

VENTURA NURSING LEGACY PROJECT

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Ventura County Community Foundation (VCCF) has been selected as one of 10 foundations nationwide - and the one in California to participate in a new national initiative to develop and test solutions to America's nursing shortage. VCCF has partnered with California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) to develop a sustainable strategy to address the structural issues around nursing capacity to serve our population.

The goal of the project is to determine priority issues around nursing in Ventura County and to develop a common set of sustainable long-term strategies to address recruitment, health policy and diversity in the nursing profession, with emphasis on developing funding strategies for the Ventura County region. Working in partnership with CSUCI, the initiative focuses on:

- Determining priority issues for the region through interaction with nursing leaders and professionals
- Engaging stakeholders across multiple sectors through symposia and a nursing summit
- Educating other funders about priority issues and developing funding strategies to address these issues
- Working with the other PIN partners to create models that link funders to community priorities around nursing issues

REGIONAL NURSING CRISIS IN VENTURA COUNTY

As in all counties of California, Ventura has experienced an increased demand for and decreased supply of registered nurses in the workforce. There are many factors leading to an increased nursing demand in Ventura County. They include:

- Total population growth
- An increase in people over 65 with projected relatively high mortality and morbidity rates for a number of chronic illnesses
- The general state-wide shortage of registered nurses
- The recent (2004) staffing ratio legislation that mandated lower nurse patient ratios

The nursing shortage in Ventura County is serious and chronic; with one of the worst nurse-to-population ratios in the country. The lack of registered nurses threatens patient care and safety, health care costs, and patient outcomes. Various factors contribute to the complexity of the nursing shortage and include:

- Rapid population growth
- Increase in local cost of living, particularly in housing prices and rental costs
- An aging nursing workforce
- Low job satisfaction
- Varying working conditions
- An increasingly diverse patient population requiring intensive and culturally appropriate health services

VNLP PROGRAM IMPACT TO DATE

We have seen a re-energizing of the nursing leaders in our community. The process of identifying the challenges to nursing's future in Ventura County has raised a number of difficult-to-tackle challenges, it has also created a positive energy and increased momentum to formulate stakeholder strategies. By participating in this process, our community's nursing leaders are taking an active role in shaping the future of nursing in our county and thus making a positive impact on the health of the community.

This stated impact is based on anecdotal evidence only, drawn from participants' comments. In addition, by convening diverse groups of stakeholders, the process has helped to create bonds among these groups (such as educational institutions and hospital administrators) and has opened the door to dialogue about how groups can better communicate to create a better prepared nursing workforce.

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YEAR I PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The establishment of a regional Partners Investing in Nursing Committee (PINC), development and distribution of the *Consensus Report on Ventura County Priority Nursing Issues*, a regional Nursing Summit, and the collection of stakeholder strategies that respond to Ventura County's priority nursing issues were the four major accomplishments in the first year of the grant.

1) *Partners Investing in Nursing Committee (PINC)*

A group of 28 nursing and health care workforce leaders interested in contributing to the Ventura Nursing Legacy Project in 3 primary ways:

- Determining a set of priority issues around nursing
- Participating in and facilitating the Nursing Summit
- Inform the two symposia and the education campaign

2) *Consensus Report on Ventura County Priority Nursing Issues*

- *Consensus Report on Ventura County Priority Nursing Issues* was developed by convening the PINC on four occasions to develop a list of nursing priorities for Ventura County. The nurse leaders engaged in a participatory consensus-driven process, using the *World Café Model*, to engage them in a constructive dialogue regarding the most pressing issues that impact the current workforce environment and intensify the current nursing shortage. The group began with free-flow discussion which yielded more than 40 priority issues for our county. Throughout the process the original list of 40 issues were pared down to the 14 highest priority issues using a feasibility and fundability filter.

3) *VNLP Hosts Ventura County Nursing Summit*

- The VNLP hosted the first Ventura County Nursing Summit in April, 2007, to unveil the *Consensus Report on Ventura County Priority Nursing Issues* and elicit stakeholder and community input to identify strategies to address these priority issues. The Summit engaged a broad group of stakeholders across multiple sectors who reviewed the priority issues and began to dialogue about strategies to address these issues.

4) *Strategies in Response to Regional Priority Issues*

- 212 strategies were originally identified by Nursing Summit participants.
- 64 viable strategies were distilled from the rich raw data generated by the Summit participants
- Various criteria including fundability were applied to the 64 viable strategies from which eight overarching themes emerged:
 1. Pipeline improvements
 2. Recruitment, retention, retraining, re-entry
 3. Management and professional development
 4. Workforce education
 5. Collaboration among existing groups & information sharing
 6. Cross-institutional issues of service and academia
 7. Faculty preparation and compensation
 8. Policy implications