

# The NH Nursing Diversity Pipeline Project

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Lessons to Grow and Sustain Nursing Diversity in New Hampshire

Project Summary 2010 - 2013



July 2014



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This report was written by Jessica Santos with input from the following advisors:  
 Bobbie Bagley, Julie Dasilva, Jodi Harper, Karen Horsch, and Kelly Laflamme, Kerry Nolte, Paula Smith, and Trinidad Tellez

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## Executive Summary

In 2010, the Institute of Medicine's Future of Nursing (FON) report<sup>1</sup> highlighted the fact that nurses, who make up the largest segment of the health care workforce, must play a key role in shaping the future of the health care delivery system. The FON report provides key recommendations to elevate nursing's role in the future of health care with diversity as a critical component of each endeavor. A specific FON recommendation includes increasing the diversity of the nursing workforce, including nurse faculty and researchers. A diverse workforce is required to meet the demands of the nation's changing health system and to effectively provide care for diverse populations across the lifespan. The NH Nursing Diversity Pipeline Project (NDPP), a 3-year multi-partner initiative - the first of its kind in NH - responded directly to this call to action. This report provides an overview of the NDPP model, synthesizes lessons learned and emerging best practices, and offers recommendations to grow and sustain nursing workforce diversity into the future. The report is broken down by program components that represent different phases of the workforce pipeline:

- Phase I: Middle and high school students;
- Phase II: Aspiring nurses in training;
- Phase III: Practicing nurses; and
- Phase IV: Nurse leaders and faculty.

These phases of life and the needs they present are not mutually exclusive. Successful workforce development and diversity programs must strike a delicate balance between interventions tailored to life phases, and a cohesive model that supports diversity and inclusion across the workforce pipeline. The final program component, the Institutional Environment, ties together these life phases and helps to achieve this balance: the focus shifts away from the individual and broadens to include interventions that improve the institutional environment at nursing schools and employment settings so that diverse nurses are well received and supported in all stages of their careers. High level practice-based recommendations, detailed in this report, include:

- Increase the supply of students of color applying to our state's nursing schools by disseminating information to youth and families and providing hands-on exposure to the field of nursing and to higher education.
- Improve retention and advancement by creating professional networking opportunities and implementing outreach strategies to engage practicing LNAs, LPNs, and RNs in the pipeline, including opportunities that foster leadership and result in faculty positions.
- Create a multi-sector pipeline by engaging employers, educational institutions, high schools, community-based organizations, and other partners throughout the program.
- Assess readiness and provide support for educational institutions to enhance their cultural effectiveness, reduce unconscious biases, and adapt to and reflect New Hampshire's changing demographics in their student body and faculty.

These recommendations have direct implications for the future of our state's health care delivery system and the reduction of health disparities. They also contribute to a growing knowledge base of New Hampshire-specific standards of practice in the field of health equity.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2010/the-future-of-nursing-leading-change-advancing-health.aspx>

## Overview of the NH Nursing Diversity Pipeline Project

From 2010 - 2013, the NH Nursing Diversity Pipeline Project (NDPP) was offered as New Hampshire's first workforce development program to explicitly address the state's shortage of nurses and nurse faculty of color.

The goals of the NDPP were to expand diversity within the nursing workforce and nursing education faculty in New Hampshire by increasing awareness of the nursing profession among diverse youth; strengthening academic preparedness for nursing education; developing networks to support minority nursing students and nurses in practice to succeed in their careers; and increasing the number of nurses from underrepresented populations (men or racial, ethnic, or linguistic minorities) who attain an advanced degree and commit to teach in nursing education in NH. The program model, illustrated below on page 4, represents a continuum of exposure, support, networking, and financial assistance to grow the nursing workforce at all phases of the pipeline from middle school students to doctoral-level nursing faculty. The NDPP engaged approximately 453 individuals across the pipeline over three years.

This model strengthens and weaves together existing components of the state's nursing career pipeline by providing supplemental support to diverse students at each stage, while simultaneously engaging schools and other workforce institutions to develop culturally effective programs that are accessible to all.

The NDPP was implemented with minimal administrative staffing and overhead. A core team of a part-time Project Coordinator and a part-time Project Evaluator were supported by the in-kind contributions of a Program Director and the Director of Grants Management and Finance at the Endowment for Health, as well as sub-contracts and/or in-kind contributions of staff at the Southern NH Area Health Education Center (SNHAHEC), BRING IT!!! (Bringing Refugees, Immigrants, and Neighbors Gently Into Tomorrow), the NH Office of Minority Health and Refugee Affairs (OMHRA), and others to ensure successful implementation. The project was guided by an advisory group comprised of members of these organizations, as well as health care employers, nurse leaders, leaders of color, and nurse educators.

