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Educating nurses behind steel bars: Re-imagining the future of clinical learning for BSN and nurse practitioner students

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Nursing education programs in the US have traditionally been preparing nursing students as generalists who function best in acute care settings. Hospitals are closing and the acute care clinical experience has become more difficult to provide for students. At the same time, the applicability of attaining clinical training, primarily in acute settings, is declining as nursing curriculums are being redesigned with a focus on health promotion/disease prevention and community/population health. Community partnerships that provide clinical immersion opportunities for nursing students to apply concepts of this new healthcare paradigm continue to be explored while still offering an acute care experience. There are approximately 2.2 million adults incarcerated in US federal and state prisons and in county jails. Many of these correctional facilities are managing the acute, chronic, and terminal health care needs of inmates on site. Placement of undergrads and NP students in these facilities can develop and enhance the skills needed to provide nursing care across the health care continuum while meeting the goals of the redesigned curriculum. The correctional health team can assist in introducing students to a diverse and unique population of patients whose medical needs range from basic health education to the management of multiple co-morbidities. This presentation will discuss the experience of one urban university in forming community partnerships for nursing student placement with prison healthcare teams to meet the objectives of a community nursing course, expanding it to include NP students, and now for immersions, service learning, and experiential experiences in their redesigned BSN curriculum.

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