



February 9, 2021

Chair Rep. Rick Ladd
Education Committee
The New Hampshire House of Representatives
LOB Room 207, State House
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

Chair Sen. Ruth Ward
Education Committee
The New Hampshire State Senate
Room 302, State House
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

Vice Chair Rep. Glenn Cordelli
Education Committee
The New Hampshire House of Representatives
LOB Room 207, State House
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

Vice Chair Sen. Erin Hennessey
Education Committee
The New Hampshire State Senate
Room 105-A, State
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

The Organization for Associate Degree Nursing (OADN) is compelled to address the recent comments made by Representative Linda Tanner regarding community college registered nursing (RN) graduates. Rep. Tanner's comments are not only extremely disappointing and inaccurate, but also risk spreading false and dangerous misinformation about a large segment of New Hampshire's health care workforce.

OADN is the national voice and a pivotal resource for community college nursing education and the associate degree pathway, to which Rep. Tanner referred. As the national advocate for the over 1,100 associate degree nursing programs across the country, OADN works to advance excellence in nursing education and community college pathways into registered nursing careers. Institutions OADN represents educate over 50% of all newly licensed professional registered nurses (RN) which equates to an average of 81,000 RNs annually.

Nursing graduates from community college nursing programs are highly competent registered nurses (RN). The nursing curriculum is rigorous, complex, and all New Hampshire programs are approved by the New Hampshire Board of Nursing. Community college and university nursing graduates must pass the same licensure exam (NCLEX) to ensure competent and safe practice for the American public. This exam is based on a practice analysis of nurses in the health care setting and is psychometrically sound to protect the safety of the public. Additionally, all nine associate degree nursing (ADN) nursing programs in New Hampshire hold specialized national accreditation by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). This voluntary specialized accreditation is recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE).

Community college nursing programs are essential to the healthcare of our country. Nowhere is this more important than in the many communities across the country that rely on these colleges to provide an educational approach that serves as a solid foundation for baccalaureate and higher degree attainment. Research shows that community college nursing graduates are more likely to live and work in their

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communities after graduation. As these graduates' progress to higher levels of education, their communities reap the benefits of their growing skills, knowledge, and abilities. This is critical as these nurses will take on new roles in the community alongside their counterparts in more traditional acute care settings. Patients and families rely on community colleges and associate degree registered nurses to ensure access to high-quality health care.

Furthermore, community colleges have the capacity to provide individuals with the ability to launch careers, setting them on the path to achieve their goals, with minimal debt. Community colleges educate a nursing student population that is reflective of the communities they serve, with nursing programs that graduate more African American, Latino, and Native American registered nurses than other types of prelicensure nursing programs. This nursing workforce diversity is not only a necessary goal itself, but also important for the development of culturally competent care and increased knowledge of health disparities in diverse populations. Community graduates are also twice as likely to work in the most economically distressed areas and nearly twice as likely to work in rural areas.

OADN remains committed to the dissemination of accurate information regarding community college nursing programs. This accuracy is important, so the public has the correct information and has trust in the nursing professional providing care.

If OADN can be of any assistance, please contact Donna Meyer, Chief Executive Officer, at donna.meyer@oadn.org.

Sincerely,



Laura Schmidt, DNP, FNP-BC
President
OADN



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