Key components of the NDPP model are currently being sustained by local partners, and the overall vision to increase diversity in NH's nursing workforce has been adopted by the NH Action Coalition's Diversity Workgroup and will be supported by other ongoing efforts throughout NH to improve workforce development systems, increase workforce diversity, and ensure health equity.

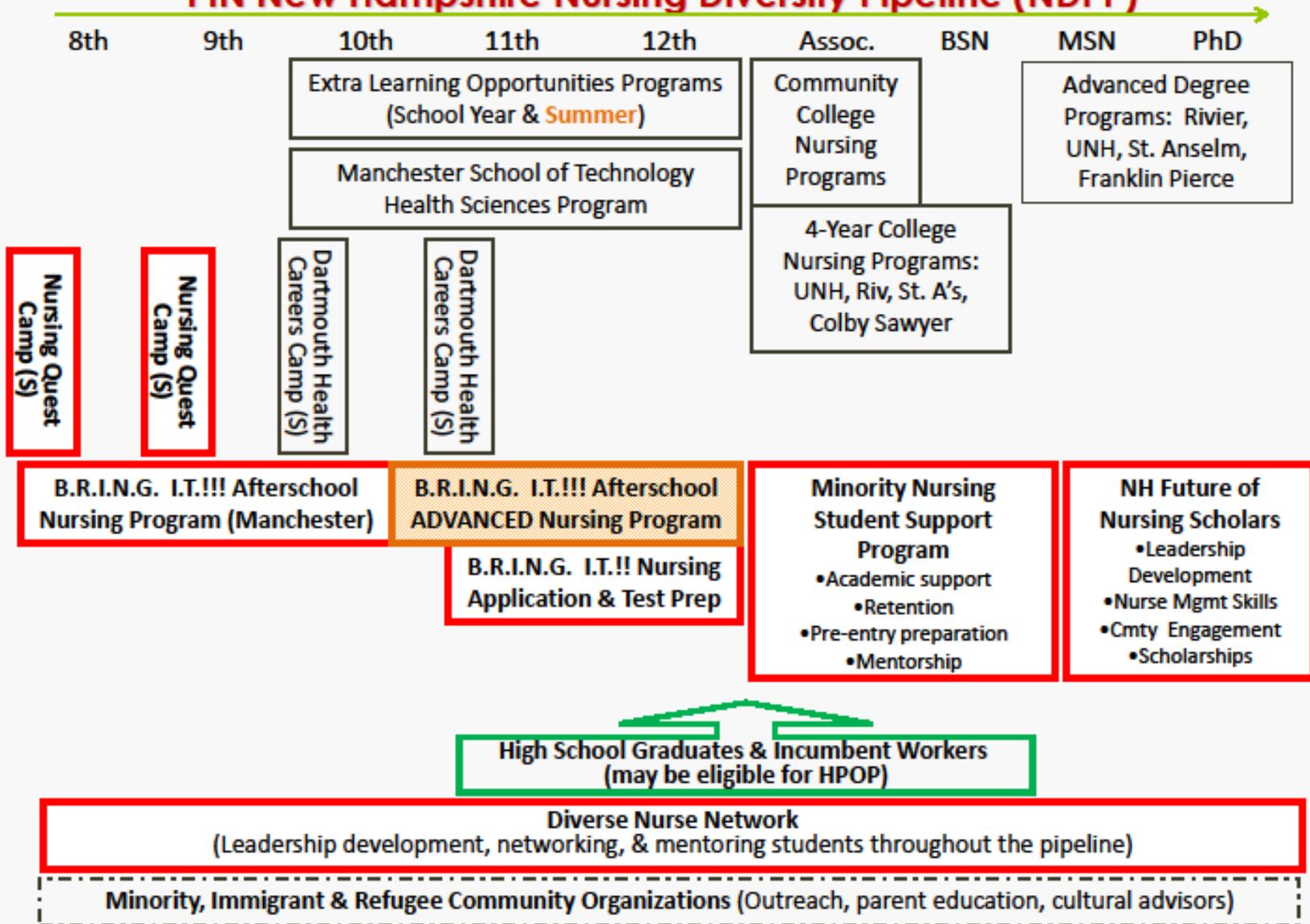
With \$230,000 in funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Northwest Health Foundation through their Partners Investing in Nursing's Future (PIN) initiative,<sup>2</sup> the NDPP

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.partnersinnursing.org/>

leveraged an additional \$239,131 of local funding over three years to invest a grand total of \$469,131 in the state's nursing workforce. Local funders and partners included the Endowment for Health, the NH Charitable Foundation, the Norwin S. and Elizabeth N. Bean Foundation, Southern NH Area Health Education Center, the Jessie B. Cox Trust, the NH Office of Minority Health and Refugee Affairs, BRING IT!!!, and the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation.

