**Capstone Paper-The Genesis of Change**

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**The Genesis of Change**

The nursing profession has continuously evolved since its origin. The transformation from being viewed as a "handmaiden" to the physician to becoming a respected and educated profession mirrors broader societal shifts and healthcare advancements. Initially, nursing was perceived as a subordinate role, occupied by women providing basic care in patient-filled wards (Archer, 2023). This view was entrenched in the societal norms of the time, which saw nursing tasks as an extension of domestic duties rather than a professional vocation.

By the mid-20th century, nursing expanded with specialized areas like pediatric, critical care, and surgical nursing emerging. The introduction of advanced practice roles, such as Nurse Practitioners and Clinical Nurse Specialists, further enhanced the profession's stature (Archer, 2023). Currently, nursing is acknowledged as an integral part of the healthcare system, with nurses serving as well-educated professionals in various capacities, including direct patient care, leadership, research, and policy advocacy. The incorporation of technology, evidence-based practice, and collaborative education has propelled nursing forward, contributing to improved patient outcomes.

In the modern era, the progression of formal nursing education from a two-year associate degree in nursing (ADN) program to the four-year baccalaureate of science in nursing (BSN) degree has led to notable enhancements in patient care quality and better health outcomes, such as reduced mortality and morbidity rates. Research indicates that in units with a 10% increase in BSN-prepared nurses, patient mortality decreased by 10.9% (Yakusheva et al., 2014). Additionally, if the percentage of BSN-trained nurses provided at least 80% of the care provided to patients it would significantly lower the rates of readmission within 30 days and result in shorter lengths of stays. The statistics for readmission are OR=0.813, P=0.04, and a 1.9% reduction in hospital stays (Yakusheva et al., 2014). With reimbursement and revenue big stakeholders in the hospital setting, reductions like this improve financial standing and decrease costs to patients.

Evidence of improved outcomes, decreased mortality, and decreased length of stay all point to the differences in educational preparation. While both ADN and BSN nurses are capable and competent, the additional education and training that BSN-prepared nurses receive can enhance their ability to provide high-quality, comprehensive care. BSN programs place a strong emphasis on critical thinking, crisis management, leadership and management, and evidence-based practice. This additional training helps BNS-prepared nurses to analyze complex clinical situations more effectively, make better decisions that improve patient outcomes, and implement evidence-based practices to enhance the quality of care a patient receives (Robinson et al., 2024). Overall, BSN-prepared nurses bring a higher level of education, a broader skill set, and a commitment to professional growth, all of which can significantly benefit patient care and the overall operation of healthcare facilities.

The significance of BSN-educated nurses is clear in the literature reviewed, yet there is a need for support in creating a pathway for ongoing development and acknowledgment of nursing as a professional force. This involves several crucial strategies:

1. Continuing Professional Development - It is critical for all nurses to engage in professional development to maintain and enhance their skills and knowledge. Sustaining this level of development ensures that nurses can meet patient needs and adapt to the ever-evolving healthcare environment (Jackson & Manley, 2022).
2. Accreditation and Certification - Bodies like the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANA) offer accreditation for nursing continuing professional development programs. These programs guarantee that educational activities are of the highest standard and assist nurses in maintaining competence in a fast-paced healthcare setting (Nursing Continuing Professional Development, n.d.).
3. Professional Recognition - It is vital to recognize and honor the accomplishments of nurses. This can be achieved through awards, certifications, and public recognition of their contributions. Opportunities for professional development and specialized training programs also promote a culture of lifelong learning and excellence (How to Incorporate Meaningful Nurse Recognition, 2024).
4. Leadership and Advocacy - Nurses ought to be motivated to assume leadership positions and champion the profession. This includes involvement in professional organizations, contributing to policy formation, and participating in research to further nursing practice (Bera, 2022).
5. Supportive Work Environment - Establishing a supportive work environment that allocates time and resources for professional development is essential. Employers must ensure that nurses have access to opportunities and are supported in their career advancement efforts.

By concentrating on these key strategies, the nursing profession can continue to develop and be esteemed as a cornerstone of quality healthcare.

BSN-prepared nurses have a significant impact on hospital environments, affecting various aspects of patient care, clinical outcomes, and organizational efficiency. Every article referenced in the paper speaks to the differences in the education of associate degree nurses versus the baccalaureate of science nurses with little to no discussion about the diploma programs. Little has been shared regarding the differences in a diploma-trained nurse. A diploma nurse, also known as a hospital-trained nurse, is a nurse who has completed a nursing program typically offered by hospitals. These programs are one of the oldest forms of nursing education and focus heavily on clinical practice.

Employing diploma nurses can bolster your team with highly skilled professionals adept in direct patient care. A workforce balanced with diploma, ADN, and BSN-prepared nurses can form a dynamic and robust nursing team. Providing diploma nurses with further education and professional growth opportunities can address the changing standards of healthcare while maintaining a dedicated staff. I am a diploma nurse myself.

I began my nursing career as a diploma recipient in 1992, amidst a severe nursing shortage. The onset of managed care cost reductions, an aging workforce, and the AIDS crisis underscored the necessity for a prepared and resilient nursing workforce ready to tackle new health emergencies.

Bridging the educational gaps from 1991 to 2024 has been challenging. I have faced professional biases for over two decades, which motivated me to pursue a 4-year BSN degree. Completing this academic journey, I can affirm that my 33 years of refined skills have been enhanced by my BSN studies. My experience and perspective will undoubtedly inspire others to consider advancing their education. It’s never too late to continue learning and growing in your profession.

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