Key Findings of Nationwide NLN-Carnegie Foundation Study of Nurse Educators Released: Examination of Compensation Practices Suggests Solutions to Challenges of Nurse Faculty Recruitment & Retention

A newly published report on America's estimated 32,000 nurse educators shows that poor compensation may hinder recruitment and retention efforts as nursing schools battle a critical faculty shortage. The report, a profile of faculty at both public and private institutions of higher learning, compared compensation of nurse educators to that of their counterparts in other academic disciplines, as well as to nurses with equivalent credentials in clinical practice and other non-academic settings.

New York, NY (PRWEB) August 29, 2007 -- A newly published report on America's estimated 32,000 nurse educators shows that poor compensation may hinder recruitment and retention efforts as nursing schools battle a critical faculty shortage. The report, a profile of faculty at both public and private institutions of higher learning, compared compensation of nurse educators to that of their counterparts in other academic disciplines, as well as to nurses with equivalent credentials in clinical practice and other non-academic settings.

The data, considered preliminary, was collected last year by the National League for Nursing and the Carnegie Foundation Preparation for the Professions Program. "The analysis from the 2005-06 academic year, the latest information available," said NLN CEO Dr. Beverly Malone, "presents a clear signal to leaders in the profession - administrators, researchers and policy-makers - seeking to recruit more nurses to the ranks of faculty at schools of nursing, especially as legions of current faculty approach the age of retirement." More than half of those who plan to leave their jobs within the coming year (53 percent) cited "more compensation" as their primary reason for departure.

Among the specific findings, researchers noted:
• Master's-level prepared nurse faculty are not only paid 39 percent less than nurse anesthetists, the highest paid nurses, but also paid significantly less than nurse administrators, consultants, supervisors, head nurses, nurse practitioners and midwives with the same educational credentials.
• Nurse educators earn only 76 percent of what colleagues in other academic disciplines do.

The compensation picture is presented in detail in an article in the most recent issue of Nursing Education Perspectives (Vol.28, No. 4; July/Aug. 2007), the NLN's respected, peer-reviewed journal. The NLN-Carnegie Foundation project sought to investigate factors that have contributed to the stubborn shortage of nurse educators, a root cause of the shortage of nurses plaguing America's health care system. Another goal of the research was to build a database of variables to illuminate a wide variety of topics crucial to nursing education well into the future, creating a rich resource for strategic planning regarding workforce environment, administrative policy issues, funding formulas, pedagogical approaches and other challenges to growth and development of the profession. Other highlights of the study were first reported in an earlier edition of Nursing Education Perspectives (Vol.28, No. 3; May/June 2007); findings related to faculty workload will be covered in the forthcoming Nursing Education Perspectives (Vol.28, No. 5; Sept/Oct. 2007).

These journal articles are an introduction to the empirical data obtained through the survey, conducted online. Respondents represent 25 percent of the nursing faculty teaching in certificate and degree-granting programs in diverse college and university settings throughout the country that prepare nurses for all levels of clinical
practice, as well as to enter academia.

The NLN-Carnegie Foundation partnership was forged in the fall of 2006 after the foundation completed an in-depth comparative study of nine schools of nursing, interviewing students, faculty, and administrators. Interested to learn if their findings were representative of nursing education nationally, as well as across a variety of program types and different types of institutions, and eager to examine regional differences, the foundation's chief investigator, Dr. Patricia Benner, approached the National League for Nursing.

While a number of the findings are not surprising to those who have been tracking the worsening nurse and nurse educator shortages, the results do confirm what many have merely suspected are the main reasons for the continuing challenge: an aging and overworked faculty that earns less than nurses who enter clinical practice or holders of advanced degrees in other academic disciplines.

Among the other points of interest to emerge:

- The majority of nurse educators are white women at least 55-years-old who expect to retire in the coming decade.
- Ninety percent of nurse educators work full-time, often adding administrative duties to teaching responsibilities, resulting in a 56-hour average work week.
- Nursing lags significantly behind the rest of academia in racial and ethnic diversity, with only 7 percent of nurse faculty being African-American, Hispanic, Asian, or Native American, compared to 16 percent minority representation among US faculty generally.
- Nurse educators are less well educated than their counterparts in other academic disciplines. Only a third of nurse educators hold doctorates, compared to 60 percent of all postsecondary faculty.
- Forty percent of nurse faculty also held administrative posts within their academic institutions.
- Forty-four percent of nurse educators expressed dissatisfaction with their current workload, undermining retention. More than 25 percent of the nurse educators who plan to leave their current job cited overwork as the primary motivation.

For copies of the articles that appear in Nursing Education Perspectives, go to http://nln.allenpress.com/nlnonline/?request=get-toc&issn=1536-5026&volume=028&issue=04 and click on "Headlines from the NLN." For contact information for story sources, please call Karen R. Klestzick at 212-812-0376 or email kklestzick @ nln.org.

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