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Technology's Role in addressing Maryland's nursing shortage

by Susan Newbold, MS RNBC, FAAN, FHIMSS & Dr. Barbara Covington, RN

ABSTRACT

Nursing challenges in the State of Maryland, USA, are multifaceted, necessitating multifaceted solutions. It is not known to what extent technology is used or which technologies are being used in various settings by nurses in Maryland. Technology is playing a role in alleviating the nursing shortage. The Maryland Statewide Commission on the Crisis in Nursing Technology Workgroup established in 2002 focused on Technology's Role in Addressing Maryland's Nursing Shortage. A report was published in 2004 and updated in 2005 which reflects innovative use of technology and examples of how the technology can solve specific nursing problems. The Technology Workgroup embarked upon a grass-roots assessment of technological tools that are being used to: maximize nursing productivity, increase the quality of patient care, improve the work environment infrastructure, and alleviate the top concerns of Maryland Nurses. Widely disseminated, this report has been judged to be application both nationally and internationally. The Innovations report received a Media Award in 2004 from the American Academy of Nursing.

Following the self-report Innovations study, a baseline descriptive research survey was conducted with Maryland registered and licensed practical nurses. Participants identified perceived benefits and problems of technology in practice, issues related to implementation and use of information technology in practice. The survey responses were collected online, telephone, or paper. Implications of results include policymaking, funding for technology implementation, recruiting, training, and education. Other implications include expanding the study to other national and international locations.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Susan K Newbold is a healthcare informatics consultant and an online instructor for the graduate nursing program at Excelsior College in Albany, New York. She is certified in Nursing Informatics by the American Nurses Credentialing Center. Ms Newbold has made over 200 presentations on healthcare informatics in the United States, Canada, Singapore, New Zealand, Australia, Brazil, Japan, and Sweden. She is the co-founder of CARING, an international nursing informatics special interest group. Ms Newbold has numerous publications to her credit including co-editing two editions of Nursing Informatics: Where Caring and Technology Meet and Developing an Online Course.

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Barbara G. Covington has 30 years experience in civilian and military health care systems, distance education and health care informatics. Her teaching, consulting and research focuses on innovative teaching/learning approaches in patient and nursing education using technology, and health care systems implementation. She is co-author of the book Distance Learning: The essential Guide, by Sage publishing Company. Associate Dean for Information and Learning technologies she provides the school of nursing leadership and direction for their network and computer support services, the multi-media center, the clinical simulation laboratories, school of nursing website, and the extensive distance learning and Web education programs.