



To: North Carolina General Assembly Fiscal Research Division Team

From: Dr. David Shockley, President, Surry Community College

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Legislative Report: Surry Community College's MOU with Northern Regional Hospital

This report is submitted to provide an update on the successful partnership between Surry Community College (SCC) and Northern Regional Hospital (NRH) facilitated by the funding provided by the North Carolina General Assembly. This initiative has significantly enhanced nursing education and successfully improved healthcare services in our region. The North Carolina General Assembly allocated funds from the ARPA Temporary Savings Fund to the North Carolina Community College System Office in the 2023-2024 biennium budget to Surry Community College to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Northern Regional Hospital to train and employ up to eight licensed nurse educators each year. These nurse educators were to provide clinical instruction for the nursing students in programs leading to nursing licensure at Surry Community College. This report highlights the goals and accomplishments of this initiative.

Surry Community College Nursing Programs

Surry Community College is dedicated to providing the region with high-quality, accessible nursing education that provides its' citizens opportunities to complete that education in their home community, entering the nursing profession prepared to excel in their roles. The college offers programs in Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) that provides qualifications to sit for licensure as a Registered Nurse; Practical Nursing (PN) that allows students to become Licensed Practical Nurses; and an LPN-ADN program which allows Licensed Practical Nurses the opportunity to advance their education becoming Registered Nurses while continuing to work as a Practical Nurse.

Impetus for Partnership

Nursing shortages, exacerbated by COVID-19, hit crisis levels both locally and nationally for the following reasons, and were all more severe in rural North Carolina:

- Nursing profession exhaustion and burnout
- COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy – nurses retiring early or pursuing jobs outside the hospital



- Nursing turnover and retention due to higher compensation levels as travel nurses
- Aging workforce (average age for RN in NC is 46, average age of LPNs in NC is 47) (NC IOM, 2024)
- North Carolina is in top 10 states with largest projected nursing shortages by 2035 (Rosseter, May 2024)
- Nursing program enrollment/capacity were not offsetting the loss of nurses
- Insufficient facility/space to accommodate the need for more students
- Nurse applicants turned away due to insufficient number faculty and preceptors
- Nationwide shortage of nursing faculty even more significant than bedside nurses
- Nursing program attrition rates exceed 45% during the first year
- Surry Community College forced to constrain numbers of admittance due to a) lack of nursing faculty and b) vying for clinical sites with larger schools and universities

Overall Objectives of Partnership

- Increase the interest in the nursing profession
- Increase the enrollment in the nursing program
- Decrease the attrition rate of enrolled nursing students
- Increase the graduation rate/number of nursing students
- Increase the number of licensed nurses to live and work in our community
- Create a successful program that can be emulated across rural North Carolina

Key Achievements and Benefits

- Enhanced interest in Nursing programs by engaging youth in K-12 system through Surry-Yadkin Works
- Established Interview schedule for incoming students to identify potential barriers (financial, academic & competing priorities) to success in nursing students
- Enhanced Clinical Training through consistent clinical experiences with preferential placement based on student request for site
- Improved student retention with mentoring and individualized/targeted tutoring hours each semester
- Increased access to advanced technology through Anatomage at NRH
- Establishment of innovative learning environment for nursing students with incorporation of best practices in nursing education and integration of clinical and classroom
- NRH scholarships for nursing students helped improve retention through decreased work hours (students formerly dedicated too many hours to working)
- Increased access to education through expanded enrollment in nursing programs
- More nurses for the workforce through increased graduates



- Career pathways for graduates through pre-apprentice and apprenticeship programs
- Paid student internships during final semester of nursing education
- Graduates enter the workplace more prepared to excel after years of clinical experience in the facility learning the culture, developing relationships with facility personnel, and learning policies and procedures
- Significant decrease in the use of travel nurse personnel providing greater consistency of caregivers within hospital

Measures of Success

Objectives	Measures of Success	Outcome
Increase the interest in the nursing profession	Enroll 12 or more students into pre-apprenticeship program. Sponsor Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA)	EXCEEDED- 115 Nursing Pre-apprentices have been enrolled since January 2021- 86 since the first grant in 2022 There is ongoing active involvement with HOSA programs as well as interaction with middle school students
Increase the enrollment in the nursing program	Increase nursing program enrollment by 40% by year two	EXCEEDED- Enrollment Fall 2021 to Fall 2023 increased by 58.54% Enrollment Numbers: 28 ADN students in Fall 2021 41 ADN students in Fall 2022 65 ADN students in Fall 2023 Note: LPN-ADN students admitted in spring and summer join the 2 nd year ADN prelicensure students each fall resulting in larger cohorts each fall NOTE: PN numbers have not increased. In Spring 2021 30 enrolled; in Spring 2022 21 enrolled; in Spring 2023 17 enrolled and in Spring 2024 17 enrolled Currently developing program to offer PN educational program in high schools which is expected to increase enrollment in PN program



