

**MACN**  
**Michigan Association of**  
**Colleges of Nursing**

Alma College  
Andrews University  
Baker College  
Calvin College  
Central Michigan University  
Chamberlain University  
Concordia University  
Cornerstone University  
Davenport University  
Eastern Michigan University  
Ferris State University  
Finlandia University  
Grand Valley State University  
Hope College  
Lake Superior State University  
Lawrence Tech  
Madonna University  
Michigan State University  
Northern Michigan University  
Oakland University  
Rochester University  
Saginaw Valley State University  
Siena Heights University  
University of Detroit Mercy  
University of Michigan  
University of Michigan-Flint  
Wayne State University  
Western Michigan University

**Michigan Association of Colleges of Nursing (MACN)**  
**Position Statement on Community Colleges Bachelor of Science in**  
**Nursing (BSN)**  
**Opposition to House Bills 5556 and 5557**

The Michigan Association of Colleges of Nursing (MACN) opposes House Bills 5556 and 5557, that would grant community colleges the authority to offer the Bachelors of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree and allow them to eliminate their existing programs that offer the Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) degree.

We believe that investing in Michigan's existing health care infrastructure and its nationally accredited existing undergraduate nursing programs is the most sensible and cost-effective strategy to increase the number of Bachelor of Science (BSN) prepared nurses. All of our state's undergraduate BSN nursing programs are nationally and professionally accredited, and are committed to their partnerships and continued collaboration with Michigan's community colleges.

Our partnerships with community colleges continue to expand, and provide seamless, convenient and affordable access to BSN education in Michigan. MACN supports the continued expansion of these partnerships. This type of cooperative approach is the most cost-efficient and strategic process for educating highly skilled nurses to provide high quality and safe, effective patient care based on current evidence. Our undergraduate BSN nursing programs are committed to addressing the critical need for additional nurses, advanced practice registered nurses, and nurse faculty in Michigan.

The nursing profession has been in the forefront since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Our undergraduate BSN nursing students and nursing programs have faced many challenges during the pandemic as well. For example, most of our undergraduate BSN nursing programs were forced to suspend direct care clinical education for nursing students due to several factors such as health systems restrictions, shortages of PPE, safety concerns, etc. Many of our undergraduate BSN nursing programs had to move to online course delivery, as well as virtual simulation, and other alternative activities to supplement in-person clinical rotations in order to prevent disruption to our student's progression in our programs. In addition to new challenges due to the pandemic, many of our undergraduate BSN nursing programs continue to have issues finding face-to-face clinical opportunities in pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, and psychiatric mental health. However, in spite of these challenges, the interest in the nursing profession continues to remain strong. In fact, nationally, enrollment in BSN nursing programs went up nearly 6% in 2020 alone (and a 5% increase in 2019). While this is good news, the bad news is that nearly 81,000 qualified nursing applicants at 4-year colleges and universities were turned away because of a shortage of clinical sites, clinical preceptors, faculty, and other resource constraints (AACN). That means virtually every BSN nursing school is turning away qualified

applicants. House Bills 5556 and 5557 would only worsen these challenges for Michigan's nursing programs.

**Snapshot of Michigan's undergraduate BSN nursing students:** During the 2020-2021 academic year, there were 12,874 students enrolled in a undergraduate BSN or graduate nursing program: of that, 9,290 are enrolled in a BSN program; 3,490 students graduated from a BSN program; and an additional 961 students completed a graduate-level nursing program.

A recent report released by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) shows that 45.5% of nurses in our state are BSN degree prepared, and 33.6% are ADN degree prepared. Of the ADN prepared nurses, 5.4% are currently enrolled in an undergraduate nursing program to earn their BSN degree. Michigan's undergraduate BSN nursing programs have the capacity to increase enrollment.

**Exacerbating the persistent nurse faculty shortage** Michigan is facing a nurse faculty shortage. The growing shortage of faculty directly limits the ability for undergraduate and community college nursing programs alike, to grow and expand. Only 1% of Michigan's nursing workforce holds a Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP), and only 11.7% hold a Master's degree in Nursing. Less than 1% hold a PhD in Nursing. Only 3.8% of our nursing workforce are enrolled in a Master's (MSN) program, only 1.3% are enrolled in a DNP program, and less than 0.02% are enrolled in a PhD program. *Only 4.8% of our nursing workforce actually work in an education setting (academia, simulation, clinical, administration, and adjunct).* Of the nurses who work in an education setting:

