



# MARYLAND ACTION COALITION

*Creating a Healthier Maryland*

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## FUTURE OF NURSING™ CAMPAIGN FOR ACTION

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### **A Collaborative Performance** Audra Houser, MSN, FNP-BC, CNRP

#### **Abstract**

##### *Background*

Frostburg State University (FSU) has implemented an innovative family and psychiatric and mental health nurse practitioner (NP) program by adding NPs to rural communities, helping to fill the gap of the health care shortage. Both NP concentrations are modeled in a blended format; the psychiatric and mental health concentration is the only one in the University System of Maryland to offer a master's degree level in a blended option. As the program was developed, the importance of simulated patients in learning was embraced. Research has demonstrated that simulation improves knowledge, skill performance, critical thinking, and satisfaction. In health care simulation, actors may be hired to perform in an educational activity; however, as standardized patients, they are doing something different from actors. They are part of an educational team, focused on fulfilling the learning objectives of a simulation activity in service to learners. The National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties Simulation Guidelines and Best Practices for Nurse Practitioner Programs guide this initiative, as they provided guidance that incorporates all aspects of this project.

##### *Initiative*

The implementation of the NP blended program is funded by the Maryland Higher Education Commission Nurse Support Program II. The funding has been used to create the family and psychiatric and mental health concentration curriculum, to hire faculty to explore the collaboration, and to improve the knowledge of nursing and theater faculty in the development of this initiative.

##### *Outcomes*

A collaboration between the Departments of Nursing and Theatre was developed. The collaboration of the programs has produced a theater class named THEA 335: Acting in Simulation. The theater students are simulated patients for five courses in the NP curriculum. The collaborative experience has been used face-to-face, in simulation through online synchronous sessions, and to assist in training for telehealth visits. This also fulfills the mission and strategies of FSU with experiential learning and strategic goals of increasing high-impact learning practices.

The anticipated outcomes and results over the project period is a health care theater class that is taught every spring semester to continuously supply the nurse practitioner program with simulated patients throughout their program. The students then support the nursing department in five courses throughout the curriculum as their simulation patients. This program supports every NP student in the program. The program provides an opportunity for debriefing, feedback, and student self and peer evaluation.