



# MARYLAND ACTION COALITION

*Creating a Healthier Maryland*

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## FUTURE OF NURSING™ CAMPAIGN FOR ACTION

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### **Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Preceptor Program**

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### **Abstract**

#### *Background*

Preceptors are essential in the successful orientation, integration, and socialization of students and novice clinicians into advanced practice nursing roles. The preceptor is expected to teach and mentor the student or new employee, but the preparation received is often limited. The health care workforce shortage is a national problem, and Maryland is facing the greatest shortage in its history. Maryland has seen a vacancy rate of health care workers rise from 7% to 12% in less than 10 years. It is projected the nursing deficit will be greater than 10,000 by 2025. This program is created to fill the need for standardized training for Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) preceptors.

#### *Objective*

The primary goal of the program is to increase the number and quality of prepared APRN preceptors. A secondary goal is to increase the capacity of nursing education to meet the demands for APRNs in the state of Maryland.

#### *Methods*

A standardized preceptor program was developed consisting of seven modules and an in-person simulation. The modules included content pertaining to roles, needs assessments, learning styles, teaching and evaluation strategies, critical thinking, managing learning experiences, communication, conflict resolution, and legal considerations. Recruitment was accomplished through social media advertisements, contact with nursing officers and educators of hospitals in Maryland, and mailing of posters. The program was unexpectedly impacted by COVID-19, requiring the in-person simulation to be delivered using an online format. Evaluation of the program was performed via surveys.

#### *Results*

Since March 2017, 454 APRNs have completed the program, and evaluation data for every participant was collected. Evaluation of the surveys revealed three categories of data: achievement of the program objectives, contribution to learning, and knowledge gained. A Likert

scale was used for participants to describe the amount with which the APRN Preceptor Program met its objectives: 84.4% of participants strongly agreed that the program met its objectives, 15.3% of participants agreed, 0.3% of participants neither agreed nor disagreed, and no participants disagreed or strongly disagreed. Participants were asked what aspect of the program contributed most to their learning: 63.2% chose the simulation, 25% stated the instructor's feedback and knowledge, 4.7% described the ladder of inference and advocacy inquiry framework, and 7.1% chose the online modules. Next, the participants were asked to describe how the knowledge gained will aid their practice: 57.7% described that the knowledge gained will improve their preceptor skills, 39% stated it will improve their communication skills at home and at work, and 3.3% stated that the knowledge will help them to manage their personal bias. An identified limitation was the amount of time available to run the simulation. Clinicians have limited time available, which limits the length of simulation time that can be provided. Also, the transition of the program to an online format alongside a global pandemic reduced the capacity of participants during the 2019-2020 year. However, the nature of an online program aids in sustainability and limits a prior barrier of geography.