

MINUTES OF THE VIDEO CONFERENCE MEETING
NEBRASKA CENTER FOR NURSING
July 26, 2023

Call to Order

The meeting of the Nebraska Center for Nursing (CFN) Board was called to order by Ronda Ehly, Acting Chair, on July 26, 2023, at 9:05 a.m. The central meeting location was at the Nebraska State Office Building, Room 3U, 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln NE 68508. Copies of the agenda were distributed in advance to the Board members on July 19, 2023, posted outside the Licensure Unit within the Nebraska State Office Building on July 19, 2023, and posted on the Department of Health and Human Services website on July 19, 2023. Joyner announced that a current copy of the Open Meetings Act was available at the central meeting location as well as online using the link listed on the agenda.

Roll Call

The following Board members were in attendance during all or part of the meeting via virtual conference:

- Ronda Ehly
- Janelle Francis
- Ashley Havel
- Adam Kuenning
- Leah Logan
- Joan Nelson
- Michelle Summers

The following Board members were not in attendance: Tamara Allen, Sheila Bjerrum, Wayne Briner, Jr., Jerry Cooper, Kathy Harrison, and Angela Johnson.

Three Board positions were vacant.

The following staff members were present: Ann Oertwich, *Program Manager*, Sherri Joyner, *Health Licensing Coordinator*, and Juan-Paolo Ramirez, PhD, *Independent Consultant*.

The following staff members attended via videoconference: Ginger Rogers, *Nursing Practice Consultant*, and Jacci Reznicek, *Nursing Education Consultant*.

Adoption of the Agenda & Approval of the Minutes

No motions were made due to lack of quorum. (Eight Board members must be in attendance in order to vote on motions.) Joyner explained that the meeting was for informational purposes only.

LB227 – Funding for Center for Nursing to Expand Clinical Sites for Nursing Students

Oertwich reported on the implementation of LB227, which provides \$3 million to the Center for Nursing for fiscal year 2023-24 and an additional \$3 million for fiscal year 2024-25 for the purpose of expanding clinical sites for nursing students, with a particular focus on opening up clinical sites in rural areas. Oertwich noted that the Center normally does not receive funds from the Legislature. The Center's funding generally comes from nurse licensing fees.

These minutes were approved by the Nebraska
Center for Nursing Board on October 26, 2023.

The proposal for the bill came from the Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA). Oertwich reported that the NHA and other partners have worked hard to find potential clinical sites and to match those sites with the right schools. They project that they will be able to open nine clinical sites in rural Nebraska, including sites at long-term care facilities. Oertwich believes that they will be able to have sites throughout Nebraska rather than just concentrated in a few areas.

Oertwich noted that there is a current perception the clinical instructors must have a masters degree. There are options, however, to use innovative approaches. The project for expand clinical sites will focus on providing mentoring, support, and financial incentives to experienced nurses at the selected clinical sites so that these nurses can serve as clinical instructors. The clinical nurse instructors will be paired with a faculty member from a participating school who will provide a lot of “hands on” mentoring during the first semester of the program. The clinical nurse instructors will also need to complete three professional development courses during the first term. Oertwich said that the goal is to develop a staff person at each rural facility who will be able to serve as a clinical nurse instructor or years to come.

Summers suggested that providing a stipend to preceptors might encourage more bedside nurses to volunteer for the role. Logan noted that it might also be worthwhile to provide additional financial incentives to retain the clinical instructors, who might be tempted to go elsewhere after they have received additional training.

Oertwich said that the nursing schools participating in the program will rotate their students through a variety of clinical sites so that all their students will spend some time at a rural location. One of the potential outcomes of the program is that the experience might lead more students to accept employment at rural facilities. Nelson noted that students at urban schools might also benefit from experiences at rural sites. Oertwich said that at first, it will be more feasible to just have schools within range of the clinical sites participate in the program. She also noted that some rural facilities only have the capacity to host a small number of students at a time.

Oertwich noted that nursing students generally begin their clinical experiences after Labor Day. The NHA and other partners will be very busy in August to ensure that the rural sites are ready for students when clinical rotations start.

RFP for Marketing Plan

Oertwich reported that a second Request for Proposal (RFP) will soon be issued to solicit bids for a marketing plan for the Center for Nursing. A number of companies did submit proposals for the first RFP, but Oertwich was told that the RFP needed to be revised. Once the new RFP is issued, businesses generally have 2-3 weeks to submit proposals. Oertwich said that the goals of the marketing plan include developing a recognizable brand for the Center for Nursing across social media platforms, elevating the status of nursing careers, and supporting the work being done to expand clinical sites for nursing students.

UNMC HRSA Grant Updates

Discussion of the HRSA grant project on nursing mental health and resiliency was deferred until the Board's next meeting.

