



BUILDING CAPACITY TO INCREASE RN WORKFORCE IN MARYLAND: P-TECH NURSING PATHWAY

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The demand for registered nurses (RN) continues and nurse educators are now exploring ways to attract high school students to consider nursing as a promising career. Developing and promoting high school students' interest in nursing expands our ability to meet the needs of the RN workforce nationwide as well as for RN workforce needs in the state of Maryland. Therefore, broadening the nursing pipeline to include high school students in Baltimore City means there would be more RNs prepared to care for Maryland residents. This is critical because nurses tend to practice in the state where they complete their nursing education (Health Resources and Services Administration, 2017). In addition to increasing the number of RNs, we must also respond to the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) goal of 80% of the nurses at the bedside holding a bachelor's of science in nursing (BSN) degree by 2020 (IOM, 2011). The University of Maryland School of Nursing (UMSON) developed a novel career pathway, within the Pathways in Technology Early College High (P-TECH) program, at Paul Laurence Dunbar High School. P-TECH students wishing to pursue a career in nursing begin taking prerequisite courses at Baltimore City Community College (BCCC) the summer of their freshman year. Within six years from beginning high school, P-TECH nursing students will graduate with the associate degree in nursing (ADN). With the addition of the UMSON pathway, ADN graduates matriculate into the UMSON Bachelors of Science in Nursing (BSN) program under the umbrella of the dual admission agreement. This agreement ensures guaranteed admission to UMSON provided admission requirements are met. This process provides students with a seamless pathway towards attaining their BSN.

Mentoring, academic support, proactive advisement, learning about nurses' various roles, and receiving financial support, are all components within the program. Collectively these features will serve to improve career options and eventually employment prospects for high school students living in Baltimore City.

This presentation offers an overview of the P-TECH model, a public-private workforce partnership. The three-pronged approach to enlightening the P-TECH students on three separate health care career options (nursing, physical therapy technician, and respiratory therapy technician) within the P-TECH program at Dunbar Framework is explained: (1) Freshmen Year-Year of Discovery, (2) Sophomore Year-Building Student Capacity, and (3) Junior Year-Preparing for the Workforce/College. The nursing career pathway scope and sequence is illustrated. Informational flyers are examined and the P-TECH nursing website is highlighted. Finally, mentoring, advisement, and career exposure activities are described. Less than one year since inception, the Nurse Support Program II grant aims to support P-TECH Dunbar High School students to successfully complete BCCC's ADN program within four-six years of matriculation to the P-TECH program and complete the UMSON RN-BSN program within three years of completing their ADN program. The P-TECH nursing pathway fosters career entry into the nursing profession at the ADN level and promotes lifelong learning as RNs complete and earn the BSN credential.