## PIN New Hampshire Nursing Diversity Pipeline (NDPP)



\* PIN Program Interventions Identified in Red; Additional Program Elements in Orange; Gaps In Green

## **Phase I: Middle School & High School**

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NDPP project partners found that New Hampshire nursing programs typically demonstrated an openness to diversifying their student population, and unanimously expressed that they accept the highest ranking candidates regardless of background. Schools felt they had little to no control over who applies to nursing school, or who becomes a competitive candidate. Phase I combines the development and dissemination of consistent messages about the field of nursing to students of color at an early age with hands-on exposure to the field as well as to higher education settings and processes. Although not all students engaged in these activities will become nurses, they will have this career option open to them as a possibility, and over time, these strategies will increase the supply of students of color with competitive applications to our state's nursing schools and other health career training programs.

### **Nursing Quest Camps**

A total of 232 8th and 9th graders participated in summer Nursing Quest Camps held in 2011, 2012, and 2013. Although some students paid the \$100 registration fee, most requested and received scholarships, reducing financial barriers to participation. Each summer, SNHAHEC hosted five week-long camps at different locations throughout the state including Manchester Community College, Nashua Community College, Manchester School of Technology, and NH Technical Institute - Concord. Campers received hands-on education about nursing and wellness through age-appropriate activities such as seeing the inside of a hospital, putting on a cast, dissecting cow hearts, and learning Zumba. Families were engaged through an orientation night so they knew what their children would be experiencing at the camp, and so that they could have any questions answered. Although not exclusively designed for students of color, approximately 75% of the students were racial, ethnic or linguistic minorities. The NDPP achieved this by focusing outreach in minority communities and working with a range of organizations to recruit students, including health care organizations, school nurses, school administrators, BRING IT!!! staff, and ethnic community leaders.

### **BRING IT!!! Nursing After School Program**

Over three years, 90 students of color from 8th-12th grade participated in the BRING IT!!! Nursing After School Program which included an Introduction to Nursing Program and an Advanced Nursing Program for students who wanted more exposure to nursing. The Introduction to Nursing Program included nursing education sessions, homework help, supplemental math and science support, field trips to nursing homes and hospitals, a training session by Media Power Youth, and First Aid/CPR training and certification. Staff met with

families of students during the semester to explain the program, answer any questions, and discuss their child's education. Due to a partnership with the Manchester School District, students received .5 extended learning opportunity high school course credits for completing the program. The success of the program can partially be attributed to this strong connection with the Manchester schools on multiple levels, including support from one of the school Principals who believed in the NDPP model and offered to host the program and the after school activities on site. BRING IT!!! staff had professional experience working within the schools, and were representative of the population being served by the program. These assets facilitated explicit outreach within the schools and the community to discuss the program, recruit students, and support their overall academic progress.

In 2012, BRING IT!!! began offering an Advanced Nursing Program for students who completed the introductory program. The advanced program offered job topics such as job shadowing; advanced anatomy and physiology; and field trips to explore different types of nursing. This course was not part of the initial NDPP program design, however it emerged as a priority once staff found that participants who had attended the introductory program wanted to continue to pursue their interest in nursing. Developing ongoing knowledge and interest in a career field is a lifelong process and cannot be offered to students as a "one-shot" deal. The success of this program model caught the attention of workforce development leaders and funders across the state, including the Granite United Way, where BRING IT!!! is now housed. This and other connections led to the development of a similar program focused on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), which is now offered in partnership with the University of New Hampshire-Manchester and also supports diverse students in achieving academic success.

*"I want to say thank you to everybody that helped and supported us to get to the end of this nursing program. We've learned a lot of things, and this [BRING IT!!!] program helped me think about my future and let me know I have a mission to accomplish, that I have a hope, an option, and I know that life has a purpose of departure and a purpose of arrival, that means, trust what you are doing and believe in yourself. Do not come to school for your parents anymore. Come to realize your life, and your hope. To do all those things you have to believe in yourself, believing in yourself is the only option."*  
- BRING IT!!! Student

#### **Making Early Connections Along the Pipeline (2011-2013)**

- 4 students who participated in afterschool nursing were admitted to nursing schools, 11 were admitted to college with an expectation of entering nursing.
- 23 participants in the BRING IT!!! nursing program participated in the Nursing Quest camps.
- 3 participants in the BRING IT!!! nursing program participated in the Dartmouth College Summer Nursing Camp after securing financial assistance and 6 participated in VolunTeen Program at Elliot Hospital.
- 10 afterschool nursing program participants continued in the college prep program the following year.