- 1) 13.7% work as ADN educators
- 2) 24.8% work as BSN educators
- 3) Of the total nurses who work in an education setting, 27.8% plan to stop working within 5 years (1,337)

The current estimated vacancy rate for Michigan's nursing faculty is 7%. This is consistent with national trends, where recent data demonstrates a national nurse faculty vacancy rate of 7.2%. Most of the vacancies (89.7%) were faculty positions requiring or preferring a doctoral degree in nursing. Many of the open faculty positions in Michigan indicate either a preference for or requirement of a doctorate in nursing or a related field. Other contributing factors include budget constraints, aging faculty, and increasing job competition from clinical sites. Adding additional BSN programs, which will compete for qualified faculty, and our clinical preceptors, will only serve to worsen the faculty shortage. Michigan's population is aging and so is our nursing educator pool. A wave of faculty retirements are expected across the U.S. over the next decade. The average age of doctorally-prepared faculty is 52-62 years of age. According to the Nursing Outlook on Retirements and Successions of *Nursing faculty in 2016-2025*, one-third of the current nursing faculty workforce in BSN and graduate programs are expected to retire by 2025. In addition, we know that enrollment in PhD nursing programs has declined by 9.5% since its peak in 2012 (AACN). This downward trend creates concern for nursing educators who are responsible for preparing nursing faculty.

Higher compensation in clinical settings is more attractive than in nursing education. Another contributing factor to the faculty shortage is that a nurse can receive higher compensation in clinical and private sector settings, which is luring nurse educators away from teaching as faculty. According to the American Association of Nurse Practitioners, the average salary of a master's prepared nurse practitioner is \$110,000 and the average salary for a master's prepared assistant professor in a nursing program was \$79,444.

***The bottleneck in nursing education*** There are currently 68 board approved pre-licensure RN programs in Michigan, 37 BSN programs and 31 ADN programs, and there is a significant bottleneck in nursing education. The majority of nursing program capacity issues consist of a lack of faculty and clinical preceptors, budget constraints, and finding clinical sites due to competition with other nursing programs and non-nursing health professional programs, as well as the lack of specialty care placements such as pediatrics, obgyn, and psych-mental health. Authorizing community colleges to offer BSN nursing programs will only make the bottleneck in nursing education worse.

***Current workforce shortages in healthcare*** Nursing continues to be the largest sector of the healthcare workforce. Registered nurses are among the top occupations in terms of forecasted job growth through 2029. Michigan is home to 164,623 associate degree and bachelor's prepared nurses (September 2021). **As a matter of fact, our nursing workforce has increased by 9,424 nurses since 2019.** Michigan also has more RNs than the national average (16.33 nurses per 1,000 population). Nearly 80% of our licensed nursing workforce is actively working. ***While there is no doubt that pockets of the state are experiencing workforce issues in healthcare, evidence shows this is not due to an education gap.*** Instead, many of the existing workforce challenges are due to employer issues (workplace stress, retirements, high turnover, travel nursing agencies, etc.) House bill 5556 and 5557 will not alleviate current workforce issues that have only been exacerbated by Covid-19. In fact, this legislation will only aggravate workforce challenges by allowing community colleges to close associate degree in nursing (ADN) programs. This would have a direct impact on the nursing workforce.

***Creating unnecessary duplication and increasing cost*** Creating up to 28-56 additional BSN nursing programs will duplicate nursing education services already in place in Michigan's undergraduate nursing programs, and will increase operating costs of community colleges that offer BSN nursing programs. These costs will include salaries and benefits for additional faculty, staff and administration, information and simulation technology, infrastructure, high costs associated with acquiring and maintaining national professional nursing accreditation, and other support services.

Funding for community colleges comes from three main funding sources: local property tax revenue, tuition/fees, and state appropriations. Adding a baccalaureate program at a community college will require an increase in one or more of these funding sources.

Due to a number of factors such as state mandated nurse-to-faculty ratios and simulation technology, nursing programs are costly to operate in addition to obtaining and maintaining national professional nursing accreditation. Existing undergraduate (BSN) nursing programs have already made these investments, as they all currently hold national professional nursing accreditation.

Michigan already has 68 pre-licensure nursing programs (an increase of two new programs since 2020) that offer either a bachelor's in science in nursing (BSN) or an associate's degree in nursing (ADN). The majority of undergraduate BSN nursing programs in Michigan also offer an RN to BSN completion degree, and most of these are under capacity. These programs are offered to associate degree prepared nurses who seek to obtain a BSN degree, are conveniently offered in classrooms, or on-line through distance learning and most of the programs are under capacity. RN to BSN programs do not produce additional nurses. They do confer an additional degree; a BSN degree. The students in these programs are already registered nurses with an associate's degree.

