
Integrating the Institute of Medicine *Future of Nursing* Report into the American Association of Neuroscience Nurses Strategic Plan

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Introduction

The release of the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) report *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health* in October 2010 makes this an unprecedented time in health care and nursing (IOM, 2010a). The political, economic, and social drivers of change include the focus on healthcare reform as well as public demand for access to quality care and practice, and changes to care. There is also mounting evidence in respected reports about anticipated changes in nursing practice, education, recognition, and other aspects of the profession.

These forces have coalesced, opening a rare opportunity for the estimated 3 million registered nurses in the United States. There is a great incentive for nurses to act urgently because this window will close as soon as the focus shifts to other pressing matters. Change is inevitable, health care is quickly evolving and the ultimate outcome of the present healthcare reform is unknown. In order to prepare neuroscience nurses to lead change and advance health for all Americans, the American Association of Neuroscience Nurses (AANN) board of directors (BOD) passed a motion in July 2011 to adopt the following four key messages of the IOM *Future of Nursing* call to action and tie them to the AANN strategic plan.

IOM *FUTURE OF NURSING* REPORT: FOUR KEY MESSAGES

1. Nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training.
2. Nurses should achieve higher levels of education and training through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression.
3. Nurses should be full partners, with physicians and other healthcare professionals, in redesigning U.S. healthcare.
4. Effective workforce planning and policy making require better data collection and an improved information infrastructure.

Purpose

As the leading authority in neuroscience nursing, the AANN BOD recognized that they were one of the organizations that needed to take initiative on the future of nursing. The intent of this white paper is to provide a blueprint for change by tying the four key messages of the IOM *Future of Nursing* report to the AANN strategic plan to assist nurses in initiating change in the neurosciences. Because of the changing roles and arenas in which neuroscience nurses practice, the scope of this paper is by design broad and inclusive.

IOM Report: Key Message 1

The first key message of the IOM *Future of Nursing* report is that nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training (IOM, 2010a). Under this key message, there are two important subcategories. The first speaks to scope of practice and the second pertains to nurse residency programs.

Subcategory 1: Scope of Practice

Discussion

Neuroscience nurses must be able to practice to the full extent of their education and training regardless of whether they are working as a staff nurse at the bedside or as an advanced practice nurse in the community. For this reason, the AANN strategic plan called for and commenced a task force to update its 2002 scope and standards document. There is a need to integrate the scope of practice for advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) with those of bedside nurses to support excellence in the neurosciences. The current revision will incorporate these necessary changes.

AANN Recommendations

- Support regular scope and standards updates.
- Collaborate with the American Nurses Association (ANA) on the scope and standards document.
- Disseminate the revised scope and standards document to key stakeholders.

Subcategory 2: Transition-to-Practice (Nurse Residency) Programs

Discussion

At this time, there is a need to implement multilevel residency programs to manage entrance into neuroscience nursing (e.g., student to practitioner) and during transitions to positions of greater oversight (e.g., practitioner to coordinator, coordinator to director).

AANN Recommendations

- Support transition-to-practice graduate nurse residency programs.
- Develop a competency-based transition-to-practice (nurse residency) program for entry into the neuroscience nursing subspecialty.
- Support and facilitate the implementation of multilevel nurse residency programs across the continuum of care.
- Prepare an AANN position statement on competency-based transition-to-practice (nurse residency) programs for neuroscience.
- Disseminate the AANN position statement to key stakeholders.

IOM Report: Key Message 2

Discussion

The second key message of the IOM *Future of Nursing* report is that nurses should achieve higher levels of education and training through an improved educational system that promotes seamless academic progression (IOM, 2010a). As a continuing education provider, AANN promotes the education of neuroscience nurses. It is also important that AANN consider supporting alternatives including degree and non-degree programs, fellowships, and institutes that further the education and support lifelong learning of neuroscience nurses. The second key message fits well with two of the objectives in the AANN strategic plan: (1) to achieve industry-wide reputability as a producer of quality education products and (2) to explore the global market to provide education in neuroscience nursing.

AANN Recommendations

- Foster a culture of lifelong learning (IOM, 2010b).

