

The Obama Administration's Record on Supporting the Nursing Workforce

Nurses are at the center of the American health system. There are more nurses in our country than any other type of health care provider. And they do it all, from delivering preventive care to our children to helping seniors manage chronic disease. There is virtually no setting where health care is delivered where you won't find a nurse.

The health care law – the Affordable Care Act – has given nurses and other health care professionals a historic opportunity to improve the health of millions of Americans. The nursing profession is positioned to contribute even more to both health and health care.

With implementation of the law, we have new opportunities to move to a health care system that focuses on increased access to primary care, improved care coordination and an emphasis on prevention and wellness—efforts nurses have focused on from the beginning. This is what the future of health care looks like, and it makes the work and expertise of America's nurses more important than ever.

That's why we're giving nurses the support they need. Thanks primarily to the Affordable Care Act and the Recovery Act:

- The number of National Health Service Corps primary care providers nearly tripled between 2009 and 2011 with the support from the Affordable Care Act, Recovery Act and ongoing appropriations, supporting more than 1,900 nurse practitioners and certified nurse midwives.
- Since the beginning of 2009, community health centers have added about 3,000 nursing positions, including 800 in advanced practice – a 20 percent increase.
- The Affordable Care Act's investment in Nurse Managed Clinics is projected to help train more than 900 nurses by 2013 and serve 94,000 patients.
- The Affordable Care Act's Prevention and Public Health Fund is supporting the training of 600 new nurse practitioners and nurse midwives by 2015.

The Affordable Care Act strengthens prevention and wellness efforts around the country and expands investments in primary care programs where nurses play a vital role. Its emphasis on keeping people healthy, preventing illness, and managing chronic conditions, opens new opportunities for nurses and capitalizes on the expertise of the nursing profession.

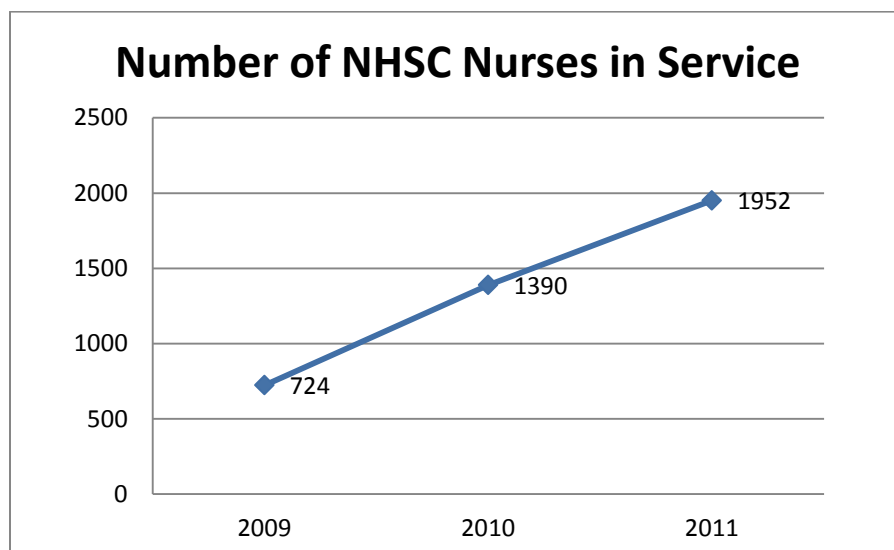
Nurses and the National Health Service Corps

The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) has been supporting nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives and psychiatric nurse specialists, as well as other primary care providers, for 40 years. By offering nurses scholarships and loan repayment to pay down educational debt, these health care professionals are able to work in underserved communities where they are needed most.

The Affordable Care Act invests \$1.5 billion over five years to grow the NHSC, which builds on a \$300 million investment from the Recovery Act. The result has nearly tripled the size of the Corps between 2009 and 2011, including a more than 1,900 nurses that are working every day to not only treat illness or injury, but also keep people healthy and prevent them from getting sick.