According to the September 2021 Michigan Association of Colleges of Nursing survey of undergraduate BSN programs, there are eighteen undergraduate BSN nursing programs with articulation agreements with community college nursing programs and many of the undergraduate BSN nursing courses are offered in-person at community college campuses. In addition, there are nineteen existing undergraduate BSN nursing

programs that already offer an RN to BSN completion program, all but one of which are offered online, and eighteen of the nineteen programs are under-enrolled. There are currently more than 2,197 nurses enrolled in an RN to BSN completion program among Michigan's colleges and universities.

***RN to BSN completion programs available statewide*** Students currently enrolled in community college Associates Degree in Nursing (ADN) programs can enter one of Michigan's many BSN programs following their community college graduation, which are under capacity and accessible statewide. Associate degree prepared registered nurses can enter the workforce quickly and work while obtaining their BSN degree. This is frequently a necessary pathway for community college graduates who have a desire to enter the workforce to earn high wages and who often have to support their families. House Bills 5556 and 5557 threaten to close this pathway by allowing community colleges to close their ADN programs for "lack of demand." Community colleges are a valuable resource and provide local access and entry into the nursing education. Closing this pathway could result in workforce issues. Nationally, RN to BSN programs program enrollment has seen a decline for a second consecutive year (2.6% decrease). This is unfortunate because we know that BSN degrees awarded by four-year colleges and university-based programs prepare nurses for greater professional responsibility and more complex practice. For example, many studies have linked BSN prepared nurses to better patient outcomes, fewer errors, and lower mortality rates (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, AACN). In addition, BSN students are traditionally receiving two or three times more clinical training in outpatient environments than do their ADN counterparts. In fact, research shows that registered nurses prepared at the associate degree level develop stronger professional level skills after completing an undergraduate BSN nursing program, demonstrating higher competency in nursing practice, communication, leadership, professional integration, and in research and evaluation.

***BSN entry into the workforce*** Michigan's undergraduate BSN nursing programs continue to increase the number of BSN prepared nurses by offering pathways for associate degree prepared nurses to obtain a BSN completion degree. In fact, the percentage of nurses with a BSN or higher degree is now at an all-time high with a national average of approximately 64%, up from 49% in 2010. In 2010, Michigan's percentage of RNs with a BSN or higher was at 44.8% and in 2018, it had grown to 54.9%.

MACN supports the AACN position that registered nurses (RNs) should be, at minimum, prepared with the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) or equivalent baccalaureate nursing degree offered at an accredited four-year college or university. AACN calls for "the continued support for and expansion of articulation agreements and concurrent enrollment agreements as a ***proven solution for addressing the needs for more baccalaureate prepared nurses***" stating that these types of agreements allow for a seamless transition for associate degree prepared registered nurses into BSN programs offered by four-year colleges and universities. Articulation agreements and partnerships accomplish the following:

- Provide a pathway for students into existing regionally and professionally accredited baccalaureate programs;
- Promote mutually beneficial cooperation among four-year colleges and universities and community colleges; and
- Ensure the quality of BSN degree programs.

**2021 Data from the Michigan Association of Colleges of Nursing: 26 undergraduate BSN nursing schools reporting**

19 undergraduate nursing schools offer an RN to BSN completion program

18 RN to BSN completion programs are offered fully on-line

19 RN to BSN completion programs are under enrolled/under capacity

16 undergraduate nursing schools are under capacity for their traditional 4-year BSN program

18 undergraduate nursing schools have articulation agreements with community colleges

5 undergraduate nursing schools have affiliation agreements with healthcare systems for RN to BSN completion programs

For the Fall 2021 semester, there were over 600 unfilled seats in traditional 4-year BSN programs and over 600 unfilled seats in RN to BSN completion programs, some of which have unlimited capacity to add students.

To alleviate current nursing faculty shortages and healthcare workforce challenges, MACN supports the following policy priorities:

- Passage of the Nursing Licensure Compact legislation
- Nursing faculty development through loan forgiveness programs and other tuition incentives
- Nursing student scholarships for RN to BSN programs and for existing traditional BSN programs
- Additional support for the Michigan Essential Health program
- Passage of clinical preceptor tax credit legislation

