



## Academic Progression Position Statement

The Organization for Associate Degree Nursing (OADN), as the leading advocate for associate degree nursing (ADN), promotes academic progression of ADN graduates in furthering education to reach their maximum professional potential. OADN supports the Institute of Medicine (IOM), *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health* report, which states, “nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training” (IOM, 2011, page 4).

As the largest and most trusted healthcare profession, it is imperative that nurses unite at this most crucial time in meeting the healthcare needs of this country. OADN commends the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Center to Champion Nursing in America, an initiative of American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), for bringing all levels of nursing education and nursing practice in collaboration through the state health care coalitions.

Although currently, the nursing shortage appears to be abating due to economic conditions, there is still a prediction of a shortage of 1.2 million nurses in 2020 (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2012). Community college nursing programs currently educate approximately 57% of the nursing workforce (HRSA, 2010a). These programs are vital to the healthcare needs of many rural communities across our country. As cited by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), a program under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 75% of ADN graduates seek employment in the state where they were educated. Data further demonstrates that 75% of registered nurses (RNs) in rural settings received their initial nursing degrees through an ADN program (HRSA, 2010a).

The Urban Institute Study emphasized that many rural and underserved communities rely on community colleges for their nursing workforce (Urban Institute, 2009). The report concluded that nurses work where they are educated and simply producing more nurses may not address the critical shortage areas.

Additionally, community college nursing programs educate the largest number of minorities in nursing. This is significant, as the data from HRSA indicates only 16.8% of all nurses represent a minority racial or ethnic group (HRSA 2010a). Recognition of diversity is a critical component in the health care reform goal of developing a health care system that understands and addresses the needs of an increasingly diverse population.

Furthermore, OADN does not support mandated legislation for entry into practice or a specified time period to complete an additional degree in nursing. Every associate degree nurse should have access to pursue additional nursing education. In many areas of the country, access to education beyond the associate degree is still a challenge. However, innovative strategies should be developed to assist the associate degree graduate in academic progression. This may include employer incentives, university completion programs on community college campuses, and affordable online programs. OADN welcomes partnerships and collaboration with the other key national nursing organizations to support academic progression. Working together will facilitate the unity of the nursing profession. OADN supports the following models as examples to ensure academic progression:

- Seamless transition from associate to bachelor degree by cooperative work between community colleges and universities

- Dual admission programs
- Fostering associate to masters programs
- BSN completion programs offered at community colleges

## References

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Organization for Associate Degree Nursing  
7794 Grow Drive  
Pensacola, FL 32514  
(877) 966-6948 (850) 484-8762 (fax)  
[www.oadn.org](http://www.oadn.org) [OADN@oadn.com](mailto:OADN@oadn.com)