



Illinois Department of Financial and  
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Division of Professional Regulation

# NEWS

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **ILLINOIS ADDRESSED NURSING EDUCATION CAPACITY**

#### **All-Country Summit Sparked Innovative Solutions to Illinois Nursing Shortage**

BALTIMORE, MD – Nursing state leaders from across the country including Illinois recently gathered in Baltimore for the 2009 Nursing Education Capacity Summit, which brought together teams from over forty states to not only address the shortage, but help create solutions.

The Center to Champion Nursing in America, a joint initiative of AARP, the AARP Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration and the U.S. Department of Labor held the summit where participants identified and developed approaches to improving nursing education capacity. The ultimate goal is to reverse the persistent nursing shortage that could leave Illinois and the United States without enough nurses and put patient care at risk. They shared best practices and focused on four key areas: strategic partnerships and resource alignment; policy and regulation; increasing faculty capacity and diversity; and redesigning educational curriculums.

Illinois is one of 18 lead states for the Center to Champion Nursing in America and sent a team to the summit of multi stakeholders including Linda B. Roberts, RN, Manager, Illinois Center for Nursing and Mary Anne Kelly, Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council. Other lead states participating included: Alabama, California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, North Carolina, North Dakota, New Jersey, Oregon, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin.

The unprecedented nursing shortage increases costs and threatens the health care of hundreds of millions of Americans, including 78 million aging baby boomers. In Illinois, latest surveys project that by 2020 Illinois could face a nursing shortage of 21,000, positions needed to address the state's pressing health care needs. The number of potential caregivers, including nurses, is projected to decrease 4.2 percent between 2000 and 2020, while the number of those who need care is projected to increase by 31 percent. While the nursing shortage persists, there is also a dire shortage of nurse faculty in the 120+ nursing educational institutions in Illinois. As a result, nursing schools are turning away qualified students every year due to a growing shortage of nursing faculty.

From coast to coast, these state teams have been advocating for policy changes and fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships that increase nursing school enrollment and bring more nurses into the workforce. In Illinois, regional stakeholders and state agency leaders have developed frameworks that define the nature of our shortages, the barriers and challenges and the recommended regional solutions. Illinois is working with nursing educational institutions to foster transition between nursing programs to support more masters and doctoral prepared nurses, to prepare more nursing faculty. Illinois is also working to create a toolkit to build a case to expand school capacity and faculty salaries. These are but two examples of statewide efforts to expand nursing education capacity.

"Illinois is working hard to improve its capacity for nursing education and expanding opportunities for men and women to work as nurses in our state," said Daniel E. Bluthardt, Director, Division of Professional Regulation, Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR). "We are working on a state-wide plan to reduce nursing shortages in Illinois through a regional public-private approach that aligns state and regional resources to address major causes of shortages at each stage of the nursing workforce development pipeline."

"We are at a critical crossroad in Illinois. When the nursing staffing shortage grows, no doubt patient care falls. The nursing shortage is a national concern that demands both national and community driven solutions," said Linda B. Roberts, MSN, RN, ICN Manager.

The summit was held during an important time as America's leaders are making health care reform a priority. According to a post-election poll commissioned by the Center to Champion Nursing in America, nearly 90 percent of Americans agree that making sure there are enough nurses to monitor patient conditions, coordinate care and educate patients should be part of the effort to improve the quality of health care. Americans say nurses play an important role in reducing health care costs in the areas of patient safety, preventing medical errors, care coordination and providing primary and preventive care.

"You have to go home and make things happen," RWJF Senior Nursing Adviser Susan Hassmiller urged the state representatives attending the summit. "The patients in this country need us; it's about providing higher quality care in this country. Some of the greatest solutions have come when this country has been in a crisis."

*The Illinois Center for Nursing (ICN) was established in 2006 to advocate and ensure for the appropriate nursing resources necessary to meet the healthcare needs of the citizens of Illinois. ICN is working with industry professionals and educational institutions to ensure that Illinois has a nursing workforce necessary to meet the demands of a growing and aging population. For more information, visit the ICN website, [www.nursing.illinois.gov](http://www.nursing.illinois.gov).*

*The **Center to Champion Nursing in America** is a joint initiative of AARP, the AARP Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. A consumer-driven, national force for change, the Center seeks to ensure that this country has the nurses it needs to care for all of us, now and in the future. The Center focuses on two priorities: the nation's capacity to educate and to retain nurses. For more information, visit [www.championnursing.org](http://www.championnursing.org).*

*AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to either political campaigns or candidates. We produce AARP The Magazine, the definitive voice for 50+ Americans and the world's largest-circulation magazine with over 34.5 million readers; AARP Bulletin, the go-to news source for AARP's 40 million members and Americans 50+; AARP Segunda Juventud, the only bilingual U.S. publication dedicated exclusively to the 50+ Hispanic community; and our website, AARP.org. AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.*

*The **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** focuses on the pressing health and health-care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 35 years the foundation has brought experience, commitment and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit <http://www.rwjf.org>.*

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