

ONE HUNDREDTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 167

Introduced by Flood, 19;

PURPOSE: To evaluate the nature and scope of state resources that should be devoted to the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Nursing, the state's only comprehensive PhD-granting institution for nurses, with primary emphasis placed on ensuring the long-term sustainability of a new Northern Nebraska Division of the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Nursing.

Several recent studies have demonstrated an ongoing and critical shortage of Registered Nurses (RNs) since 1998 in the United States and particularly in rural states like Nebraska. Projections indicate that the national demand for RNs will exceed the available supply by twenty percent in 2020, and in many rural areas of Nebraska the projected demand will exceed the supply by twenty to thirty percent by 2020. In the last year, more than twenty states have developed significant policy and funding responses to address the critical and unique RN and faculty workforce needs of their respective states. The feasibility study conducted by the University of Nebraska Medical Center in 2006 illustrates that the shortage of RNs, especially those with baccalaureate and master's degrees, is particularly acute in the northeast region of the state.

This RN shortage endangers quality of care and places

patients at increased risk for illness and death. In fact, studies indicate that many of the improved patient outcomes are specifically correlated to baccalaureate-prepared RNs providing direct patient care. The need for these baccalaureate-prepared nurses will only increase in the future in order to meet the demands of patients and the increasingly complex health care system – a system requiring clinically relevant research that builds the science for nursing practice.

The ability to ensure adequate numbers of RNs with baccalaureate and master's degrees is dependent upon having adequate numbers of doctoral-prepared nursing faculty. At this time, however, the nation is experiencing the most serious shortage of doctoral-prepared nursing faculty ever, with a diminishing pipeline of doctoral enrollees and graduates. This is particularly true in rural states like Nebraska. Yet experience has demonstrated that the economic vitality of a community's hospital and health care resources is essential to the economic growth of a region, especially in those rural communities where each job in the health care sector has been shown to generate additional jobs and revenue in other sectors of the rural economy.

At this time, there are no public institutions in the northeast region of the State of Nebraska that produce baccalaureate and higher-degreed RNs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, FIRST SESSION:

1. That the Appropriations Committee of the Legislature shall be designated to conduct an interim study to carry out the purposes of this resolution.

2. That the committee shall upon the conclusion of its study make a report of its findings, together with its recommendations, to the Legislative Council or Legislature.