## College Prep Program

The year-long college prep program, also run by BRING IT!!!, had twelve 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders participate during the pilot year. The goal was to assist them in developing an academic plan for their final years in High School and beyond. Monthly group sessions were offered which covered topics such as SAT prep, completing college applications and financial aid forms, test taking, essay writing, and choosing the right college. Participants went on field trips to visit NH educational institutions and universities that offer nursing programs including St. Anselm College, Southern NH University, UNH-Durham, NH Technical Institute, Rivier University, Manchester Community College, the New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation, and an ESOL fair at UNH-Manchester. At least one home visit was conducted with each student in the program, and each student was assigned a mentor who supported them through the process. Although the group education model was well designed to educate students, make them aware of their choices, and empower them to apply to college, NDPP staff found that most students really needed 1:1 assistance filling out college applications, filing financial forms and paperwork, and navigating the overall application process. This type of assistance is time intensive and represents a consistent need for many students. Future workforce programs would benefit from investing more resources to address this step in the pipeline. After the pilot year, NDPP staff identified the nursing after school programs as the more promising program model and incorporated college prep activities into that.

## Nursing School Information Sessions

Through an innovative funding model, two nursing diversity "mini-projects" of about \$2,000 were implemented in 2012. Both funded applications were from nursing schools and both proposed hosting a nursing school information session for diverse high school students. Rivier University's nursing program partnered with the Rivier Office of Multicultural Affairs, Nashua High School guidance counselors, and the Boys and Girls Club of Nashua. Keene State College's nursing program partnered with two Nashua High Schools. This low-cost funding strategy engaged multiple partners in new ways. Nursing schools became engaged as funded partners driving a piece of the pipeline, and not just as hosts of the program field trips mentioned above. A total of 131 students learned about nursing programs in their region through this strategy. While these information sessions cannot replace the depth of knowledge and exposure gained through more intensive models like the after school programs, they do engage students who may not be able to commit to an ongoing after school program due to involvement in other activities or commitments.

## Key Lessons from Phase I:

- Conduct targeted outreach to students of color, even for programs such as Nursing Camps that are not exclusively designed for minorities
- Engage families of middle and high school students in their children's career and academic development
- Offer high school credits for participation in nursing after school programs
- Provide ongoing opportunities (introductory and advanced after school programs and summer camps) for students to engage in the field of nursing at an early age to avoid the "one-shot" approach
- Adjust workforce pipeline program models throughout the implementation period to fill any gaps
- Invest resources in 1:1 counseling to assist students to apply to college
- Engage new partners through innovative, low-cost funding methods like "mini projects"

## Phase II: Aspiring Nurses in Training

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Nursing students of color who have been accepted to RN programs are currently distributed among New Hampshire's 13 schools. Higher education institutions in the Southern part of the state have higher levels of diversity in their student body, which is reflective of the population as a whole. Nevertheless, cohorts are small and schools do not offer support programming specifically for students of color. Phase II addresses the unique needs of nursing students of color by offering a statewide professional network and pre-orientation to prepare students for nursing school. Combined, these strategies address the challenges many students face with regards to retention and academic success once they are accepted into nursing school.

### Minority Nursing Student Support Program

The Minority Nursing Student Support Program (MNSSP) was originally designed to support nursing students of color from NH's 13 programs that offer RN degrees. Through monthly *Connections*, SNHAHEC brought together nursing students and mentors for learning and mutual support through professional presentations and opportunities for more informal dialogue and exchange. Monthly connections were held throughout the academic school year to address the unique challenges and opportunities that minority students face while in nursing school and included topics such as mentoring, interdisciplinary teamwork, cultural competency in healthcare, managing work/life balance, NCLEX<sup>3</sup> prep, and what it means to be a diverse nurse in NH. The kickoff event in April 2011 was attended by 35 people, but ongoing participation in

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<sup>3</sup> National Council Licensure Examination, a standardized exam used by state Boards of Nursing to test eligibility to receive a nursing license.

the MNSSP proved challenging. Students are extremely busy with school, work, family duties, and other commitments. Furthermore, the geographic distance between schools prohibited some individuals from participating because *Connections* were typically held in Manchester or Nashua. SNHAHEC experimented with offering live online *Connections* and engaging schools to host sessions in different parts of the state, but small numbers of minority students in each nursing program made organizing and sustaining a statewide network a challenge.

