



# MARYLAND ACTION COALITION

*Creating a Healthier Maryland*

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## FUTURE OF NURSING™ CAMPAIGN FOR ACTION

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### **Continuing to Increase Admissions During a Pandemic: Alternative Approaches Admitting, Orienting, and Introducing Nursing Students into the Profession**

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#### **Abstract**

When the pandemic started in March 2020, Harford Community College (HCC) nursing students were halfway through the semester and the program quickly switched to remote/online learning for students already in the program. The faculty and current nursing students adapted to remote learning, online testing, and virtual simulation.

The big new challenge for fall 2020: How to orient and socialize 72 new nursing students into the profession when there is no patient contact and limited opportunity to learn and practice nursing skills, the college is operating in a remote environment, and all classes are delivered online and remote.

The first steps to meeting this new challenge was addressed by our Nursing Student Success and Retention Specialist who developed a virtual Nursing Student Success Workshop to meet the same goals as the in-person workshop. All topics covered in the in-person workshop were redesigned for a virtual setting. Students received a detailed email beforehand explaining the things they would need to do to prepare for the virtual workshop. Key elements of the workshop included: a welcome/ice breaker; a program overview; a review of the Nursing Student Handbook; instructions related to COVID-19 lab practices as well as a virtual building tour with maps, building floor plans, and a video; an introduction to the Student Nursing Association (SNA); a PowerPoint presentation discussing “Success Strategies in Nursing School;” an overview of the Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) resources; and finished up with a Q&A/wrap-up session attended by faculty where questions that were posted throughout the workshop as well as impromptu questions were answered.

Once students engaged with an intensive orientation to the nursing program, the next steps to meeting the challenge was addressed by our first semester faculty teaching in the Fundamentals of Nursing course who developed a number of strategies to help students socialize into the nursing program in a remote environment. The Blackboard course included a welcome page, video tour of the Blackboard course site, and escape room to orient to the site. The discussion board to get to know classmates and faculty included posting of biographical information and photos. The clinical simulation lab section on the Blackboard course menu included bios of staff and a video tour of the lab. Faculty held synchronous classes for theory, lab, and clinical components of the course. Small group assignments were included. Virtual meetings were held

with individual and groups of students. Weekly announcements were made via Blackboard for course highlights and upcoming course and college events. Students were offered another opportunity to learn about and join SNA. Video meetings were scheduled for Q&A pre-exam sessions and small group work on other topics, such as nursing care plans. Net tutor and links to other HCC resources were embedded in the course. In the context of all of these strategies, faculty were very intentional that virtual simulations selected and learning activities developed were clearly mapped to learning outcomes.

Current updates include an 84.7% retention rate for this cohort, 4.7% higher than our stated goal, and reports of some skills demonstrated better than in prior groups.