

**Texas Statewide Health Coordinating Council
Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) Advisory Committee
Minutes of Meeting Held Wednesday, October 13, 2021
10:00 a.m.**

**Location: Department of State Health Services, 1100 West 49th Street, Austin,
Texas, 78756, Room K-100**

Members Attending

Angel Angco-Barrera, MBA, BSN, RN
Diana Dolan, PhD, CNML, RN
April Ernst, MSN, RN, CNE
Sheila Fata, MBA, BSN
Karen Kendrick, MSN, RN, CPHQ
Fu-An Lin, PhD
Lula Pelayo, PhD, RN, FAAN
Cora Rabe, DNP, CRNA
Linda Rounds, PhD, RN, FNP, FAANP, FAAN
Susan Ruppert, PhD, APRN, FNP-C, ANP-BC, FNAP, FCCM, FAANP, FAAN
Renee Schumann, PhD, RN, CNE
Lisa Taylor, PhD, RN, CNS, FNP
Katherine Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN
Remy Tolentino, MSN, RN, NEA-BC
Grace Werckle, BSN, RN
Sally Harper Williams
Linda H. Yoder, PhD, MBA, RN, AOCN, FAAN
Cindy Zolnierrek, PhD, RN

Members Absent

Pamela Burns, LVN (Unexcused)
Cheryl L. Johnson, RN, MSN, CDP, CADDCT (Excused)

