

SHSU: Degree Program Addition—Master of Science in Nursing

Upon motion of Regent _____, seconded by Regent _____, it was ordered that:

Sam Houston State University be authorized to offer a degree program and the associated new course additions, leading to the Master of Science with a major in Nursing, housed within the College of Health Science (10 1387) to be implemented upon final approval by the TSUS Board of Regents and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Explanation

The School of Nursing in the College of Health Sciences at Sam Houston State University proposes a Master of Science degree in Nursing with a concentration in Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP). The School of Nursing currently offers a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing. The proposed MSN program will prepare the graduate for state licensure by the Texas Board of Nursing as an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) and national certification by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) or the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Program (AANPCP). The SHSU School of Nursing BSN program is already accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). APRN education programs must be housed within graduate programs that are nationally accredited, and their graduates must be eligible for national certification used for state licensure.

The proposed Master of Science in Nursing degree program is in alignment with the mission and values of SHSU and the School of Nursing. Scholarly and high-quality education will be offered to BSN-prepared nurses seeking to provide advanced medical and nursing care to individuals, families, groups, and communities. The Nurse Practitioner program will respond to the ever-changing community and state level demands for advanced practice nurses. The Nurse Practitioner Program aims to produce graduates dedicated to careers of lifelong learning, scholarship, and excellence in practice.

The concentration offered in the proposed MSN degree is the Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) Concentration. The FNP is prepared to provide primary care delivery to patients and families across the lifespan. The Family Nurse Practitioner test, diagnose, and treat patients. Their scope of practice includes promoting health, preventing disease, and facilitating the management of common acute and chronic illnesses. They document and review patient and family health histories; perform physical examinations; diagnose and treat common and acute health issues; and order and interpret lab tests, x-rays, and other tests. In most states, including Texas, FNP's have prescriptive authority. Students will perform the majority of their clinical experiences in clinics, doctor offices, and other outpatient care facilities such as urgent care agencies.

Graduates of the Master of Science in Nursing program will:

- integrate ethical, legal, cultural, and advanced collaborative competence in promoting health and treating illness/injury for the focused population of concern;
- demonstrate advanced skill in communication and inter-professional relationships while serving as an advocate and providing holistic, safe patient-centered care for the focused population;
- initiate multifaceted leadership behaviors and knowledge in affecting the advancement of clinical practice research and patient outcomes, delivery of cost-effective healthcare, and healthcare policy for the target population;
- critique published peer-reviewed research for application in evidence-based practice;. Synthesize healthcare theory, diagnostic skills, and advanced nursing roles in providing evidence-based care for the focused population;
- contribute to the advancement of the nurse professional and practitioner roles by functioning as a lifelong learner, and serving as a mentor, educator, coach, and leader to colleagues within the healthcare system; and
- exhibit advanced nursing practice knowledge, analytical skills, and clinical expertise in sitting for state licensure by the Texas Board of Nursing and national certification by the appropriate certification body.

Nurse practitioners (NPs) have been granted authorization by the Texas Board of Nursing to practice based on their advanced education and experience. As the landscape of healthcare in the United States continues to evolve, the NP is increasingly being recognized as an essential partner in the provision of primary and acute care services. There are an estimated 110,200 NPs in the US, with a projected employment of an additional 14,300 by 2022. In addition, according to the US Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, NP employment opportunities in Texas are 0.72 times higher (as a percent of the job market) than in the rest of the US. The three US states that have the greatest employment opportunities for NPs are New York, California, and Texas, with only 6,690 NPs in Texas. The national need for NPs is projected to grow by 33.7% between 2012 and 2022. This growth is attributed to the population of baby boomers needing primary and acute healthcare, current focus on health prevention strategies, the inception of the Affordable Care Act, and the impending physician shortage.

As of 2015, there are approximately 65.2 million baby boomers (born between 1946 & 1964) in the US; however, that number increases to 76.4 million when immigrants are included. According to the Stein Institute for Research on Aging at the University of California, San Diego, by 2030, those age 65 and older will increase from 42 million to 70 million.

Along with these population changes and growth, there is a national effort to implement programs focused on health promotion and disease prevention. The National Prevention Strategy was developed by the National Prevention Council, which calls for the Affordable Care Act to address health and well-being at the state and community levels. Two of the NPS's primary goals are to: a) expand preventative primary care services in clinics and communities by improving health access, and b) eliminate health disparities by allowing healthcare providers to teach patients and families in underrepresented community settings. Texas is ranked third in

US as having the fewest primary care physicians for every resident, with Mississippi and Georgia as the top two states, respectively, with the lowest physician-to-resident ratios.

Expanded healthcare coverage represents a step forward in efforts to increase nationwide access to primary healthcare services, but it carries with it an increase in the demand for primary care providers. With a physician shortage of anywhere from 61,700 and 94,700 doctors anticipated over the next two decades, there is an overt increased demand for primary and acute care providers. Increasing the number of NPs in Texas is essential to bridge the gap between the supply of primary and acute care providers and the demands placed on state and governmental regulations. This demand can be met by educating future NPs who have knowledge and expertise in primary care, such as the FNP. The Affordable Care Act has contributed approximately \$230 million for education and training of 1,700 primary care medical residents, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants. Nurse Practitioners provide many of the same healthcare services as physicians and have become recognized as an integral component of the healthcare team in both primary and acute care settings.

