Demanding “BSN in 10 Legislation”

Zongfang Yang, RN

New York City College of Technology

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Jose Hernandez

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Many states have begun to require Registered Nurses (RN) to have or earn a Baccalaureate of Science in Nursing (BSN) to work in facilities. The field of nursing is becoming more complex and nurses are occupying non-traditional roles. Therefore the need for a wider theoretical base is necessary for the health care field today. Increasingly, nurses are in leadership and advocacy position that direct resources and personnel. A longer, in-depth education can help prepare the nurses for rapidly changing health care environment.

Looking back the history, approximately 55% of registered nurses held a hospital diploma as their highest educational credential. 22% held BSN and 18% held an associate degree in 1980. By 1996, only 24% of RNs held a diploma as the highest educational credential, despite the fact that the number with BSN degrees raise to 31%, with 34% holding an associate degree (The Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing, 2014). Today, the Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) primary dominate the nursing education in U.S. as of 2009, there are 59% of nurses graduated from a associate programs, while of 37% from baccalaureate degree program. Diploma programs are nearly disappeared as low as 4 % (Huston, 2013).

Why is there such a significant increasing level of nursing education? Even our legislative system is enforcing the entry-level of nursing practice to be BSN. Shifting of health care from hospital-centered to the community play a major role in mandating advance nursing education. Traditionally, the major role as a nurse is bedside care, and mostly the hospital is the primary site for health care delivery. Therefore, hospital trained nurses (diploma nurses) and ADN nurses are competent enough to carry out their roles as care giver. According to carol, two levels of preparation were suggested for RNs, technical and professional. ADN would be sufficient to prepare a nurse for an entry level (Huston, 2013). Therefore, they practice in less complex patient care situation, and provide additional care such as coping with their conditions and to maintain their care upon discharge.

However, the health system has transformed to preventive care and expanded to community, not only limited in the acute care setting or hospital centered. This transformation and shift of health care, required RNs not only be able to function in the hospital setting, but also can be capable and independent in practicing as a provider, manager, navigator and coordinator under a environment beyond the hospitals-setting.

Four-year degree nursing education prepares the nursing students not only for boosting the nursing knowledge taught in associate program, but also enhancing the students’ professional development (Huston, 2013). For example, in my BSN program, we have nursing classes such as physical assessment, which provides more in-depth physical examination on patients; case management, “a method of managing the provision of healthcare to members with catastrophic or high-cost medical conditions, to achieve the goal of delivery of quality care in a cost-effective way”(Powell & Tahan, 2009, p.5). Community Health class provide a concept of the provision of nursing care for collective of people, bound in relationship with families, other groups and communities. The major role of Community Health Nurse is the conduction of a continuing and comprehensive practices based on preventive, curative and rehabilitative method. The goal is to focus on promoting wellness in communities (Holzemer & Klainberg, 2014). Nursing research, a class teaches us that a systematic inquiry designed to develop trustworthy evidence about issues of importance to the nursing profession, including nursing practice, education, administration and informatics (Polit & Beck, 2010) etc. These advanced programs prepare RNs to function with more autonomy in making clinical decision, case management, disease prevention, and health promotion.

The BSN programs prepare nursing students for clinical, scientific decision-making and humanistic skills, including nursing management and leadership skills. In my BSN program, through the leadership class, I have learned that we as professional nurses are empowered to be competent leaders in healthcare. We don’t just delegate, dictate and direct, we also have the potential and capacities to advance health and lead change. The skills and knowledge that we learned from the BSN program are essential for us to make quick and accurate decisions that meet patients’ needs; design and manage a nursing care plan; be familiar with patients’ treatment, symptoms and danger signs; supervise other nursing individual and support staff; provide patients of health care resources in a community, educate patients for health care options and promote healthy lifestyles (Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing, 2014).

According to Haverkamp and Ball (2013), it was approved that nurses who hold a baccalaureate degree may bring a better patient outcome. It was recommended from research that baccalaureate-prepared nurses demonstrate increased knowledge of professional role, problem-solving capabilities and communication skills. These skills are crucial in the complex health care context nowadays ( Haverkamp & Ball,2013). Particularly, we are confronting with health care reform, as President Obama signed into law the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; this transformation of health care will expand the scope and nature of nursing practice. Nurses with high level of education and professional skills are highly demanded to play roles as advocators, educators, as well as care providers (Heather, 2010).

Even though there are different voices of arguing the entry-level of practicing in nursing, but I believe that the “BSN in 10 legislation” is going to become the fact in the near future. Not to mention about the development and complexity of health care that require of advancing nursing education., the fact of increasing graduating nursing students, the depressing of economy and job market, will cause the demanding in higher level of degree in nursing. Employers have become selective in hiring nurses. Most of the facilities have established “BSN-preferred” even “BSN-required” policy for new hires. According to Bureau of Labor Statistic, registered nurses with at least a bachelor’s degree in nursing (BSN) will have better job prospects than those without one. (Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2014).

Overseeing the degrees of entry level for the Health Professionals, for examples Pharmacists, Social Workers, Physical Therapists, and their entry level is master degree. Field of Professional Nursing demands the BSN. The changing climate of providing medical care calls for a person with professional training who can establish a structure where there maybe none. The increased demand of disease prevention and health promotion, reformed more complex healthcare context required RNs to have high level and variety of skills and knowledge. The 21 century nurse must be prepared to delegate, teach and lead. Education and training are the only ways to prepare for the challenges to come.

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