- Support the use of traditional educational methodologies (e.g., face to face, online, distance learning, simulation).
- Create entrepreneurial professional development education that enables neuroscience nurses to consider starting businesses intended to improve healthcare outcomes.
- Develop a comprehensive core of clinical performance competencies.
- Continue to identify research-based best practices and disseminate evidence of associated successes through AANN's clinical practice guidelines (CPGs).
- Disseminate innovative evidence-based care models.
- Continue to explore opportunities for AANN to introduce new products and services consistent with these recommendations.

IOM Report: Key Message 3

Discussion

The third key message of the IOM *Future of Nursing* report calls for nurses to partner with physicians and other healthcare professionals in the redesign of U.S. healthcare (IOM, 2010a). To achieve this goal, a shift in how nurses view their responsibility to patients and relationships with other work team members is required. In addition, nurses must obtain the necessary educational preparation to practice in this new healthcare model. The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified the need for healthcare professionals to work collaboratively as members of a healthcare team as being essential for the delivery of effective healthcare (WHO, 2010). Neuroscience nurses, given the nature of their patients' illnesses, routinely care for patients concurrently with interdisciplinary teams (e.g., physical therapy).

Advanced educational preparation and skill upgrades are necessary to practice in this healthcare model. Neuroscience nurses must possess a mix of skill sets that will enable them to perform as team members, team leaders, and patient advocates. Elevating skill levels enhances confidence and provides the knowledge integral to being part of redesigning neuroscience health care.

Although the shared perception that most nurses lack general and specific leadership competencies has been identified, the development of leadership skills is a priority to help nurses overcome this obstacle. Mastery of these core competencies is multifaceted, because leadership skills (e.g., effective written and oral communication, delegation) are learned and honed over time. Nursing educators tasked with critically evaluating curricula must devise relevant methods for students to develop and utilize leadership skills during their program of study. The need for continued learning and self-development activities, which emphasize leadership skills, extends to practicing nurses as well. The question is how to best provide nurses with these activities and have them recognize their importance.

Nursing organizations such as the AANN have the opportunity to provide mentorship programs, leadership development, and leadership opportunities for all members. With its finger on the pulse of neuroscience nursing, AANN is a valued repository for those seeking expertise and opinions on neuroscience healthcare issues. In order to ensure success and renew vitality, the association should continue to provide leadership development and opportunities for all members.

Members may access leadership development opportunities in AANN through a variety of venues. Constituent chapters are a primary networking vehicle for members to engage in organizational activities at the local level. Chapter presidents are members of a Chapter Council that is facilitated by a designated member of the AANN BOD. Chapter presidents may seek individual support, post questions to a designated Listserv and participate in regularly scheduled conference calls with fellow chapter representatives and the BOD facilitator.

Members aspiring to be leaders may run for elected office (e.g., secretary, treasurer, director-at-large) or join a task force (e.g., local stroke awareness screening). Active participation in chapter activities may help members move progressively toward involvement on a national level. AANN members can answer the Call for Volunteers to serve on a committee (e.g., as a conference planner). Engagement in group activities exposes members to an

array of ideas, perspectives, and trends encouraging them to share feedback that shapes positive project outcomes.

As the expert resource in neuroscience nursing, AANN must remain at the forefront of the field by offering career development initiatives such as structured mentorship programs for neuroscience nurses. Mentorship in neuroscience nursing is essential to the growth and sustainability of the specialty. Formalized mentoring arrangements foster the transfer of leadership knowledge and skills through role modeling and role rehearsal, which is helpful to new initiates.

As health care becomes increasingly complex, an expectation of nursing is that the profession will provide its practitioners with a range of skills from the bedside to boardroom. Clearly, the need to possess effective leadership skills has never been more crucial. As such, several critical issues have prompted questions that merit further consideration.

Related Questions

- What preparation will provide nurses with the requisite leadership competencies necessary to function in the increasingly complex healthcare system?
- How can the fundamental concept of leadership be defined and contextualized so that it applies across the spectrum from bedside to boardroom?
- What is the meaning of the phrase “nurses as full partners” and how is the definition operationalized?

Providing answers to these questions will be a challenging and complex pursuit that requires out-of-the-box thinking and a collaborative approach.

AANN Recommendations

- Create multilevel leadership programs that provide the skill sets nurses need in order to respond to changes in quality, access, and value of health care.

- Develop an AANN mentorship program with defined goals and organizational support to assist neuroscience nurses in mapping their professional growth and development and career trajectory.
- Explore the possibility of engaging in future joint endeavors with strategic partners.
- Solicit input from strategic partners (e.g., chief executive officers, government and corporate entities, healthcare systems, and professional societies) to design fellowship programs.

