

Legislative Support for North Dakota State Nurse Staffing Clearinghouse at the ND Center for Nursing (SB 2198)

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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.

A shortage of nurses compared to demand has existed to some extent for twenty-five years and yet today's shortage is uniquely serious. The retirement of baby boomers, the aging population and the associated increase in healthcare needs of our nation's largest generation has intensified the issue, leading to the need for more nurses and supporting healthcare workers across the state. Nursing forms the base for the economic engine for North Dakota's communities. With COVID, facilities have been pushed to the brink of collapse with many unable to provide needed care due to a shortage of nurses. The rural North Dakota landscape makes this shortage particularly acute due to the limited program capacity and distance.

The North Dakota Center for Nursing requests legislative support to provide one-time state appropriation to provide support for organizational structure and to build new nursing workforce recruitment and retention programs serving North Dakota. (SB 2198)

What has become apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic is the lack of a centralized, coordinated effort to provide for nurse staffing across the state. This is paired with the need for increased awareness and recruitment of future nurses to replace burned out nurses, an increased focus on recruiting ND nursing students to work in ND, increased recruitment of out-of-state and international nurses, the development of a centralized contract nursing staffing pool and the need to ensure that the work environment provides a positive workplace culture to ensure retention.

For the last ten years, the ND Center for Nursing (NDCFN) a 501c3 has joined industry with education, special interest with state government and practicing nurses with nursing leadership. The ND Center for Nursing is uniquely positioned to develop and implement an innovative comprehensive strategy to address the state's staffing crisis. However, the ND Center for Nursing is currently unfunded and is need of one-time state appropriations to build the ND State Nursing Clearinghouse which will be sustained past the biennium.

We are heavily recruited by out-of-state recruiters. ND should provide more detailed resources promoting in-state jobs if they would like us to stay here. ND Nursing Student (ND Intent to Stay Study, 2020).

Nurses are burning out due to chronic nursing shortages exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nurse Administrator, 2020

Health care facilities spend millions of dollars on travel and contract nurses. Several out-of-state agencies provide contracting services.

Something needs to be done about retention of staff. Currently, I know of 7 ICU nurses that left their positions in Bismarck to take traveling positions to Fargo and 7 Fargo nurses that have left Fargo to go to Bismarck for different jobs. ND has a constant churning of nurses. *ND Nurse, 2020*

The North Dakota Center for Nursing will work with all stakeholders to develop the ND Nurse Staffing Clearinghouse and plan to have the clearinghouse operational one-year into the biennium.

Key Components of ND Nurse Staffing Clearinghouse

- Will be based on extensive education, supply and demand data that the NDCFN has collected over many years.
- Target Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN), Registered Nurses (RN), Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) and Nursing Faculty
- Provide career services to nurses participating in clinicals and graduating nurses connecting them with communities and jobs
- Recruit nurses for permanent positions and develop statewide pool of travel/contract nurses.
- Provide career services to unemployed, underemployed (part-time) and encumbered nurses.
- Provide unified recruitment to out-of-state nurses, especially those in states with greater supplies of nurses.
- Provide career services and/or connections for international students and international nurses.
- Increase recruitment and retention of nurses through the ND Nursing Culture of Excellence Designation program which is designed to improve the workplace culture and support the formation of professional identity in nursing.
- As funds are available, additional incentives could be offered to nurses choosing to stay and work in North Dakota such as loan repayment or other programs funded through the clearinghouse work.



Fiscal Note

Funding is needed support the ND Center for Nursing infrastructure and to fully develop the ND Nurse Staffing Clearinghouse. It is anticipated that these will be fully developed during the 2021-2023 biennium which will help provide sustained funding for all the ND Center for Nursing pipeline activities.

Total State Appropriations for 2021-2023= \$400,000