Nevertheless, those students who attended found the content and networking opportunities to be beneficial. SNHAHEC found that there is not as clear a distinction between nursing students and practicing nurses as the pipeline program had envisioned. Many nurses are in school while working, and many others did not take a traditional path from high school into college and directly into the nursing field. Therefore, over the course of the 3 years, the MNSSP merged with the Diverse Nurse Network (DNN) (further described below). SNHAHEC also worked with OMHRA to encourage nursing schools to integrate aspects of the MNSSP into other campus resources and programs so that students do not have to look outside their campus for support. Some nursing schools had resources that were helpful to students, but none were specifically devoted to minority nursing students. Schools indicated that they felt the MNSSP has value, and they also suggested that as a complementary idea, all students can benefit from enhanced exposure to and understanding of cultural differences.

## Nursing School Pre-Orientation

In order to prepare incoming nursing students of color for nursing school, SNHAHEC hosted a 2-day nursing school pre-orientation before the 2011, 2012, and 2013 school years, which engaged a total of 15 students of color. The curriculum covered a variety of topics including school resources, expectations of nursing schools, communication, managing life as a student, study skills, medical terminology, test taking, and the MNSSP program. Academic institutions assisted with marketing and outreach, and individual faculty members and Diverse Nurse Network members acted as faculty and mentors for the incoming students. Engaging students in August prior to the start of the academic school year proved to be a challenge, and although students who attended the program found it beneficial, the NDPP would recommend that this programmatic function be more closely integrated into existing nursing school programs in the future, so that students view it as an academic opportunity linked to their school rather than an extra-curricular option.

*“The pre-orientation helped me get organized for school, especially the sessions on what to expect from nursing faculty, how to study, and test taking. Actually my clinical professor did an expanded talk about how to read a chapter out of our textbooks to get the most out of reading. I have already used these tips and they have saved me so much time. The pre-orientation just reaffirmed my long time career goals of becoming a nurse practitioner and have given me some things to think about after I finish my associate's degree program. I cannot thank you enough for all the help you have given me through the pre-orientation.”*

- MNSSP Pre-Orientation Participant

## Key Lessons from Phase II:

- Provide statewide networking opportunities for nursing students of color to engage with mentors and access resources in ways that minimize their time commitment
- Integrate evidence-based academic support and diversity programming into all nursing schools across the state so students can access resources in their home institution
- Offer statewide or regional academic pre-orientations with an added emphasis on diversity training for all students entering nursing school which are facilitated, advertised, and organized through their home institutions, and heavily recruit students of color

## Phase III: Practicing Nurses

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The need for networking, support, and resources continues once students graduate from nursing school and become employed. Phase III builds on the ideas and systems put in place for diverse nursing students in Phase II and extends these resources to individuals throughout their career. Phase III also includes creative outreach strategies to engage practicing LNAs and LPNs seeking further education to enter the pipeline in non-traditional ways. These strategies strengthen retention and provide opportunities for advancement for nurses of color in ways that go beyond what the traditional workforce system has to offer.

### Diverse Nurse Network

The Diverse Nurse Network (DNN) was designed as a professional network for nurses of color to engage with each other, identify mentors, and potentially become mentors to younger aspiring nurses. As described above, the NDPP partners quickly realized that there was significant overlap between the needs of nursing students participating in MNSSP, with those of the practicing nurses in the DNN. This is largely due to the fact that many working nurses were also pursuing advanced education. Developing the administrative and leadership skills required to advance in the nursing field and succeed in today's health care environment is a lifelong process. DNN and MNSSP members participated together in monthly *Connections* and all benefited from learning from guest speakers. Combining the two groups proved successful in that it increased numbers of participants and provided more direct and informal mentoring opportunities than were previously envisioned. SNHAHEC also developed a web portal to support the DNN, which includes access to a discussion board, resources, job postings, and news. The project also created Facebook and Twitter accounts to communicate with members through a range of social media venues. These pages link members with national associations, resources, and news or research articles that may be of interest. At the end of the three years the DNN/MNSSP had 25 participants who had attended at least one session, and 89 members on the mailing list.

*"As an advisory member and faculty participating in the DNN, I found the project to be very rewarding. I was truly impressed by the diverse opportunities that were offered to those engaged in the DNN. It was exciting to meet inspirational nurses of color practicing in NH. Learning about the challenges and obstacles that presented in their lives, their passion to succeed and the greatness of their accomplishments! Had this project not been awarded in NH, we would have missed all of these gems and their goals to pursue further education may have been deferred. Thank you."*

