

# IN BRIEF

**In 2010, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) issued a landmark report and evidence-based recommendations on the important role nursing will play in our nation's health care transformation. To meet growing health care demands and challenges and to serve patients better, we need to change how nurses are educated, trained, and practice.**

**The Massachusetts Action Coalition is one of 51 coalitions working nationwide to advance nursing to meet current and future health care. Our goals are to:**

- increase the percentage of Massachusetts nurses with baccalaureate and higher degrees who can manage increasingly complex patients and health system challenges in all practice settings;
- strengthen education and training so nurses in Massachusetts can meet the growing needs of an aging and ethnically diverse patient population;
- improve access to higher levels of nursing education by facilitating transfer of credits between degree programs and ensuring there is sufficient nursing faculty in our schools;
- eliminate outdated regulatory barriers and organizational policies that limit nurses from practicing to the full extent of their education and training;
- improve data collection and analysis to better understand nursing workforce supply and demand.

**A more highly educated nursing workforce can lead to improved patient care, innovations in health care delivery, and improved coordination of care.**

## Who We Are

The MA Action Coalition is a partnership of the MA Department of Higher Education and the Organization of Nurse Leaders of MA & RI. We are part of the nationwide Campaign for Action, a joint initiative of AARP Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, to help implement the Institute of Medicine's recommendations on the future of nursing.

## Our Priorities:

### CREATE ACCELERATED PATHWAYS FOR NURSES TO ACHIEVE BACCALAUREATE (BSN) & BEYOND:

To prepare nursing to meet the challenges of the future, we need to strengthen nurse education and training. Studies show that higher proportions of BSN-prepared nurses are associated with lower rates of medication errors and mortality. Research also shows that BSN-prepared nurses have stronger critical thinking skills and make better care decisions. In addition to patient care benefits, Massachusetts needs more nurses to seek higher education so they will be ready to teach the next generation of nurses. Our goals:

- Make it easier for nurses with associate degrees to earn bachelor's degrees (BSN) in Massachusetts nursing schools, beginning with an agreement for improving the transfer of academic credits among nursing education programs at the Commonwealth's public colleges and universities.
- Work with nursing education programs and employers to increase options for flexible student-centered learning opportunities that will make it easier for working nurses to advance their education.
- Replicate successful academic progression models for new nursing students and current nurses to earn baccalaureate or higher degrees.

### SUPPORT INTEGRATION OF NURSING CORE COMPETENCIES IN ACADEMIC & PRACTICE SETTINGS

Further integration of core competencies as a foundation in nursing education programs statewide will promote a smooth progression between Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN), Associate Degree (ADN), and Bachelor Degree (BSN) programs to ensure all nurses graduate with essential knowledge, attitude, and skills. The integration of the same core competencies into a range of practice settings (such as hospitals, skilled nursing facilities and community health centers) will support new nurses in their transition from education into practice.

[continued](#)

'Our Priorities' continued

## INCREASE THE POOL OF FACULTY TO EDUCATE NEXT GENERATION OF NURSES

In order to increase the percentage of nurses who achieve a BSN degree, Massachusetts needs more nursing faculty. This need comes during a time of an existing faculty shortage. The MA Action Coalition is working with college and university nurse education programs to:

- Provide opportunities for retired faculty to return to teaching positions.
- Strengthen new faculty recruitment, orientation, and development across the state.
- Maximize opportunities for practicing nurses to also obtain faculty positions and teach the next generation of nurses.

## REMOVE OUTDATED BARRIERS TO PRACTICE AND CARE

- Outdated regulatory barriers and organizational policies prevent Massachusetts Advanced Practice RNs (such as Nurse Practitioners and others) from practicing to the full extent of their education and training.
- Eliminating these barriers will expand access to care by maximizing the use of Advanced Practice RNs, especially in primary care settings.

## Get Involved, Learn More

**LEARN MORE** about our progress and how you can be part of our success at <http://campaignforaction.org/state/massachusetts>.

**INVEST IN YOUR FUTURE** by advancing your nursing education and skills. Learn about the academic pathways to earning your BSN or beyond – and what schools offer programs – at the MA Colleges of Nursing website: <http://massnursing.org/baccalaureate.asp>.

**Increase proportion of Massachusetts nurses with baccalaureate degrees or higher from 55% in 2014 to 66% by 2020.**

## MA Action Coalition Accomplishments

- Massachusetts is one of nine states awarded a two-year \$300,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation through its Academic Progression in Nursing (APIN) program to advance state and regional strategies aimed at creating a more highly educated, diverse nursing workforce.
- Developed and distributed a comprehensive tool kit to assist with the integration of core competencies across nursing academic and practice settings to facilitate the transition from classroom to patient care.
- Developed the Nursing Education Transfer Compact (NETC) to facilitate the transfer of academic credit between two- and four-year nursing programs at the Commonwealth's public higher education institutions. In January 2014, the MA Board of Higher Education endorsed the agreement and work is underway to implement the voluntary compact beginning as early as fall 2014.
- Collected and analyzed data on faculty recruitment, retention, retirement trends, and issues to identify opportunities to increase pool of faculty to educate nurses at the BSN through doctoral levels. Established a centralized database of clinical nursing faculty and available teaching opportunities.
- Conducted gap analysis of current state laws that prevent Advanced Practice RNs from practicing to full extent of their training and education. Working with legislators, providers, and patient care advocates to make changes that will improve access to care and decrease costs.

Patricia Crombie, MSN,RN  
Project Director  
[pmcrombie@gmail.com](mailto:pmcrombie@gmail.com)  
t 617.686.4375

800 West Cummings Park #5600  
Woburn, MA 01801-6396  
[www.campaignforaction.org/  
state/massachusetts](http://www.campaignforaction.org/state/massachusetts)

