



June 3, 2020

Iowa Organization of Nurse Leaders  
Iowa Association of Colleges of Nursing  
Iowa Community College Nursing Education Directors Association

Nursing leaders in practice and education are urged to begin to establish plans to return nursing students to clinical placements. This is critical to ensure that Iowa has well prepared nursing students who will become future members of the nursing workforce.

In June 2019, Iowa nurses in education and practice collaborated to develop more closely aligned practice-academic partnerships to strengthen the nursing workforce in Iowa.

Currently, nurse educators in Iowa are faced with a situation where many hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities, and public health agencies have had to turn away students from educational opportunities.

In an effort to assist Spring 2020 semester students, nurse educators in Iowa reduced the percentage of clinical hours required for graduation and substituted evidence-based, high-fidelity simulation experiences for clinical hour completion. Local academic-practice partnerships, in small pockets across the state, allowed some students to complete preceptorships to ensure that practice-partner hires, orientations, preceptorships, and nurse residencies scheduled for June through the summer could still occur. This allowed these students to join the nursing workforce as planned due to their ability to complete the clinical hours required to ensure competent, confident practice.

However, many graduating students in preceptorships were not allowed to complete clinical hours and either could not progress or had non-high-fidelity simulation substituted for their scheduled clinical hours. In addition, the majority of instructor-led clinicals were cancelled across the state, with substitution of non-high-fidelity simulation for clinical hours.

The COVID-19 pandemic will be with us for the foreseeable future. If we do not implement academic-practice partnerships to facilitate student participation in real clinical experiences by Spring of 2021, graduates from nursing programs in the state of Iowa may not have had any real-life clinical experience caring for actual patients.

Inability of student nurses to complete the clinical hours necessary for competent, confident, and safe practice will severely hamper the nursing workforce in Iowa for the foreseeable future, impact future employers, and may decrease patient safety.

Therefore:

- We advocate that academic and practice organizations in Iowa partner at the local level to implement the public policy advocated by all nursing leadership organizations in the United States including the American Nurses Association, National League for Nursing, National Council of State Boards of Nursing, American Organization of Nurse Leaders, American Association of Critical Care Nurses, Organization for Associate Degree Nursing, Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (Policy Brief: U.S. Nursing Leadership Supports Practice/Academic Partnerships to Assist the Nursing Workforce during the COVID-19 Crisis, March, 2020).

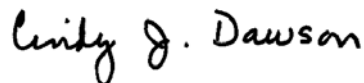
- We respectfully request that local academic-practice partners start and/or continue to work together to identify strategies that will allow students to participate in clinical rotations and preceptorships using innovative strategies to:
  - Allow students that are their current employees to complete their preceptorship or clinical hours in their institution.
  - Allow students who they plan on hiring upon graduation to complete their preceptorships or clinical hours in their institution on the unit or area on which they will be hired (decreasing orientation and preceptorship onboarding costs). Some considerations could include:
    - Implement paid preceptorships to allow students to be designated as employees in order to complete their clinical or preceptorship hours.
    - Develop joint-appointment models of clinical instruction, where the instructors of clinical groups are also nurses employed by the organization on that clinical area.
  - Allow students to complete instructor-led clinicals during periods where the COVID-19 cases are reduced (i.e., June into fall) within the PPE and faculty-to-student ratios that practice sites require.

We advocate that all academic and practice organizations in the state of Iowa join us as partners committed to developing evidence-based and innovative strategies to ensure a high-quality educational experience for our students entering the nursing workforce to care for patients.

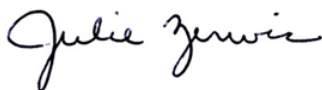
Sincerely,



Mary Jo Kavalice  
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