Center for Nursing Foundation

Oertwich explained the role of the Foundation in providing support to the Center for Nursing. Because the Foundation is not a state government organization, it has more flexibility in how it spends the money it raises. The Foundation currently has funds in the amount of \$8,374. Recent projects of the Foundation include conducting research on the educational needs of rural nurses and providing a research grant to a graduate student studying the responses of Nebraska nurses to COVID-19.

Lina Bostwick, a former member of the Center for Nursing Board, has served as the Foundation's President for a number of years. Members of the Foundation Board include representatives from the Center for Nursing Board as well as other nursing organizations in Nebraska. Margaret Woepfel is the current Nebraska Hospital Association representative on the Foundation. Lin Hughes, who has served as the Foundation's Treasurer, has been the Nebraska Nurses Association representative, but would like to retire from the Foundation. It is Oertwich's understanding that NNA has appointed Linda Stones as their representative to the Foundation.

Most of the Center for Nursing Board representatives on the Foundation have been termed out, and new members are needed to fill their places. Kuenning expressed interest in serving on the Foundation. Staff will email Center for Nursing Board members a blurb about the duties and time commitment involved in serving on the Foundation to see if any others are interested.

Updates

Specialty License Plates

One of the projects that the Center for Nursing Foundation shepherded was specialty Center for Nursing license plates, which can now be ordered through the Nebraska DMV's website. Oertwich explained that the plates did raise some funds for the Center as a small portion of the application fee for the first 250 plates that were minted went to the Foundation. Nelson said that she has received positive feedback on her Center for Nursing license plate.

Website

Ramirez reported that the Center for Nursing's website has been updated. The public can now use the website to access the Center's previous reports, which are available as pdfs.

Social Media Accounts

Oertwich said that former Center for Nursing Board member Christi Glesmann did an excellent job moderating the Center's Facebook page, and it would be nice to have another Board member take over this role.

40 Under40 Awards

Ehly reported that the Nebraska Nurses Association has reactivated the "40 Under 40" awards campaign. Ehly encouraged people to think of nurses they might nominate for the award. The deadline for nominations is August 25th.

Consultant's Report

Ramirez reported that the Center has ample data to support the requirements of LB227, including workforce data from the 2022 renewal surveys. Ramirez showed a map and table he had made showing the per capita number of nurses, total population, projected population growth, senior-aged population, number of critical access hospitals, number of rural health clinics, and number of nursing schools for each of the 93 counties in Nebraska. He is considering adding data on incivility and bullying to the table.

Ramirez also reported that he is analyzing data from the Nebraska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. He described the system's online dashboard as a "hidden gem" with data on behavioral health, mental health, tobacco use, cancer rates, and hundreds of other health indicators.

Environmental Scan

Ehly reported that her facility has been successful recently with hiring new nurses, which has allowed them to reduce their number of agency nurses. Nurses who left in the past for other jobs are also returning to the hospital. They are providing scholarships to students enrolled in the their local community college's LPN to RN transition program, and by May of next year they may be in a position to hire five graduates of the program. Oertwich suggested the Ehly might write an article on the subject for the next edition of *Nursing News*.

Frances reported the Bryan College will soon open its new campus in Hastings at Mary Lanning Hospital. Approximately ten nursing students will be in the first cohort, with plans to expand that number to a maximum of thirty students.

Nelson reported that she is now retired but still volunteers with the federal emergency response program. She recently spent two weeks at a federal warehouse inspecting medical supplies in preparation for hurricane season. She noted that the program is developing a much-needed computerized inventory system.

Summers reported that she recently participated in a poster presentation on simulation labs at a national conference. She noted that community colleges are embracing simulation labs, and that it is exciting to see the new technologies. She will be doing a webinar for nursing faculty on how they can incorporate Next Generation NCLEX-type questions into simulation experiences.

Reznicek reported that Next Generation NLCEX was implemented on April 1, 2023. The National Council of State Boards of Nursing has been working for over ten years on this major update to NCLEX. The new version of the exam using case-study types of questions to assess clinical judgment. The pass rates for Nebraska students have increased since the new version was implemented.

Reznicek also noted that staff worked closely with schools this spring and encouraged students to submit their applications 60-90 days prior to their anticipated graduation date. Despite three vacancies, staff were able to prep applications to enable graduates to take NCLEX as soon as feasible following graduation.

Conclusion

Oertwich said that after the expanded clinical sites are in place, she hopes that the Center will be able to focus on strategic planning. Monthly meetings might be advisable. Staff will send an email to Board members to try to find a meeting date in August.

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann Oertwich".

Ann Oertwich, PhD, RN, CNE
DHHS Program Manager II