

Foundations of Nursing Research

Different Approaches to Nursing Education

In December 2017, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo signed legislation into law healthcare system and rapidly expanding technology, the

requiring future registered nurses graduating from associate degree or diploma nursing programs in the state to obtain a baccalaureate in nursing within 10 years of initial licensure. The legislators found that given the increasing

In February 2019, the Campaign for Nursing's Future, an initiative of the Center to Champion Nursing in America, published a series of state maps showcasing the progress being made by nurses in attaining baccalaureate degrees. The percentage of RNs with a BSN or higher degree is now at an all-time high with a national average of approximately 56%, up from 49% in 2010 when the Institute of Medicine's report on the Future of Nursing was released. The BSN maps are based on data compiled in the American Community Survey.

In April 2021, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing released findings from the 2020 National Nursing Workforce Survey which found that 65.2% of the RNs were prepared at the baccalaureate level or higher. The survey also found that the baccalaureate degree was the most common credential pursued by nurses seeking licensure to enter the nursing profession (41.8%), followed by the associate degree (37.7%) and diploma (11.1%).

Baccalaureate nursing programs encompass all of the course work taught in associate degree and diploma programs plus a more in-depth treatment of the physical and social sciences, nursing research, public and community health, nursing management, and the humanities. The additional course work enhances the student's professional development, prepares the new nurse for a broader scope of practice, and provides the nurse with a better understanding of the cultural, political, economic, and social issues that affect patients and influence healthcare delivery. For more than a decade, policymakers, healthcare authorities, and practice leaders have recognized that education makes a difference when it comes to nursing practice.

There are three routes to becoming a registered nurse: a 3-year diploma program typically administered in hospitals; a 3-year associate degree usually offered at community colleges; and the 4-year baccalaureate degree offered at senior colleges and universities. Graduates of all three programs sit for the same NCLEX-RN® licensing examination.

Recognizing Differences Among Nursing Program Graduates

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There is a growing body of evidence that shows that BSN graduates bring unique skills to their work as nursing clinicians and play an important role in the delivery of safe patient care.

Public and Private Support for BSN-Prepared Nurses

The federal government, the military, nurse executives, healthcare foundations, nursing organizations, and practice settings acknowledge the unique value of baccalaureate-prepared nurses and advocate for an increase in the number of BSN nurses across clinical settings.

Fact Sheet References

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Reference

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