-DNN Faculty and Advisory Member

## LNA/LPN Outreach

In 2012, SNHAHEC hired a BSN, MPH intern from UNH to assist with outreach for the MNSSP and DNN. She astutely pointed out that outreach efforts to a small population of people (diverse nurses or RN students in NH) were unlikely to improve unless the program expanded the potential pool of participants. She also pointed out that there are higher percentages of minorities in the Licensed Nursing Assistant (LNA) and Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) workforce than in occupations such as Registered Nurse (RN) or more advanced licensure. These individuals are more likely to have entered the health care field through non-traditional career paths, and therefore the pipeline needed to open to engage members of this nursing workforce in new ways. To better understand this, SNHAHEC conducted a survey and focus group of LNAs and found that many were interested becoming RNs. These aspiring nurses faced several barriers including lack of information about how to navigate the state's higher education system, and a desire for support networks to assist them in advancement. Although the NDPP did not offer direct 1:1 career counseling support or financial assistance for nursing scholarships, by becoming connected to the DNN, several of these aspiring nurses were able to learn about and take advantage of other opportunities to advance, including the resources offered by a partner program through OMHRA.<sup>4</sup>

### Key Lessons from Phase III:

- Provide networking opportunities for all aspiring and practicing nurses of color together
- Engage and support other members of the health care workforce, including LNAs, who wish to pursue nursing education
- Provide opportunities for "non-traditional" students to enter the pipeline and access further education and resources while working

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<sup>4</sup> The Health Profession Opportunity Project: <http://www.nhhpop.org/>

## Phase IV: Nurse Leaders and Faculty

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Nursing schools in NH face a shortage of faculty, and within the ranks of existing faculty, very few schools have faculty of color who adequately represent the state's diversifying patient population and workforce. This limits nursing programs' ability to present diverse perspectives and research agendas, impacts the way students view leadership, and provides few role models for students of color who aspire to hold a leadership position in the field. Additionally, transitioning from a clinical career in nursing to an administrative or teaching position requires new skills and an investment of time and money for further education. Phase IV provided a scholarship and leadership development program which invests in nurse leaders who are ready to take their career to the next level.

### NH Future of Nursing Scholars

From 2011-2013, the NDPP invested in three exceptional nurse leaders of color and provided them with financial assistance and leadership development support. Scholarships funded by the NH Charitable Foundation ranged from \$5,000 to \$7,500 and were supplemented with 1:1 leadership development assessments and career coaching from the NDPP Project Coordinator. Scholars also participated in several aspects of the NDPP as mentors for younger participants. The brief bios below demonstrate the leadership skills that these scholars have developed throughout their lives and in their nursing careers to become advanced professionals who will likely shape our health system and inspire younger nurses of color to advance.

***Fely Matillano*** immigrated to the U.S. in 1991 after completing her nursing degree in the Philippines. After working as a nurse at Concord Hospital for 15 years, and with scholarship support from the NDPP, she graduated with a MSN degree in Nursing Leadership from Franklin Pierce University in 2012. She attended a clinical teaching conference at St. Anselm College in 2013 for further professional development and is now teaching as a faculty member of the nursing program at New Hampshire Technical College in Concord.

***Beata Umugwangwali*** came to New Hampshire in 1994 with her three children after escaping the Rwandan genocide that claimed the lives of her husband and two brothers. Formerly a midwife in Rwanda, she gradually rebuilt her educational credentials in NH. She worked as a staff nurse specializing in gastroenterology at Wentworth Douglass Hospital for 10 years. Scholarship support has helped Ms. Umugwangwali to complete her MSN, Education track at Franklin Pierce College. In 2011, she received the Lux in Tenebris ("Light in Darkness") Award from St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Dover, NH honoring significant and enduring contributions to humanity.

***Chhan Touch*** arrived in the United States from Cambodia in 1988 at the age of 24 and soon began his educational journey. He is currently a family nurse practitioner at the Lowell

Community Health Center/Metta Health Center of Greater Lowell where he provides comprehensive care to underserved populations and new refugees. A resident of Londonderry, NH, he was the first Cambodian to graduate from the University of Massachusetts Lowell with a master's degree in family health nursing. Scholarship support is helping him to complete his Doctor of Nursing Practitioner degree at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. He is a clinical instructor at Tufts University, teaches Cambodian-English medical interpretation to Cambodian staff at various local hospitals, and helps to promote nursing as a career among younger Cambodian generations.