Even in the most remote areas, you do not expect to hear “never” when you ask a woman in her 40s or 50s when she had her last breast cancer screening. But that is precisely the response Darryl Adams received from a patient who had come to her clinic after injuring herself. Unfortunately, for this patient she was soon diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer. “I was so upset. Here was this local woman who lived so close to the clinic, and a little bit of information about what was available could have saved her life. And so I decided I was going to gather as many ladies as I could to prevent this from happening again.” Darryl launched an annual event to help ensure more women receive cancer screenings. She will finish her service commitment to the NHSC in 2012, but plans to remain in Tennessee.

*Darryl Adams
Nurse Practitioner
Tennessee*



After a service trip to Africa to provide health care to people suffering from diabetes, cancer, and other serious health conditions, Susan Mix was inspired to apply to the NHSC. She came into contact with patients who had limited access to health care resources and these patients ignited a renewed passion to provide the same type of care for her community back home and for all underserved populations. “I plan to continue serving this community at this clinic until I am 70 years old because I love what I do. I can point to the difference I am making, and it’s because I received the support and resources I needed from NHSC to continue making a difference.”

*Susan Mix
Family Nurse Practitioner
White City, OR*

Nurses Pursuing Their Passion

NHSC program participants view the Affordable Care Act funding as much more than simply a financial investment. For those in the Corps, the Affordable Care Act has made it possible for them to pursue their passion for nursing. NHSC providers are often leaders in their communities. And more than 80 percent of NHSC members remain working in health professional shortage areas after they have completed their service obligation. They become a part of the communities where they serve, ensuring continuity of care for patients, which means the return on the investment from the Affordable Care Act will continue.

Growth and Innovation

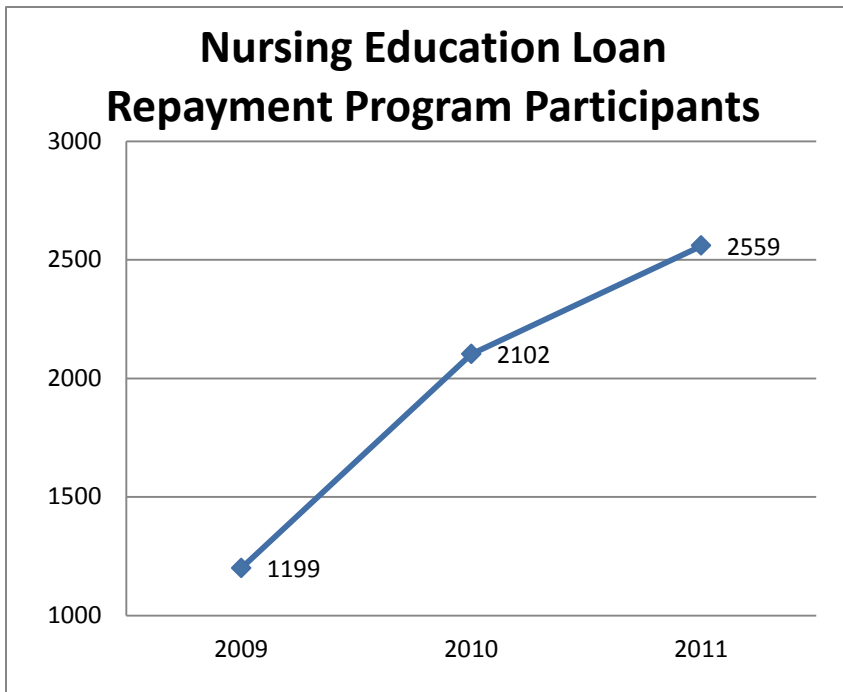
In addition to supporting the growth in the number of nurses caring for the nation’s underserved communities, the Affordable Care Act has also allowed the program to evolve and innovate. Provisions in the Affordable Care Act allowed the NHSC to offer a part-time option and increased credit toward fulfilling the service commitment for providers working at Teaching Health Centers, offering flexibility for those interested in the nursing profession. These innovations provide more flexibility to program participants – they can pursue additional nurse training, balance a desire to teach and serve patients, or spend more time with family – ultimately supporting retention at their health service site and within their community.