In a report commissioned by the College of Health Sciences and Sam Houston State University in 2015, analysts stated the following data regarding the current and future demand for Nurse Practitioners:

According to the Texas Workforce Commission, Texas should see an increase of about 267 Nurse Practitioner jobs per year, representing a 40.50 percent increase from 2012 to 2022. This percentage growth is greater than the expected national growth of 33.70 percent, or about 37,100 more positions total over the same period. Predicted employer demand for Nurse Practitioner appears to exceed the supply of qualified graduates.

This demand was further recognized during a healthcare planning meeting which included nine chief nursing and executive officers of hospitals located in The Woodlands, Texas, and SHSU key SHSU administration. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss healthcare gaps and opportunities in The Woodlands and surrounding areas of the state. The primary need expressed by the group was acute care nurse practitioners, in addition to basic RNs. These hospital administrators also made a commitment to provide physician and nurse preceptors as well as clinical opportunities for potential students attending SHSU.

To help determine SHSU's nursing program focus, a survey was sent out to all currently enrolled SHSU nursing students and all nursing alumni. The target population was approximately 285. From the 63 respondents, 89% indicated that they were somewhat or extremely likely to attend graduate school to earn a master's degree; 33% indicated FNP as their preferred specialty with pediatric nurse practitioner at 21% and nurse anesthetist at 16%; and 41 students (65%) said they were moderately or extremely likely to attend the FNP program, if approved. The responses to the survey led to the decision to move forward with the FNP option. With the growing number of hospitals in Montgomery County, a growing number of geriatric patients, and with a large prison population in Walker County, the job market will be high and drive the demand for NPs.

The FNP program will produce graduates prepared in primary care that can help meet the high rural demand for primary caregivers and the geographical locations of SHSU in east Texas. According to 2016 population estimates, there are 784,363 people in the two counties that host SHSU campuses (Walker and Montgomery) and the six surrounding counties (Trinity, Grimes, Houston, Madison, San Jacinto and Waller). The population estimate is conservative, as Conroe, TX was recognized in July 2017 as the fastest growing city in the United States. With the recent closure of hospitals in Houston and Trinity counties, residents in the counties surrounding SHSU will be forced to seek healthcare in The Woodlands, Conroe, Huntsville, Palestine, and Lufkin. Specialty care access requires travel to Smith or Montgomery County or one of the facilities in the Texas Medical Center. Most of the current SHSU students and alumni come from Huntsville and the surrounding areas. Thus, it is expected that these students would return to their hometowns following graduation to offer healthcare.

The student demand for nurse practitioners in Huntsville, and surroundings areas, is unique because of potential job opportunities in the Huntsville units of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. According to Correctional Managed Care (2015), NPs provide population-focused care in collaboration with a unit physician. The correctional facility NPs' responsibilities include teaching health promotion and illness prevention strategies; and diagnosing, treating and evaluating patients with chronic, infectious, and acute illnesses and injuries. The correctional facility opportunities can be attractive to new graduates due to the competitive governmental salary (\$80 to \$100K annually), recruitment incentive, and potential for student loan repayments.

The home healthcare agencies in the Huntsville area and surrounding counties are flourishing businesses as a result of the rural settings, demographics of the population, and only one hospital serving these areas. There are at least seven agencies in Huntsville alone that provide home health and hospice care to the community. Opportunities are growing for home health risk assessments, skilled and home care transitions care, and home care coordinators. These home healthcare practitioner and management positions require a MSN and certification as a NP.

However, the largest demand for NPs will come from the burgeoning medical center in The Woodlands, Montgomery County, and surroundings areas, such as Conroe Regional Medical Center. Currently there are six major hospitals in The Woodlands area, along with specialty facilities, such as Nexus Specialty Hospital.

Furthermore, an additional significant source of nurse practitioner employment will originate from the ExxonMobil Houston Campus, opened in 2015. This campus is located on 385 acres in Spring, Texas, adjacent to The Woodlands, and 25 miles from Houston, Texas. The campus was designed to house 10,000 employees.

The impact of the MSN Program to the community will be positive in that the Nurse Practitioner Program will provide a nursing program that is geographically close to many RNs residing in the rural areas along the I-45 corridor, as well as those in The Woodlands. Healthcare facilities from north of Houston to south of Dallas, and east of Huntsville, will benefit from the SHSU graduates of this program providing advanced healthcare by NPs to the focused populations. Graduates of the BSN Program at SHSU have gained employment in the healthcare sites where

they successfully conducted their clinical rotations. The sites with the greatest opportunities for new nursing graduates are in the rural and urban areas of the clinical sites that have been identified in the proposed MSN Program. SHSU has established MOUs and Articulation Agreements with healthcare facilities in the targeted areas of the MSN program that will significantly enhance the employment opportunities for the graduates. In addition, the Texas healthcare workforce will strengthen the healthcare deserts in rural areas as well as the urban areas of the state.

To support this new degree program, SHSU is requesting to add the following new courses:

NURS 5111	Capstone Project Planning
NURS 5216	Capstone Project Delivery
NURS 5301	Role Transition and Theory
NURS 5302	Clinical Research and EBP
NURS 5303	Advanced Pharmacotherapeutics
NURS 5304	Advanced Pathophysiology
NURS 5305	Adv Hlth Assess-Diag Reasoning
NURS 5313	Family Nurse Pract-FNP I
NURS 5314	Family Nurse Pract-FNP II
NURS 5315	Family Nurse Pract-FNP III
NURS 5317	FNP Practicum