

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Consensus Report* addresses the significant problem of nursing shortage, and proposes 14 priority nursing issues that, if addressed, can make a lasting impact on long term systemic solutions for the Ventura region.

A group of local nursing leaders engaged in a participatory process examining key issues related to three questions:

1. What are the key issues that prevent a healthful environment of practice?
2. What issues create barriers to building a nursing workforce that provides the supply, skill level, and diversity necessary for our region's population?
3. What are the key nursing practice issues that act as barriers to meeting the health-care needs of our clients?

The World Café Model⁸ was used to engage key healthcare experts in constructive dialogue regarding their perceptions of the most pressing nursing issues that negatively impact the current workforce environment, and intensify the current nursing shortage. These key informants developed, by consensus, a set of priority issues for the Ventura County region from the perspectives of nursing practitioners, nursing educators, and nursing administrators.

The *Consensus Report* summarizes key demographic data, such as increasing regional diversity, enhanced numbers of aged, and very low nurse per capita population ratios. The report then proceeds to detail a highly effective participatory process yielding priorities for nursing in the region. The report focuses on the environment of practice, patient safety, and nurse staffing ratios. It ventures into the efficiency of the educational pipeline, and access to healthcare.

The 14 priority nursing issues lend themselves to concrete strategies, programs and activities aimed at solutions; however, the *Consensus Report* is not designed to propose solutions for the 14 priority nursing issues.

The next steps for the *Consensus Report* include presentation at regional venues, including a nursing summit, two symposia and an education campaign. All approaches aim at achieving successful long term funding strategies that address: recruitment; retention; health policy; and diversity in the nursing profession for the Ventura County region.

The *Consensus Report* poses the question of whether a group of committed funders, policy-makers, employers, administrators, educators and the public can come together to solve a complex problem which affects the health of us all.