

Legislative Support for the Career Builders Program and the ND Health Care Professional Student Loan Repayment Program

ND CENTER FOR NURSING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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program and other
stakeholders

The North Dakota Center for Nursing, a non-profit 501c3 organization, was developed in 2011 to represent over 20,000 nurses and over 40 nursing organizations across North Dakota. The mission of the North Dakota Center for Nursing is through collaboration guide ongoing development of a well-prepared and diverse nursing workforce to meet health care needs in North Dakota through research, education, recruitment and retention, advocacy and public policy. This policy agenda has been approved by our Board of Directors and is an official policy of the North Dakota Center for Nursing.

The North Dakota Center for Nursing supports the continuation of the Career Builders Program (SB 2272). We request the inclusion of a waiver for the required match or allow use of state dollars for Public and Government employees. We also request the addition of bachelor's degrees to the Scholarship program eligibility to support bachelor's degree in nursing (BSRN) students. We also request the addition of graduate degrees to the Loan Repayment program eligibility and to support the addition of Nursing Faculty to the High Needs list.

The North Dakota Center for Nursing also support continued funding (\$2,288,000 including general and community health trust funding) for the ND Health Care Professional Student Loan Repayment Program (43-12.3) included

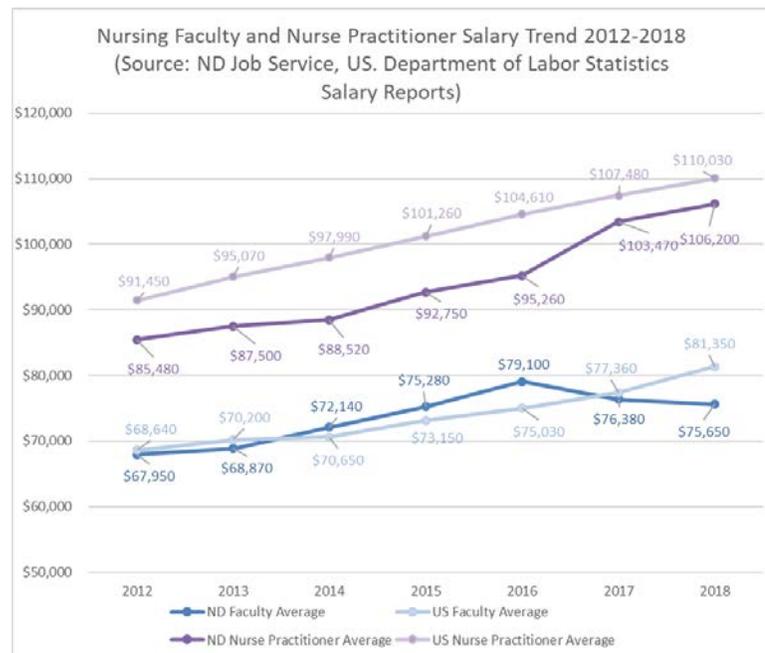
The skilled workforce scholarship and student loan repayment program (North Dakota University System) known as Career Builders was created during the 2019 Legislative Session to attract people into high need and emerging occupations in North Dakota. This unique program which is a partnership between the state and private-sector business provides scholarship and loan repayment to students within in High Need Occupations. During the current biennium, three nurses (two scholarships and one loan repayment) have participated in this program.

Both programs require a 1 to 1 match with private industry dollars matching state funding. This is a barrier to Public and Government nurse employees. For example, K-12, higher education, and state agencies would have a difficult time finding matching funds and would not be allowed to match within their budgets. **We propose waiving the required match for these employees or allowing agencies to provide the match with state funding. We also propose the addition of bachelor's degrees to the scholarship program to assist in increasing the availability of BSRN level nurses.**

The Higher Learning Commission establishes the requirements for higher education to receive accreditation on a regional and national level. Nursing faculty positions require a master's or doctorate-level degree and ND is experiencing a chronic shortage of faculty. The first factor is low faculty salaries as compared to practice settings. Faculty salaries are substantially lower than advanced practice nursing roles such as Nurse Practitioners and lower than national averages.

The second factor is student loan debt. Faculty that attend advanced degree programs end up with student loan debt that exacerbates low faculty salaries. In 2020 the average faculty student loan debt was \$34,103 (ND Center for Nursing Faculty Survey, 2020).

The third factor is recruitment. ND Nursing faculty are heavily recruited by nursing programs outside of the state. In 2020, 50% of faculty indicated that they had been contacted in the past year by a recruiter. Thirty-six percent of faculty also have considered during the last three months to changing their employment to a role outside of nursing education due to better salaries, decreased workloads and frustration with the academic work environment (ND Center for Nursing Faculty Survey, 2020).



In response to the shortage of advanced degree prepared nursing faculty, the North Dakota Board of Nursing created the Faculty Development Program in 2011. This program facilitates the growth of faculty to meet the national and state requirements for teaching in nursing education by allowing faculty that are in the process of obtaining their master's or Doctorate degree to hold a faculty position while completing the degree. Faculty in the program are paired by their employer with a mentor and their progress is tracked on a semester-by-semester basis. In 2018-2019 there was an average of 51 faculty enrolled in the program during the academic year (NDBON Education Annual Report 2018-2019). **We propose expanding eligibility for the loan repayment program to include graduate degrees in nursing. We also propose to expand the high needs occupation list to include nursing faculty to train future LPNs and RNs.**

The Health Care Professional Student Loan Repayment program (ND Department of Health) was established to provide loan repayment for health care professionals willing to provide services in areas of ND that have a defined need for services. Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (Nurse Practitioners, Clinical Nurse Specialists, Nurse Anesthetists and Certified Nurse Midwives) and Behavioral Health Registered Nurses are eligible for loan repayment which is matched with community dollars. During the 2019-2021 biennium, 4 APRNs and 4 behavioral health RNs have received support from this program. **We support continued funding of this program.**

For more information about ND Center for Nursing requests regarding loan repayment programs contact: Dr. Patricia Moulton Burwell, Executive Director, North Dakota Center for Nursing at patricia.moulton@ndcenterfornursing.org For more information about the ND Career Builders program, contact NDUS at ndfinaid@ndus.edu For more information about the Health Care Professional Student Loan Repayment Program contact Bobbie Will, Director, ND Primary Care Office at blwill@nd.gov