

**Nurse Support Program II
Statewide Initiatives Modifications**

Health Services Cost Review Commission
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This is a draft recommendation. Comments may be submitted to Oscar Ibarra (oibarra@hsrc.state.md.us) by February 29, 2012.

Purpose

This is a draft recommendation to modify several Nurse Support Program II (NSP II) Statewide Initiatives, last approved by the Commission on December 9, 2009. The proposed modifications, as suggested by the NSP II administrators at the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), strengthen the NSP II Statewide Initiatives by better supporting nursing faculty development.

The proposed modifications do not alter the percentage of gross patient revenue contributed to NSP II (i.e., the dollars funded for NSP II remain unchanged by these modifications). Additionally, the proposed modifications do not change the Competitive Institutional Grants component of NSP II.

Background

The Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC) approved the creation of NSP II on May 4, 2005, in order to alleviate the critical shortage of qualified nurses in Maryland by expanding the capacity of Maryland nursing schools with specific attention given to educating nurses to become faculty members. The program is funded for up to ten years by a 0.1 percent increase to regulated gross inpatient revenue. NSP II focuses on expanding the capacity to educate nurses through two components, Competitive Institutional Grants and Statewide Initiatives.

The HSCRC contracts with MHEC to administer NSP II. MHEC's duties include developing applications and guidelines, overseeing the review and selection of applicants, conducting site visits, and monitoring and evaluating NSP II. MHEC provides the programmatic and administrative support necessary for the successful administration of the NSP II program.

Recommended Modifications to NSP II Statewide Initiatives

Based on recommendations by MHEC staff, HSCRC staff recommends the following modifications to the NSP II authorized Statewide Initiatives:

- *Graduate Nursing Faculty Scholarships*

Graduate Nursing Faculty Scholarships are available to eligible students who are sponsored by Maryland higher education institutions to complete the graduate education necessary to become qualified nursing faculty at Maryland institutions. A service obligation is attached to the scholarships.

- Currently the annual maximum scholarship is \$13,000. We recommend modifying the annual maximum award per graduate student to be the amount for tuition and fees at the student's Maryland institution.
- Currently a scholarship may be awarded only for two years. As nursing institutions are moving toward doctoral-degreed faculty, we recommend removing time limitations around this award to accommodate graduate students pursuing doctoral degrees.
- Several Maryland institutions have developed nursing education certificates. This credential augments master's degree prepared students whose studies did not include nursing pedagogy, curriculum development and testing, which undergird sound teaching

methods. We recommend authorizing Graduate Nursing Faculty Scholarships to eligible graduate students pursuing nursing education certificates.

- *Living Expense Grants*

These grants are currently awarded to those recipients of the Graduate Nursing Faculty Scholarship who show need through submission of financial documents. Based on feedback from MHEC staff, HSCRC staff recommends MHEC deemphasizing this component of NSP II.

- *New Nursing Faculty Fellowships* - We suggest no changes to this initiative.

- *Loan Assistance Repayment Program (through the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program)*

The Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program is a separate program from NSP II. We recommend removing the language regarding loan assistance from the HSCRC's NSP II recommendation.

- *Doctoral Dissertation Research Grant*

As nursing education moves toward more doctoral-degreed faculty, HSCRC staff recommends adding authorization for doctoral dissertation support.

Note, that in addition to these recommendations to the HSCRC, MHEC is recommending to their Commission a number of program modifications, including new applications and guidelines (including application timelines) and additional monitoring processes. MHEC may also place parameters around the authorized initiatives to manage NSP II within the program dollars (e.g., MHEC may set maximum dollars awarded for a scholarship in a given year).

Anticipated Impact of Recommended Changes

HSCRC and MHEC staff anticipate that the recommended modifications to the NSP II Statewide Initiatives will facilitate better preparation of graduate students for teaching and faculty nursing positions in Maryland higher education institutions, including the preparation of more doctoral students. Prioritization of scholarship funding over the living expense grant will provide the financial assistance most needed by nursing graduate students. The scholarship funding carries a service obligation which better addresses the State's need for doctoral trained faculty and provides stronger accountability for the expenditure of funds.