



A Position Statement on the Nurse of the Future: Minimum BSN Requirement for Practice

Background

The American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses (ASPAN) was founded for educational and scientific purposes. ASPAN encourages specialization, clinical inquiry, and research in perianesthesia nursing, promotes public awareness, and facilitates understanding of perianesthesia practices and patient care. ASPAN endeavors to collaborate with universities, government agencies, and other organizations to promote the profession of nursing as a whole and the perianesthesia nursing specialty. The Society is committed to maintaining and upgrading standards and promoting the professional growth of all nurses, including those engaged in this nursing specialty.

In 2010, the Institute of Medicine released a landmark report titled, “The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health.”^{1,a} This report caused a surge of interest in standardizing the entry level requirements for registered nurses, with the goal of increasing the proportion of baccalaureate degree in nursing (BSN) prepared nurses to 80% by 2020. There were eight themes within the report which described four primary issues.¹

1. Nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training. It has been shown that hospitals employing a higher percentage of BSN prepared nurses have decreased rates of morbidity, mortality, and failure to rescue rates.²
2. Nurses should achieve higher levels of education and training through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression.
3. Nurses should be full partners, with physicians and other health professionals, in redesigning healthcare in the United States.
4. Effective workforce planning and policy making require better data collection and information infrastructure which the BSN prepared nurse is better equipped to perform.
5. Facilities seeking Magnet recognition encourage direct care nurses to obtain a BSN.^{3,b}

Further, ASPAN endorses the Institute of Medicine’s findings and affirms a commitment to the advancement of the nursing profession by agreeing that, in addition to the educational foundation of the future nurse, continued RN licensure should include a minimum educational requirement of a BSN.

The benefits of BSN preparation include:

- Nurses prepared to shape the direction of the profession
- Nurses positioned to interact with other professions effectively
- Nurses empowered to help determine the scope of professional nursing practice

^aTo view recommendations regarding the Institute of Medicine’s The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health report¹ go to: <https://www.nap.edu/read/12956/chapter/2>.

^bThe Magnet Recognition Program[®], a highly coveted recognition for quality clinical care, requires that institutions provide proof of plans to achieve 80% of nurses to be baccalaureate-prepared.³



- Nurses with the basic skills to conduct, support, and implement clinical inquiry and research, and prepared for higher education needed to engage in advanced nursing practice, education, and research
- Increased opportunities for interprofessional collaboration which benefits the patient through clear communication and an interprofessional team approach to patient care

Educational Opportunities

ASPAN recognizes that the demand for RNs exceeds the capacity of traditional baccalaureate programs. Several educational options now exist for RNs seeking to attain a BSN or master's degree in nursing or master's degree in additional health-related fields such as advanced practice care, health leadership, and/or hospital/health systems administration including distance learning or "online" programs. ASPAN's goals are to support the Institute of Medicine's recommendations regarding the future of nursing and to align our specialty with nursing organizations in support of a BSN requirement for professional nursing practice.

ASPAN recognizes that all practicing registered nurses may not choose to pursue a BSN. ASPAN pledges its continued support of these members. ASPAN also realizes that nursing education is on-going for the duration of each individual's career. Commitment to high quality educational programs encourages nurses to maintain a professional edge in their chosen area of specialization and in nursing as a whole. ASPAN is committed to providing such high-quality programs to its members.

ASPAN will continue working to identify and respond to the need for clinically relevant education in the perianesthesia setting and encourage perianesthesia nurses to pursue graduate degrees in nursing and engage in research and the dissemination of evidence-based practice.

Support System

Registered nurses enter practice with varied educational backgrounds. Many nurses seek additional educational opportunities and set professional goals beyond their basic education. Without a statutorily mandated requirement for an entry level baccalaureate degree, multiple entry-level programs will remain the norm for basic nursing education.

The perianesthesia nurse professional possesses expertise in the care of the patient in the perianesthesia setting. Just as licensed independent practitioners and ancillary members of the healthcare team possess particularized skill and training, perianesthesia nursing professionals possess a unique body of knowledge and expertise in the provision of perianesthesia care. Incorporating evidence-based practice and relevant nursing research enhances safe perianesthesia nursing practice. Increasing the number of baccalaureate prepared nurses at the bedside will positively affect patient outcomes.

ASPAN joins other professional nursing organizations in support of the goal to establish the baccalaureate degree in nursing as the minimal educational requirement for the nurse of the future and for continued professional

nursing practice. ASPAN acknowledges the need to address and overcome obstacles before this goal becomes reality.

Approval of Statement

This statement was recommended by a vote of the ASPAN Board of Directors on April 26, 2014, and approved by a vote of the ASPAN Representative Assembly on April 27, 2014, in Las Vegas, Nevada.

This position statement was updated and revised at the October 2019 meeting of the Standards and Guidelines Strategic Work Team in Dallas, Texas.

REFERENCES

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3. Pinto B. How the Magnet Recognition Program® is affecting registered nurses. The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. May 2019. Accessed February 2, 2020. <https://www.thechicagoschool.edu/insight/health-care/how-is-magnet-program-affecting-registered-nurses/>

ADDITIONAL READING

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Institute of Medicine. Assessing progress on the Institute of Medicine report the future of nursing. 2016. Accessed July 10, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.17226/21838>

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