The NHSC State Loan Repayment Program provides cost-sharing grants to States to operate their own educational loan repayment programs for primary care providers working in areas of their State with a shortage of health professionals. A \$10 million investment from the health care law will support grants in 2012, on top of \$7.8 million invested in 2011. For the first time in the program’s history, the State Loan Repayment Program is providing grantees the option to expand eligibility to include registered nurses, in addition to nurse practitioners. The grantees also now have the flexibility to support nurses, and other primary care providers, who choose to work at nursing homes and long-term care facilities in areas of the country with shortages of these types of health professionals. Through these new flexibilities, States will be able to support dedicated nurses who have a desire to serve the growing aging population.

Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program and Nursing Scholarship Program

At a time when the nation needs the number of nurses to grow, faculty shortages at nursing schools across the country are of particular concern. The Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program helps alleviate the shortage of nurses in the United States through loan repayment assistance dedicated solely to nursing professionals and helps to build the next generation of nurses by investing in nurse faculty.

Since 2009, the Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program budget has more than doubled translating into an increase from 1,199 to 2,209 in the number of registered nurses and advance practice nurses providing service to the underserved. Participants are providing much needed care to our nation's Veterans, children, homeless and seniors by working in critical care and long-term care settings including Veteran's Administration Hospitals, nursing homes, as well as other health care sites in underserved communities.



In addition, the program is also adapting to meet the changing model of delivery of care and the needs of the nursing profession. Provisions in the new health care law allow the program to begin offering loan repayment assistance to nurse faculty who are now training the next generation of nurse professionals. Since 2010, when loan repayment for nurse faculty became available, more than 530 awards have been made.

Efforts to build the future nurse professional workforce also include the Nursing Scholarship Program, which has awarded scholarships to more than 1,000 nursing students since 2009. The program provides awards to nursing students in exchange for at least a two-year commitment upon graduation to serve at a health care facility with a critical shortage of nurses.

Supporting Nurse Education and Training

To create a sound health care system built on a strong foundation, a skilled primary care workforce is needed. The new health care law is helping increase the number of skilled nurses by expanding the training and educational opportunities for nursing students and graduates seeking to acquire the skills and training necessary to enter the health workforce.

Advanced Nursing Education Expansion

The Affordable Care Act is supporting the training of 600 new nurse practitioners and nurse midwives over five years, emphasizing access to the critically important role nurses play in delivering primary health care services. Financial support is targeted to graduate nursing students for new full-time students, as well as for part-time students. In addition, the Advanced Education in Nursing Traineeship program has been revamped to concentrate traineeship support on primary care and encourage clinical training in community-based settings.

The President's Fiscal Year 2013 Budget includes a proposal to help create an additional 1,400 primary care advanced practice nurses and develop interprofessional training programs. Interprofessional training supports nurses and other health professionals to develop the skills needed to deliver comprehensive, continuous, coordinated, patient-centered primary care in complex clinical and social environments. With these skills, nurses are prepared to work on teams with other health care professionals to provide coordinated care for patients.

Nurse Faculty Loan Program

The inability of schools of nursing to recruit and retain qualified nursing faculty directly contributes to the nursing shortage. The annual survey of U.S. nursing schools by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing revealed that over 75,000 qualified applicants were turned away from baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs in 2011 due to insufficient number of faculty, clinical sites, classroom space, clinical preceptors, and budget constraints.¹ Almost two-thirds of the nursing schools responding to the survey pointed to faculty shortages as a reason for not accepting all qualified applicants into their programs. The Nursing Faculty Loan Program was reauthorized through the Affordable Care Act, and its funding has been increased under both the Recovery Act and annual appropriations. The program addresses the deficit in the supply of nursing faculty by making advanced education in nursing financially accessible for

¹ American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2012) 2011-2012 Enrollment and Graduations in Baccalaureate Graduate Programs in Nursing.

more nurse faculty candidates. In FY 2011, 114 schools received Nursing Faculty Loan Program funds and awards were made to over 1,500 students preparing to become nurse faculty.