### **Key Lessons from Phase IV:**

- Invest in nurses of color until they achieve Master's and doctoral-level degrees
- Provide leadership development opportunities for advanced nursing students to develop teaching and administrative skills
- Link advanced nurses with younger aspiring and practicing nurses to act as mentors and role models

## **The Institutional Environment**

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The NDPP interventions described so far focus on the individual, and provide resources, support, and creative activities to engage people of color at different stages of their career to enter, be successful, and advance in the field of nursing. The NDPP found that it is necessary, but not sufficient, to support nurses of color to develop and advance along their career paths. Equally important are interventions that support educational institutions to enhance their cultural effectiveness, reduce unconscious biases, and adapt to and reflect New Hampshire's changing demographics in their student body and faculty. This aspect of the NDPP was met through assessments and training sessions at nursing schools as well as meetings with the more actively involved schools to determine what elements of the NDPP model could be sustained into the future. All interventions were based on a literature review of best practices which was turned into a tool and resources utilized by schools for initial self assessments.<sup>5</sup>

### **Hinge Points In Cross-cultural Communication**

SNHAHEC offered five trainings to nursing faculty and others at Rivier University, Keene State College, St. Joseph's School, Manchester Community College, and Colby-Sawyer College over the three-year project period. A total of 164 individuals attended. This educational programming for academic faculty and staff is intended to expose them to the concept of unconscious bias and to understand how those biases play out in nursing school and in the field of nursing, with the eventual goal of taking action to reduce bias and improve the environment at

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<sup>5</sup> <http://iasp.brandeis.edu/pdfs/2012/Strategies.pdf>

each individual nursing program and college campus. The trainings were well received but conversations with nursing schools (see below) revealed that much deeper and ongoing work will be required to change the culture of schools to be truly inclusive, welcoming, and equitable in all aspects of their work.

## Assessing Readiness to Change

SNHAHEC and OMHRA developed and implemented a protocol to work with nursing schools to address aspects of the institutional environment, including assessing readiness to embrace nursing workforce diversity and adopt program components of the NDPP. In meetings at six schools with nursing faculty, department heads and deans, and other key stakeholders, SNHAHEC and OMHRA found that some schools are at the very beginning of their journey--in the pre-contemplation stage.<sup>6</sup> These schools do not have an understanding of or experience of the increasing diversity in NH, they “treat everyone the same” and “address issues of individual students.” They are unaware of the best practices for engaging students of color. School representatives take a “colorblind” approach and do not see that the needs of minority students may differ from those of traditional Caucasian students. They do not have a focus on recruitment of diverse students and have no formal plans for retaining students.

Other schools are in the contemplation stage. As one person pointed out, *“the school has a diversity statement in its mission, now we just need to back it up with action.”* These schools are clear that the demographics in NH are changing and are seeking resources and assistance to help them move to action. In some cases, although there is acknowledgement that the community is changing, there is no organizational response to focus on recruitment of diverse students as a strategic initiative.

A few schools are beginning the action stage. These schools have a diversity statement as part of their mission and/or values statements. One school has begun to intentionally hire minority faculty. These schools are located in areas where the community is more diverse and they, in turn, are welcoming of a more diverse student population and are exploring resources to help them move into more action. Others have indicated that there are diverse faculty members on staff, however, it is not an intentional institutional strategy to demonstrate organizational cultural effectiveness.

Through this work with the schools, NDPP partners learned that long-term efforts to enhance nursing workforce diversity are dependent on NH nursing schools and other institutions (such as employers and workforce development programs) becoming engaged in and adopting strategies to recruit, retain, and advance a diverse workforce. The project developed several tools and acted as a catalyst for subsequent initiatives that will further this work in NH, described below

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<sup>6</sup> Prochaska Stages of Change theory

under Resources. The program model was also presented statewide in multiple forums and the dual emphasis on individual support and institutional change has generated learning opportunities for partners across the state.

### **Key Lessons from the Institutional Environment:**

- Provide ongoing cultural awareness and competency training in nursing schools
- Assist schools in completing assessments, and complete external assessments of readiness to adopt workforce diversity principles prior to recommending strategies
- Present program components publicly and share model practices widely to a range of stakeholders

### **Recommendations and Next Steps**

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The NDPP model presented in this report provides a guide for strengthening our workforce system. In addition to the direct impacts the program had on individuals and institutions that were actively engaged over the three years, the NDPP also had indirect and unplanned impacts on the field of workforce diversity. Its influence was bolstered and multiplied by the Health Profession Opportunity Project (HPOP) and together these initiatives influenced the development of the Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare Foundation Learning Collaborative on Culture, the Health and Equity Partnership Workforce Diversity sub-committee, and the NH Action Coalition's recent focus on diversity (see resource section for details). New Hampshire has made significant progress in the area of workforce diversity as a result of these programs.

The table on the following page is provided as a quick reference for the recommendations discussed in each section of this report. Some apply to workforce development programs, but most are intended for multiple stakeholders if and when they are ready to leave the contemplation stage, take action, and join the movement to increase diversity in NH's nursing workforce. These can be organized into four key overarching recommendations:

1. Increase the supply of students of color applying to our state's nursing schools by disseminating information to youth and families and providing hands-on exposure to the field of nursing and to higher education.
2. Improve retention and advancement by creating professional networking opportunities and implementing outreach strategies to engage practicing LNAs, LPNs, and RNs in the pipeline, including opportunities that foster leadership and result in faculty positions.
3. Create a multi-sector pipeline by engaging employers, educational institutions, high schools, community-based organizations, and other partners throughout the program.
4. Assess readiness and provide support for educational institutions to enhance their cultural effectiveness, reduce unconscious biases, and adapt to and reflect New Hampshire's changing demographics in their student body and faculty.

