



NCSBN
Leading Regulatory Excellence

State of the World's Nursing Report: Recommendations & Their Relevance to the COVID-19 Pandemic Video Transcript

©2020 National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc.

More info: <https://www.ncsbn.org/14585.htm>

Presenter

David C. Benton, RGN, PhD, FFNF, FRCN, FAAN, CEO, NCSBN

The State of the World's Nursing report is the most important nursing document ever published by the World Health Organization and it has been launched in the middle of a global pandemic. While the pandemic is not the main focus of this report, each and every one of the recommendations have relevance to the challenges being faced.

As I consider the recommendations, I will highlight how nursing and nurse regulators can and are responding to the enormous challenges we face. I will offer brief comments on each of the recommendations and how NCSBN is learning from and responding with our partner boards of nursing and the wider nursing community in the issues we are facing during the crisis.

The pandemic has exacerbated some shortages as nurses have fallen ill or have had to self isolate, some gaps in absolute numbers and distribution of nurses have been found. This provides important metrics to consider for future investment needs. These shortages have offered new insights into the need for better workforce planning such as more detail on the numbers of nurses in training, their likely precise completion date on their expected date of entry to the profession.

It has also resulted in demands for detailed age-related information on those that have inactive licenses either due to a career break or through retirement. Regulators have been able to provide this information and have worked diligently with nurse leadership in education, service, and accreditation to propose solutions to protect the supply chain of new nurses, and to return inactive nurses to practice.

Data has been at a premium during the COVID-19 crisis and the work that the profession has done in assembling data for submission to the State of the World's Nursing and Midwifery reports has been a great asset. Regulators have been asked to come to the table with data to enable jurisdictions to take informed decisions about the policy changes needed to respond to the emerging challenges as cases peak and services are required.

Furthermore, some regulatory boards have been able to maintain their licensing and other functions totally remotely due to the features of our Optimal Regulatory Board System, the ORBS platform. This has maintained services to the profession and simultaneously supported social distancing guidelines.

NCSBN has made good progress in introducing and implementing the Nurse Licensure Compact. Using a universal set of licensure requirements, nurses with an unencumbered license in one jurisdiction can work through a privilege to practice in other jurisdictions. This has increased the ability to respond to needs and there has been an increase in the use of telehealth provision during the crisis.

Patients can protect themselves and others by getting needed treatment by a telehealth consultation rather than having to visit a provider in person. However, with regards to wider mobility, some population data has suggested that global mobility is not a solution to workforce shortages at this time due to the risks that moving a person from one country to another can bring in COVID-19 spread.

It is unclear whether the shift to using more telehealth provision during the crisis will be maintained in the longer term and this is perhaps one of the areas where the longer-term impacts on how a more primary care prevention-oriented and wellness-driven model can be embedded to provide universal health coverage in a more efficient and effective manner.

This would clearly have implications for the preparation of new providers and supporting the continuing competence of existing staff. Nurse leaders have stepped up to the plate during this period reaching out to peers to quickly find agreed solutions that can then be disseminated through multiple channels. Nurses have regularly featured in the media and have been proactive in bringing solutions to local, state, and national government.

In particular, regulators have played a central role in offering accurate data, evidence, and suggestions for legislative change and many of these changes provide solutions that should be sustained in the longer term. There has been for a long time overwhelming evidence that nurses need to be enabled to work to their full scope of practice. Regulators and professional associations have brought this evidence to the attention of government as a solution to increase capacity and access to needed quality services.

The solution also reduce bureaucracy and costs as well improving efficiency and effectiveness of service provision. We are pleased to see barriers to restrictions on scope of practice being removed and hope that this new way of working becomes the norm. The crisis has also raised questions as to how the entire continuum of nursing care from support worker to advanced practice practitioner needs to be differentiated, organized, educated and delivered.

This is a challenge we need to address particularly with changing demographics and disease profiles. Perhaps the biggest manifestation of the support for decent work has been concerns over the lack of personal protective equipment and other essential provisions. Nurses on the frontline are acutely aware that patient safety, as well as personal safety and capacity to offer needed services can be compromised through the lack of much-needed supplies while still colleagues in Italy and elsewhere are being confronted with major ethical dilemmas in terms of who gets treatment.

This coupled with the short and long term psychological impact on the nurse kind of increase workload related stress and raises issues as to the adequacy of current ethical and conduct guidance. While the State of the World's Nursing Report has not highlighted this specific problem that many nurses face during the pandemic, the following issue should not be lost.

Many nurses are women and have additional caring responsibilities either for children or elderly parents. Nurses and indeed other health workers, in addition to all the work pressures, must juggle finding emergency childcare alongside the worries of getting infected and taking the infection back home. With such high levels of women in the nursing workforce, policies that recognize and address the issue also need to be considered when developing response solutions and longer-term plans.

NCSBN has been calling for the modernization of the regulatory model for a number of years and has already taken bold steps in highlighting a path forward through a series of publications such as the regulation 2030 acting in the public interest and most recently a global profile of nursing regulation, education, and practice.

We have also made great progress through the development of technologies to support collaboration of regulators across jurisdictions and introduced agreements that facilitate the delivery of modern interventions at a distance but it must not stop there. The various emergency measures that have been taken are a rich source of low-hanging fruit that need to be harvested and consolidated into permanent legislative change once the current crisis is over.

NCSBN in its regulation 2030 report identified collaboration as one of the four focusing concepts needed to bring about a new regulatory model fit for today's complex global digital age. This crisis has reinforced our belief that collaboration is the way forward. Collaboration builds trust and respect, it increases efficiency and effectiveness of reach and offers a means to ensure that nursing plays its full role in influencing the future design of health and social care systems where nurses play an equal and respected part in modern collaborative teams.

This is only an initial assessment of lessons we are learning in response to COVID-19. The State of the World's Nursing report must be seen as a launching platform for increased visibility, contribution, and impact. As nurses, we all have a role to play. So in the middle of this challenging time, capture your learning and use it to build better global health in the years ahead.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me. It is, after all, through working together that we will create the future that we desire: a healthier world for all.