



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
**SCHOOL OF
NURSING**

Preparing Advanced Practice Nurses for Rural & Remote Washington

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Background

- University of WA (UW) School of Nursing (SoN), located in urban Seattle, is a state-assisted institution tasked to prepare nurses and advanced practice nurses for Western WA.
- Western WA landmass is primarily rural, with mountains, complex waterways, extensive forest lands, and isolated rural communities.
- In 1997 the SoN identified a need to make advanced practice nursing education relevant to the needs of nurses in rural communities and deliver that education to nurses residing in rural areas.

Program Beginnings

- We identified need for rural primary care Nurse Practitioners, Nurse Educators, Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioners.
- Initially, we targeted strategic locations in western, northern, and southern areas of Western WA.
- Later, as technology matured and access to the internet improved in rural Western WA, we were able to become site-independent and support students throughout Western WA.

Program Overview

- Program has 4 components: rural content, student recruitment, technology enhanced distance learning (“TEDL”), and rural community clinical partnerships.

Rural Content

- Health problems prevalent in rural WA
- Financial and legal issues related to rural practice
- Need for collaboration and innovation
- Issues related to rural populations: sense of volunteerism, autonomy, cultural issues

Rural Recruitment

- Key informants in major rural hospitals
- Informants identified nurse learning needs
- Faculty with relevant expertise traveled to the rural venues and presented designated content as well as brochures and information about UW programs.
- Topics of interest: advanced practice nursing career options, clinical management of drug overdose, effective communication, complementary and alternative approaches to health care.
- Other approaches: booths at regional nursing meetings, advertisements, word of mouth

Technology Enhanced Distance Learning: Pedagogy and Curricular Elements

- Didactic courses: video-streamed lectures, on- line or proctored exams, video-conferenced review sessions.
- Seminar courses: video-conferenced real-time interaction, initially telephone-line technology, currently transitioning to computer-based technology.
- Local clinical experiences with local preceptors and visiting faculty.
- Scholarly projects: On line mentorship with video-conferencing, shared documents.



Key Partnerships

- Partners provide access to computer labs, internet, and videoconference facilities; consultation; access to nurses for recruitment; clinical practice venues and preceptors.
- Key partners:
 - Videoconference centers, community colleges
 - Rural hospitals and clinics
 - Low income, veterans clinics, and tribal clinics
 - Public Health departments
 - Foundations, community workers, practitioners

Providence Everett Healthcare Clinic (PEHC)

- In 2003, SON partnered with health care leaders in an urban center 30 miles north of Seattle to develop and implement an innovative “teaching clinic” to provide health care services for disadvantaged populations and a venue to teach health science students.
- Clinic opened in 2004; expanded in 2007; another expansion planned for 2009.
- Supported by community donations, foundation grants, federal grants, and patient fees (we have a net positive income as of this year).



More about PEHC

- Clinic sees 1200 patients/month (primarily Medicaid, uninsured; mainly young parents and children)
- Interprofessional services: primary care, mental health, dental care
- 8 faculty practice at PEHC
- More than 100 nursing graduate student clinical rotations completed;
- Undergraduate nursing students visit clinic to study community health
- Research projects



Challenges

- Faculty must learn to teach in new ways.
- The technology evolves continually so that learning is never completed.
- TEDL methods are expensive and traditional budget lines do not cover this expense.
- Dilemma of open source programs.
- It is a challenge to sustain a sense of community among dispersed learners.
- Protecting sensitive health data.

Challenges

- Continue to encourage student enrollment from more remote areas
- Increase ethnic diversity of program enrollees
- Increase faculty & preceptor ethnic/racial diversity
- Expand clinical opportunities, especially in medically underserved sites and remote rural sites
- Keep curriculum pertinent to rural practice

Lessons Learned

- Given the choice between in person and on line classes, most students chose the latter.
- Streamed didactic content provides students with the opportunity to review the material several times as needed.
- It is not easier to teach on-line. In fact, it is more demanding and often requires increased teaching resources.

Funding

- Division of Nursing grants for Advanced Education Nursing and Nurse Education, Practice, and Retention
- UW initiative fund
- Donations for rural student scholarships
- United Way, Evercare Foundation support mental health PEHC
- WA State supports dental services at PEHC
- Community donations