Public Present

Michelle Stemley
Genice Harris
Michelle Bentzien-Purrington

Staff Present

Cate Campbell, MPH
Kayla Davis, MS
Pam Lauer, MPH

1. Welcome and Introductions	Cindy Zolnierrek called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m., and welcomed the committee members, staff, and guests present, who introduced themselves. Dr. Zolnierrek announced that the meeting would
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	be recorded as required by the Administrative Procedures Act and the Open Meetings Act, and that members should state their name for the record when making motions.
2. Establish Quorum and Approval of Excused Absences	<p>With 18 out of 20 members present, a quorum was established.</p> <p>Cheryl L. Johnson requested an excused absence.</p> <p>Motion to approve excused absences made by Angel Angco-Barrera and seconded by Karen Kendrick. The motion carried.</p>
3. Review of July 14, 2021 Agenda	The agenda was not reordered.
4A. Approval of Minutes from the March 3, 2021 Meeting	<p>No revisions were requested for the July 14, 2021 meeting minutes.</p> <p>Motion to approve minutes made by Kathy Thomas and seconded by Sheila Fata. The motion carried.</p>
4B. Biennial Report to the Statewide Health Coordinating Council	<p>Pam Lauer presented the Biennial Report to the Statewide Health Coordinating Council. No revisions were requested for the Biennial Report to the Statewide Health Coordinating Council.</p> <p>Motion to approve report made by Lula Pelayo and seconded by Linda Rounds. The motion carried.</p>
4C. September 2021 – August 2023 Operations Plan	<p>Pam Lauer presented the September 2021 – August 2023 Operations Plan. No discussion or revisions.</p> <p>Motion to approve the plan made by Remy Tolentino and seconded by Sheila Fata. The motion carried.</p>
4D. Collecting Data on COVID and Nurses	<p>The committee had a brief discussion about COVID data collection. Some points brought forth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There’s a need to determine what the impact of COVID has been on the nursing shortage. • Nursing education has been faced with different ways to get clinical hours for students and there is a need to assess what that means for nurses being prepared for the workforce. Do they have enough clinical skills and their application to enter the workforce? • Many employers have had to lengthen orientations for all recent graduates. • There’s a need to survey both the education side and the employer side to determine how much clinical training is being provided by the education programs and whether employers find that new nurses are sufficiently prepared. • There’s a need to survey nurses to determine whether they are planning to leave nursing. • There’s a need to start planning and preparing for a future pandemic.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues are not just in hospitals; a lack of home health care is also creating problems as it is leading people to stay in hospitals longer. Many home health nurses are also leaving for traveling jobs. • There's a need to examine changes in the number of face-to-face clinical experiences versus virtual clinical rounds. NEPIS data may be able to inform some of this. • There's a need to identify new best practices that have resulted from COVID. Are there new practices that worked well and will continue to be used post-pandemic? • It is important to not duplicate questions or over-burden with multiple surveys. • Dr. Yoder shared about the article she published that included information on how nurses were decreasing their stress and what has emerged as best practices in that regard. The article can be accessed: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7946535/pdf/main.pdf • Consider asking about mitigating strategies and what employers or nurses think could mitigate this situation in the future. How can such an event be addressed in real time so that there isn't a massive departure of nurses because of stress and burnout. • Is there data on how many nurses have contracted COVID? It would be helpful to know how it has impacted them and their decision for what they will do next. Are nurses leaving the profession after contracting COVID? • There's a need to examine changes in enrollments in nursing education programs. Decreases in enrollments in master's level programs are being reported across the state. Is this a result of the stress of COVID? • An email asking for members to join a COVID survey taskforce will be sent out to the committee.
<p>4E. Organizational Updates</p>	<p>Kathy Thomas gave an update on behalf of the Texas Board of Nursing (BON) which included information on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) has continued to grow. Three new states were added: Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Vermont. Ohio and Pennsylvania are particularly great because they have high nursing populations. • Five more states are in the process of being included in the Compact. • There is information on the website for employers, nurses, and students concerning the NLC. • In 2020, we continued to see the growth of RNs and APRNs and a flattening of LVNs. 2021 continues to see a growth of RNs and APRNs but a little dip among LVNs. • The Board approved four new nursing programs, 2 BSN, an ADN, and one VN program. A little less than most years but not surprising given the pandemic. • All the waivers are still in place for nursing and nursing programs. In particular, the nursing education waiver that allows senior nursing students to exceed the 50% simulation experiences still exists but are less used this year.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2020 NCLEX RN scores were good. There isn't data for 2021 yet. The calendar year will be used to look at scores for individual programs.• Next generation NCLEX projected to start April 2023. Adding 6 case studies that will be scored with partial credit.• The National Task Force on Quality Nurse Practitioner Education has defined direct care clinical hours. It does include telehealth but not simulation. The biggest controversy is that the number of clinical hours is increased to 1,000 hours. They are still receiving comments.• The Board of Nursing is still on target to move to our new George HW Bush building next summer. We are working on digitalizing all our documents before moving.• 2021 preliminary data: the number of RNs continues to increase throughout the pandemic despite all the reports that nurses are leaving nursing. The number of LVNs have dropped by about 2,000. We are seeing an increase of newly accepted students this year.• A lot of international students are having trouble with testing because of the COVID situation.• In 2020, we implemented the new Texas nursing portal and have seen a massive uptick of the number of nurses using it. This is speeding up the relicensure process.• There was a 5% decrease in the budget last year. Some of it was restored but a great deal was still lost. This could mean we can't hire more people and so processing will be delayed. <p>Fu-An Lin gave an update on behalf of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) which included information on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The last Baccalaureate degree in 2-year colleges was approved in July and haven't received any proposals since. Things have seemed to slow down a little bit. There is a total of 13 BSN programs approved so far in our state junior colleges. This information is on the website through the degree program inventory tool.• From the regular session, there were two bills, Senate Bill 1856 about vocational nursing students providing care during a declared state of disaster. They are always allowed in a licensed facility even in a disaster and must follow the regulations of the facility. Senate Bill 1102 went into effect in June and creates the Texas Reskilling and Upskilling through Education (TRUE) program. The funding comes from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) fund. The goal is to create and redesign more workforce training programs and create pathways for employment. Strings attached: selected programs may be for industry certification, certificate programs, or workforce credentials in six months or less. This might be applicable to some students but probably a limited group. Released Sept. 14 and closed Sept. 30.• In the third session there are several bills looking at vaccine mandates. Senate Bill 36, House Bills 110, 125, and 134. House Bill 134 particularly allows employees to request exemption for a
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	<p>vaccine mandate. But the executive order from the Governor on Monday prohibited any vaccine mandates and there have been similar bills doing similar restrictions. There will be more tracking on these bills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the Nursing Innovative Grant Program, there are 45 initial RN programs that we are supporting, particularly students' clinical experiences. This grant runs through Nov. 2022. • Nursing Shortage Reduction Program: new contact for the program, Audra Patridge, who has been contacting each of the programs, hoping for a smooth transition. • Emergency and Trauma Care Education Partnership Program. Looking at funding to support efforts to increase the number of students in graduate level education, trained in emergency/trauma. <p>Cindy Zolnierek gave an update on behalf of the Texas Nurses Association (TNA) which included information on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TNA offered testimony in Senate Finance and House Appropriations last week requesting increased funding for Nursing Shortage Reduction Program and Nursing Faculty Loan Repayment Program to address workforce shortages related to COVID (from American Rescue Plan Act funds). • Also, testified in House Public Health committee of Border health related to nursing shortages and need for continued funding as well as need to increase capacity of APRNs by removing barriers. • TNA's position statement on mandatory vaccinations is on our website under Nursing Policy. <p>Karen Kendrick gave an update on behalf of the Texas Hospital Association (THA) which included information on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy for pulling back the supplemental staffing so hospitals aren't struggling with the gap that gets created. From a federal level, they've been looking at hospitals based on the counties they are located. However, in Texas we know that one hospital could be serving 6 counties, so we need to keep that in mind for the transition. • Vaccine mandate, they are in communication with the House and Senate and looking to see how we can exclude hospitals from that executive order. They are also helping hospitals navigate what the federal requirements are and what the state requirements are. Trying to find a way to make this as least painful as possible when encouraging vaccination but still leaving choice.
<p>4F. TCNWS Update</p>	<p>Pam Lauer provided an update on behalf of the TCNWS related to current projects:</p> <p>Nursing Education: NEPIS has started and has been sent out. The plan is to have all the data finalized by the second week of December and to then begin updating the factsheets. At the next meeting those will be presented.</p>

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	<p>Nurse Staffing Studies: Emails will go out about these surveys and joining task forces. Each project taskforce needs a committee member to chair those task forces. Data will be collected in March or April for about 60 days, then those fact sheets will be created. Those reports should be ready for review by the October 2022 meeting.</p> <p>School Nurse Survey: Because of COVID’s continued impact, we’ve decided to post-pone this survey to Spring 2022.</p> <p>Workplace Violence Grant Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our current grantees were given additional time to implement their projects. They have until April 30, 2022 to complete their projects. • New RFA is currently out and closes November 29th. Please distribute this to your networks. <p>Other items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are two vacancies: a Research Specialist III and Research Specialist IV. • Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 2nd and will be held in person. Planning to have October meeting in person as well. July meeting will be virtual. • The team is also working on new dashboards. The graduate nursing education dashboard will be ready soon.
<p>5. Public Comment</p>	<p>No members of the public made comment.</p>
<p>6. Adjourn</p>	<p>Motion to adjourn the meeting by Remy Tolentino and Sheila Fata seconds. The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM.</p>