



California Association of Colleges of Nursing



## **POSITION STATEMENT**

### **SUPPORT OF BSN AS ENTRY INTO PRACTICE FOR PROFESSIONAL NURSING**

**10/23/2015**

#### **Position:**

The California Association of Colleges of Nursing (CACN) supports the (2010a) Institute of Medicine (IOM) *Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health* recommendation, that 80-percent of the nursing workforce be baccalaureate prepared nurses by 2020. The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) as an entry to practice is validated by the IOM (2011) and National Council of State Boards of Nursing that endorse, continued learning at all levels with educational advancement, of registered nurses (RN) to the baccalaureate level in order to meet higher levels of education, due to increasing demands of health care that are undergirded by knowledge in healthcare systems and policy leadership, research, population health, and global health. In Carnegie Foundation's *Preparation for the Professions* (2009), Patricia Benner recommended a radical transformation level of education for nurses (2010) that will lead to a BSN, with eligibility to qualify for a public health nurse (PHN) certificate. As the voice of baccalaureate and higher nursing education in California, CACN members maintain that a BSN entry to practice not only promotes higher level of education for entry that the nursing profession demands, but also supports the interdisciplinary team work within the full scope of nursing practice (IOM, 2010b).

#### **Rationale:**

This position reflects the current health care system change, growing national consensus and global trends that favor standardized preparation of nurses, to fulfill the demands of nurses being at the forefront of care coordination and prevention, especially in light of growing demands of community and home healthcare in both urban and rural communities (Smith, 2009). The nursing profession's full scope of practice has expanded to include leadership positions that embrace complex designing and implementing care for high acuity chronic care patients, who are being transitioned and discharged to community at a faster pace due to high healthcare cost. Care should be taken to evaluate current and prospective bridge programs to ensure each baccalaureate program includes population health/community health theory content and clinical experience, which enables the graduate to obtain a PHN certificate and practice in that arena. Inclusion of education for population health/community health principles for BSN provides the graduate with foundational knowledge in appropriate skills and insight, needed to understand the

contextual factors surrounding patients within the community environment that will facilitate or hinder healing.

Educating BSN prepared nurses with a PHN certificate as an entry to practice provides the breadth of knowledge required to make decisions in the management of patients through telehealth in urban or rural settings (Amos, 2015). The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) (2013) report states that BSN prepared nurses display greater professional responsibility, leadership in quality improvement projects, and involvement in clinical research. In the current healthcare system, BSN as an entry to practice requires, that policies and practices should be in place in order to provide opportunities for seamless transition into higher degree programs, especially in light of the need for advanced practice nurses in the primary care setting who will be making informed decisions for highly complex patient populations (Amos, 2015; Pulti, 2014; Wood, 2010).

CACN believes that universities should partner closely with community colleges to offer integrated, seamless transitions from associate degree programs to bachelor's programs and that those barriers that impede educational advancement in nursing should be removed. To achieve such seamless integration, a broad new system, composed of direct transfer, linkage, and partnership programs, is needed. Alternative pathways for BSN education must be developed to create opportunities for learners who might not otherwise be able to pursue additional nursing education. Higher-level education prepares the BSN for entry to practice by emphasizing the role of population health, evidenced-based practice and policy leadership within the full scope of practice.

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