - Didactic, simulation, & clinical experience locations
 - Faculty
 - Didactic
 - Current college faculty
 - Academic/service partnership (dual appointments)
 - Clinical
 - Academic/service partnership (dual appointments)
 - Dedicated preceptors
 - Simulation experts
 - Support services
 - For students/parents
 - For dedicated preceptors
- Identify potential community partners needed to establish a high school dual enrollment program
 - Community College
 - Local School Districts
 - Academic Service Center
 - Local Health System/Hospital
 - Others
 - Community Stakeholders
 - Potential investors
- Identify professional development support systems needed to aid in academic progression to BSN degree
 - Nurse Residency Program
 - Academic partnerships
 - Tuition assistance programs
- Evaluate program effectiveness at each decision point

Conclusion

A unique approach utilizing community partners, innovations in education, and a committed school district has resulted in the development of a high school dual enrollment associate degree in nursing program. Initial student successes are reassuring to all partners. More work remains including selection of the final cohort participants, ongoing support classes for both the students and families, specialized preceptor training to prepare preceptors to work with teenage students, and outcomes monitoring. Future research opportunities may involve measuring stress rates of both the student and families, successful program completion rates, board exam pass rates, satisfaction with the support services offered to this cohort, and rates of progression to the BSN level. It is a promising start to addressing the nursing workforce shortage in an economically disadvantaged area. All partners and the community at large benefit from such a program as it positively impacts this underserved region by providing health, economic, and financial benefits.

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Development Timeline