IOM Report: Key Message 4

Discussion

The fourth key message of the IOM *Future of Nursing* report is for effective planning and policy making, which requires better data collection and improved information infrastructure (IOMa). Under this fourth key message, there are two important subcategories: the first speaks to effective planning and the second to policy making.

Subcategory 1: Effective planning

In order to transform U.S. healthcare delivery effectively, current and future data regarding the healthcare workforce must be accurately collected and analyzed. Having workforce capacity data will allow for the development of workforce model projections that will be instrumental to the transformation of nursing practice and education (IOM, 2010a, p. 256).

AANN Recommendations

- Invest in information systems and technology.
- Conduct thoughtful data collection and data mining for data-driven decision making.
- Develop partnerships and coalitions at the national level to more effectively plan for the subspecialty of neuroscience nursing.
- Engage the membership in the planning and implementation processes.
- Review and update the organizational strategic plan in light of landmark reports.

- Engage in discussions with a variety of stakeholders regarding effective planning.

Subcategory 2: Policy Making

President Barack Obama signed into law the Patient Protection and Affordable Healthcare Act (PPACA) on March 23, 2010. This law is the principal part of healthcare reform of the private and public health insurance programs. It increases insurance coverage for preexisting conditions and aims to expand access to insurance for more than 30 million Americans.

According to an April 2010 memorandum from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the estimated impact of the PPACA on total national health expenditures in the United States during 2010–2019 is an approximate increase of 0.9%. Moreover, “the additional demand for health services could be difficult to meet initially with existing health provider resources and could lead to price increases, cost-shifting, and/or changes in providers’ willingness to treat patients with low-reimbursement health coverage” (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Office of the Actuary, 2010, p. 21). The AANN strategic plan has identified the goal to “influence the advancement of the field of neurosciences.” and the BOD recognizes the need to engage in discussions with multiple stakeholders to monitor health policy issues and align with other organizations to obtain the necessary data needed during this pivotal time.

AANN Recommendations

- Establish relationships with mission-similar organizations and identify the primary purpose of these relationships.
- Establish the organizational role in advocacy.
- Recognize and prioritize needs and engage in select political actions.
- Understand how health policy and related changes affect the organization (governances and membership).
- Create a strategic communication plan in order to influence decision makers.
- Develop partnerships and coalitions at the national level to gain influence for the neuroscience nursing subspecialty.

- Monitor healthcare policies and issues related to healthcare reform.
- Assess the actual or potential transformative effect of policies on neuroscience nursing practice and the organization overall.

In response to the IOM *Future of Nursing* report, the AANN BOD initiated a blueprint for strategic change at a July 2010 board meeting. During this time, the BOD approved the AANN Advocacy Statement, appointed a standing advocacy committee, and approved the criteria for prioritizing policy and advocacy opportunities from American Stroke Association (ASA) and American Heart Association (AHA) to be the AANN criteria. The charge to the advocacy committee is to develop policies, procedures, and criteria for the organizational role in advocacy.

The development of this formal process is a precursor to establishing partnerships and coalitions at the national level. It will generate opportunities for our organization and members to invest in information systems and technology for data collection and data mining. This, in turn, will permit effective workforce planning for the neuroscience population. Additionally, increased partnerships will improve our ability to monitor the impact on health policy at the BOD and membership levels to influence decision makers. AANN is proud of its current alliances and partnerships, which include the following:

AANN Alliances and Partnerships

- Affiliate member of the American Nurses Association (ANA)
- American Heart Association/American Stroke Association (AHA/ASA)
- Canadian Association of Neuroscience Nurses (CANN)
- European Association for Neuroscience Nurses (EANN)
- Neuroscience Nurses Foundation (NNF)
- World Federation of Neuroscience Nurses (WFNN)
- World Parkinson Congress (WPC)

Conclusion

As the leading authority in neuroscience nursing, the BOD recognized that AANN was one of the professional organizations that needed to take initiative on the future of nursing. This white paper provides a blueprint for change by tying the four key messages in the IOM *Future of Nursing* report to the organizational strategic plan informing nurses about the need to initiate change in the neurosciences. Because of the changing roles and arenas in which neuroscience nurses practice, the scope of this paper is by design broad and inclusive. In the end it is up to each of us to carry this forward and initiate change in the neurosciences.

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