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Preparing nursing students in the USA to work in primary care: A national survey

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Over the past few decades the costs of healthcare in the USA have dramatically increased while the population health has declined. Obtaining desired results and decreasing expenditures necessitates fundamental changes in how care is delivered. With the current emphasis on including registered nurses (RNs) on the primary care teams, it is essential that nursing programs, which historically educated students in the acute care settings, make equal effort to prepare students for employment in primary care. This study explored the current state of pre-licensure and RN-to-BSN online education in US regarding the implementation of primary care concepts. A sample of 1,409 schools/colleges from across the US was invited to participate in an online survey. 529 surveys were returned for an overall response rate of 37.5%. Summative content analysis was used to analyze survey data to identify facilitators and barriers to incorporating primary care content in the pre-licensure curricula. Although the majority of programs have implemented some primary care content in their curricula, many found it challenging. Some have demurred from incorporating primary care content altogether. Teaching primary care content in undergraduate nursing programs in the United States is inconsistent. Academic leaders and faculty must collaborate with clinical partners to overcome barriers and to design and expand didactic and clinical learning experiences that emphasize primary care content in the pre-licensure education to prepare future nurses for new, expanded roles in the growing primary care market to meet the populations' healthcare needs in the 21st century.

Biography

Danuta M Wojnar has completed BSN and MScN education at Dalhousie University in Halifax, NS, Canada and PhD in Nursing Science at University of Washington in Seattle, US. Over the past 20 years, she served in various capacities in healthcare and academia disseminated her research through peer reviewed and invited publications and presentations at national and international forums. Currently, she is the Professor and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education at Seattle University College of Nursing, Seattle, WA.

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