Recommendation	Statewide Nursing Organizations	High Schools	Nursing Schools	Health Care Employers	Community organizations	Workforce Development
Conduct targeted outreach to students of color	X	X	X	X	X	X
Engage families of middle and high school students in their children's career and academic development		X			X	X
Offer high school credits for after school programs		X				
Provide ongoing opportunities for students to engage in the field of nursing at an early age		X	X	X	X	
Adjust workforce pipeline program models throughout the implementation period to fill any gaps						X
Invest resources in 1:1 counseling to assist students to apply to college		X	X		X	X
Engage new partners through innovative, low-cost funding methods like "mini projects"					X	X
Provide networking opportunities for nursing students of color to engage with mentors and access resources	X		X	X		
Integrate academic support and diversity programming into all schools so students can access resources in their home institution	X		X			
Offer academic pre-orientations with an emphasis on diversity training for all students entering nursing school	X		X		X	X
Provide networking opportunities for all aspiring and practicing nurses of color	X		X	X	X	X
Engage and support other members of the health care workforce who wish to pursue nursing education	X	X	X	X	X	X
Provide opportunities for "non-traditional" students to enter the pipeline and access further education and resources while working	X		X	X		X
Invest in nurses of color until they achieve Master's and doctoral-level degrees	X		X	X		X
Provide leadership development opportunities for advanced nursing students to develop teaching and administrative skills	X		X	X		
Link advanced nurses with aspiring and practicing nurses to be mentors and role models	X	X	X	X	X	X
Provide ongoing cultural awareness and competency training in nursing schools			X			
Assist schools in completing assessments, and complete external assessments of readiness to adopt workforce diversity principles prior to recommending strategies	X				X	X
Present program components publicly and share model practices widely to a range of stakeholders	X		X	X	X	X

\* Includes NH Nurses Association, NH Nurse Practitioner Association, NH Board of Nursing, and NH Action Coalition

## Resources

The following initiatives and tools are provided for those seeking further information on workforce diversity, nursing, and related topics in New Hampshire.

**Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation Culture InSight:** [https://www.harvardpilgrim.org/portal/page?\\_pageid=1438.385800&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](https://www.harvardpilgrim.org/portal/page?_pageid=1438.385800&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

Culture InSight provides technical assistance to NH health profession schools and professionals on workforce diversity and cultural effectiveness through a learning collaborative on culture.

**Health Profession Opportunity Project (HPOP):** <http://www.nhhpop.org/>

Through a federal grant to the New Hampshire Office of Minority Health and Refugee Affairs, the Health Profession Opportunity Project provides training in healthcare occupations for new and incumbent low-income and minority workers.

**NH Action Coalition:** <http://campaignforaction.org/state/new-hampshire>

Linked to the national Future of Nursing Campaign for Action launched in 2010, the NH Action Coalition is the driving force to transform health care through nursing.

**NH Charitable Foundation:** <http://www.nhcf.org/page.aspx?pid=824>

The NH Charitable Foundation is a community foundation that offers the largest source of private scholarships for students pursuing higher education in NH.

**NH Health Careers Website:** <http://nhhealthcareers.org/>

This website provides links to resources for students, job seekers, educators, employers, and others seeking information about health careers in NH.

**NH Health & Equity Partnership:** [www.equitynh.org](http://www.equitynh.org)

The New Hampshire Health & Equity Partnership is a public-private collaborative effort of philanthropic organizations, public health agencies, community based organizations, advocates and others concerned with health equity.

**Partners Investing in Nursing's Future (PIN):** <http://www.partnersinnursing.org/>

Partners Investing in Nursing's Future (PIN) is a partnership of the Northwest Health Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to support the capacity, involvement and leadership of local foundations to advance the nursing profession in their own communities.

**Southern NH Area Health Education Center (SNHAHEC):** <http://www.snhahec.org/>

SNHAHEC's mission is to develop, promote, and coordinate community and academic multi-disciplinary partnerships for health professions education.

**Strategies for Diversifying Your Healthcare Workforce: A Tool for Healthcare Providers:**  
<http://iasp.brandeis.edu/pdfs/2012/Strategies.pdf>

This report provides concrete recommendations and strategies for employers seeking to diversify their workforce.