Decrease the attrition rate of enrolled nursing students	Decrease attrition rate by 15% in year 1 and 25% by year two	PARTIALLY MET - Attrition rate down by 27% in PN program; down by 66% in LPN-ADN program; and down by 5% in ADN program
Increase the number of licensed nurses to live and work in our community	Increase licensed nurses working in NRH/SCC market by 25% by year 2 from nursing program graduating classes	MET - NRH is no longer utilizing travel nursing personnel to fill staffing needs. In 2022 NRH had an average of 10 contract nurses on a consistent basis and currently has 1 finishing out a contract

Thirty-one Northern Regional Hospital employees are pursuing a degree in nursing through Surry Community College. Twenty of those anticipate graduating in December 2024 or May 2025. Another eleven hospital employees started the program in August 2024.

Northern Regional Hospital exceeded the expectations of the MOU, serving many more students than initially anticipated. This partnership is the sole reason that Surry Community College has been able to offer seats in nursing programs to the increased numbers of students. The clinical nurses provided by the hospital were bachelors or masters prepared faculty who served to provide clinical instruction for nursing students as well as precepting hours where the students work one on one with the nurses they are assigned to.

Faculty Provided – Students Served				
<u>Semester</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u># Faculty Provided</u>	<u># Students Served</u>	<u># Hours per Student</u>
Fall 2022	NUR 111	6	36	115.5
	NUR 211	2	10	111
	NUR 103	1	5	165
	NUR 221	3	18	174
Spring 2023	NUR 112	5	29	98
	NUR 113	5	29	19
	NUR 101	3	18	115.5
	NUR 213	8 Preceptors	8	240
	NUR 223	13 Preceptors	13	240
	NUR 214	2	10	48
	NUR 102	2	12	163
Summer 2023	NUR 114	3	18	106



Faculty Provided – Students Served				
<u>Semester</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u># Faculty Provided</u>	<u># Students Served</u>	<u># Hours per Student</u>
Fall 2023	NUR 103	1	6	54
	NUR 103	8 Preceptors	8	90
	NUR 111	6	39	88
	NUR 211	4	22	82.5
	NUR 212	3	15	96
Spring 2024	NUR 101	3	18	82.5
	NUR 112	4	27	90
	NUR 113	3	46	23.5
	NUR 213	16 Preceptors	16	240
	NUR 214	2	13	48
Summer 2024	NUR 102	4	13	144
	NUR 114CC	5	41	96
	NUR 214	2	8	48
Fall 2024	NUR 111	6	41	88
	NUR 211	5	33	84
	NUR 212	5	33	84
	NUR 103	13 Preceptors	13	90

Data in the table above represents formal relationships between Northern Regional Hospital Nursing staff serving in the role of clinical education faculty or preceptorships only.

Additionally, there have been countless other hours that these NRH nurses have served to assist student learning in the lab on the school's campus, in mega skills check offs in the beginning of the semester, with the mass casualty simulations conducted in the final semester of a student's respective nursing program, and tutoring students one on one or in groups that are not accounted for in the hours above. The partnership's benefit to these students cannot be praised enough.

Impact and Future Goals

This partnership and the collaboration with Surry-Yadkin works has begun the challenging work of creating a viable and steady pipeline of qualified and interested candidates from the K-12 system through the community college and into the healthcare workplace. This program has met or exceeded the goals of building awareness, providing support for educational endeavors, and beginning the creation of a pipeline to fill critical positions in the healthcare industry. A recent recommendation by the North Carolina Institute of Medicine was to "develop a strong and diverse nursing workforce that is representative of the communities served and is prepared



to meet the growing health care needs of North Carolinians” (p. 13). This partnership addresses this goal directly through developing nurses from families who live and work in this community and educating/training them to serve healthcare needs within the same community. This partnership has not only enhanced opportunities and educational experiences for nursing students with the college, but has provided the college with the opportunity to admit increased numbers of nursing students, and has also had a tangible impact on the financial vitality of the hospital through less reliance on travel personnel.

Future goals include solidifying the work that this partnership has begun. Surry Community College stands positioned to play a pivotal role in this goal by offering nursing coursework and clinical experiences that align with current practice and healthcare needs, while fostering partnerships with Northern Regional Hospital and other regional healthcare entities for real-world training opportunities. This partnership provides opportunities for not only educational success and career development but also to address critical workforce shortages in the healthcare field by equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary to enter the healthcare workforce, as well as the professional networks necessary for a successful transition from education to a professional nursing role. Ultimately, the goals of this partnership are to have a robust pipeline that supports career development of the citizens of our region and meet the evolving demands of the healthcare workplace.

Initial drafts of portions of this report were developed with the assistance of ChatGPT.

This report is compiled and respectfully submitted by Yvonne O. Johnson, Dean of Health Science for Surry Community College and Robin Hodgins, Senior VP of Patient Care Services and CNO for Northern Regional Hospital.

References

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