Nurse-Managed Health Clinics

Nurse-managed health clinics – which are run by advanced practice nurses and affiliated with schools of nursing – serve as an important safety-net provider as well as an essential clinical training site for advanced practice registered nurses and undergraduate nursing students. The Affordable Care Act provided a new opportunity to expand this resource to reach new populations and is helping to train 900 nurses and serve 94,000 patients through these clinics.

The limited number of clinical training sites has been identified as one of the primary barriers to quality clinical training for nursing students. Nurse-managed health clinics are increasing innovative clinical training opportunities at nursing schools, and directly expanding the capacity of nursing schools to train more nurses.

The National Center of Health Workforce Analysis

The Affordable Care Act also established the National Center of Health Workforce Analysis to provide a focal point for health workforce data collection, analysis, research, and information dissemination. An important goal of this center to help inform public and private decisions related to the supply of and demand for national, State, and local health care professionals, including nurses.

This center has already launched the first federally-conducted, nationally representative survey of nurse practitioners. This survey is currently collecting data that will provide insights into nurse practitioner education, demographics, employment, scope of practice, and the critical roles nurse practitioners play in the health care delivery system.

Nurses Supporting Primary Care through the Affordable Care Act

Nurses contribute to every area of health care, including private practices, public health agencies, primary care clinics, home health care, nursing homes, outpatient surgical centers, nursing-school-operated nursing centers, insurance and managed care companies, schools, mental health agencies, hospices, the military, industry, nursing education, and health care research. The Affordable Care Act expanded or created programs to support the nursing profession and improve care to Americans to build on existing work and create new opportunities:

Community Health Centers

Community health centers deliver primary and preventive care – including oral and behavioral health care – to about 20 million patients at more than 8,500 sites. Nurses are an essential component of the health center workforce. Currently, about 16,000 nurses – including 4,300 advanced practice nurses – work at health centers across the U.S. Since the Obama Administration’s efforts to expand the health center program began in 2009, health centers have added about 3,000 nursing positions, including 800 in advanced practice. To find out more, visit [The Obama Administration and Community Health Centers](#).

School-based Health Centers

School-based health centers improve the overall health and wellness of all children through health screenings, health promotion and disease prevention activities. Students and their families rely on school-based health centers to meet their needs for a full range of health care services. Students can be treated for acute illnesses, such as flu, and chronic conditions, including asthma and diabetes. The Affordable Care Act provides \$200 million in funding for 2010 through 2013 to address significant and pressing capital needs to improve delivery and support expansion of services at school-based health centers.

Home Visiting

The new law created the new five-year, \$1.5 billion Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visitation Program. Under this program, nurses, social workers and other professionals visit pregnant women and young children, with the families’ consent, and offer counseling and intervention services to improve health outcomes. Last year, \$224 million was awarded to implement this program. To date, 29 States have selected Nurse-Family Partnerships – one of the models – as the basis for their work.

Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice

Implementing the new health care law's provisions on care coordination requires a foundation of collaborative team-based health care delivery. Two of nursing training programs, the Nurse Education, Practice, Quality, and Retention Program and the Advanced Nurse Education Program have responded to the call and are soliciting projects to develop interprofessional education and collaborative team-based practice. Supporting these efforts, health-related foundations and experts from academia are promoting interprofessional education and team-based care with the goal of identifying best practices and, through them, improve health care quality and safety.

Graduate Nurse Education Demonstration

Under the Graduate Nurse Education demonstration, a new Affordable Care Act initiative, the Administration will provide up to \$200 million over four years to up to five eligible hospitals for the cost of providing clinical training to advanced practice registered nurses. Hospitals participating in the demonstration must partner with accredited schools of nursing and non-hospital community-based care settings. The demonstration requires that half of clinical training occur in community-based non-hospital settings. The clinical training included in this demonstration will provide advanced practice registered nurses with the clinical skills necessary to provide primary care, preventive care, transitional care, chronic care management and other services appropriate for Medicare beneficiaries. Students receiving training funded by the demonstration will be encouraged to practice in non-hospital community-based settings, including in underserved areas.