

TUFTS HEALTH PLAN NURSE SCHOLARS PROGRAM
Pilot Program to Improve the Nurse Faculty Shortage in Massachusetts

Submitted by the Massachusetts Hospital Research and Educational Association, Inc.

Overview

Nursing education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is at the intersection of a set of two dynamic forces. One force is a combination of a nursing workforce shortage, an aging nurse population, and major limitations on the capability to educate new nurses. The other force is a combination of growing public and legislative commitments to increase access to health care for all citizens and to enhance the quality of care and patient safety. These forces place increasing demands on nurses who care for patients across the spectrum of health care delivery, as well as those who educate the future nursing workforce. To meet these challenges and to protect the vital role of the health care sector in the state's economy, more qualified nurses must be educated and, in concert, the number of nursing educators available to teach must be rapidly expanded.

Massachusetts public and private higher education institutions play a vital role in meeting these nursing shortage challenges. However, as these institutions move to expand their role, they are met with strong constraints: nursing faculty shortages, limitations on clinical sites, and too few science and nursing laboratories. On the other hand, there is no shortage of qualified students ready to enter the profession.

Based on the 2005 Massachusetts Board of Higher Education survey, the most effective strategy that can be undertaken to address the shortage is to expand the number of nursing faculty available to teach. Schools have begun to address this in many ways, including developing partnerships with local hospitals, developing fast-track Master's curriculum, providing training for Bachelor's-prepared registered nurses to learn adult education methods (in Massachusetts there is currently a waiver to allow BSNs to teach under the supervision of an MSN), and supporting Master's-prepared nurses in transitioning to teaching from pure clinical work.

Statement of Need

Massachusetts is facing an unprecedented shortage of nursing at all levels. Recently there has been much publicity regarding the shortage, and nursing schools are now flooded with applications. However, schools are facing a critical capacity problem primarily because of a lack of nursing education faculty. The problem is at least three-fold: 1) there are not enough Master's- or Doctoral-prepared nurses who can teach; 2) the current nursing faculty is aging and approaching retirement; and 3) compensation for nursing faculty is not competitive with nursing salaries in direct care settings.

The Board of Registration in Nursing (BORN) reported the following data from its Spring 2006 Survey, *Faculty Vacancies Among Board-Approved Nursing Education Programs in Massachusetts, 2005-2006 through 2007-2008*.

- The total number of FTE RN faculty vacancies reported for academic year 2005-2006 is 32, compared to 26.41 during academic year 2003-2004 and 17.1 during academic year 2001-2002.
- The projected number of faculty vacancies will increase to 14% in baccalaureate and higher degree programs for the academic year 2007-2008.
- Consistent with the 2004 survey, participant responses showed that non-competitive salary for nurses seeking employment in academia continues. The impact of salary is not only on recruitment, but also on retention of qualified faculty. Respondents reported losing nursing faculty to other nursing programs and to clinical practice.

Purpose of the Tufts Health Plan Nurse Scholars Program

To meet the escalating need for nurse educators in Massachusetts, Tufts Health Plan has created the Nurse Scholars Program. Eligible clinical nurses are encouraged to apply, and candidates of diversity are particularly encouraged to apply. This pilot program has been developed with the Massachusetts Hospital Research and Educational Association (MHREA – a subsidiary of the Massachusetts Hospital Association). In addition, a key leadership partner in this initiative is the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, which has been working in partnership with other healthcare stakeholders and our higher education institutions to develop statewide programs to address the shortage of the clinical and faculty nursing workforce.

This program will support the additional education and training of current clinical nurses enrolled in doctoral nursing programs. The long-term goal of this initiative will be to increase the number of new full-time or part-time nurse faculty positions and promote the opportunity for these new educators to teach didactic courses in the classroom and/or supervise students in the clinical settings. It will provide tuition and fee stipends to enable them to be enrolled in doctoral programs at public educational institutions in the state.

MHREA, in collaboration with other organization stakeholders in the healthcare workforce field, including a representative from Tufts Health Plan, will coordinate the program award process, review, and recommendation of awardees. It is expected that up to 10 awardees will be named for this pilot program, which will encompass the Fall 2008, Spring 2009, and Summer 2009 semesters. Awards will be made to eligible students enrolled in the graduate nursing programs at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Dartmouth, Boston, Lowell, or Worcester, including the Boston campus Fast-Track BSN-to-PhD Nursing Program focused on health policies in cancer care and health disparities.

We are pleased to offer this unique collaborative professional development opportunity to qualified nurses in our state to become nurse educators. This will increase the numbers and diversity of our nursing faculty. In turn, these nurse educators will contribute to increasing and sustaining our future nursing workforce.

Applicant Information

Eligibility

- Full-time or part-time enrollment in the graduate nursing program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Dartmouth, Boston, Lowell, or Worcester, including the Boston campus Fast-Track BSN-to-PhD Nursing Program focused on health policies in cancer care and health disparities.
- U.S. citizen, permanent resident, refugee or qualified immigrant.
- Resident of the state of Massachusetts.
- Underrepresented Minorities are particularly encouraged to apply, meaning those racial and ethnic populations that are underrepresented in the nursing profession relative to their numbers in the general population.
- A commitment to teach nursing in the state of Massachusetts after successful completion of graduate studies. Awardees will be required to sign a letter of commitment that they will provide a one-year payback in a teaching role for each year of scholarship support provided. Failure to complete the payback requirement will require that funding be repaid to the program by the recipient.

Program Award Information:

- Awards will be made for up to \$10,000. It is anticipated that up to 10 awards will be made to full-time and part-time students.
- The award must be used between August 2008 and June 2009.

Program Award Grantee Requirements:

- Assume full-time student or part-time student status at the start of this award.
- Be enrolled or already accepted into a doctoral nursing program (i.e. PhD, DNP).
- Agree to submit a written report of student progress and goal achievement at the end of each semester, as a result of receiving the award. The report must also include an outline of plans for the next six months. This summary will be provided to Tufts Health Plan and to MHREA.

Application Deadline:

Applications must be received by May 2, 2008, regardless of post-mark date. Applications received after that date will not be accepted. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Facsimile transmissions will not be accepted. Applicants will be advised of funding decisions by June 30, 2008.

Applications should be submitted to:

Massachusetts Hospital Research and Educational Association
c/o Massachusetts Hospital Association
5 New England Executive Park
Burlington, MA 01803-5096
ATTN: Karen Nelson
Sr. Vice President, Clinical Affairs

Application Procedure:

The following items must be included in the application packet. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Late applications will not be considered.

The application should include all of the following which are completed and submitted together as the application packet:

- Applicant Data Sheet
- Three signed references in sealed envelopes with the references' signature across the seals
- One-page letter (no more than 1,000 words) from applicant describing personal and professional interest in nursing education. Include in this letter:
 - what you hope to accomplish in nursing education
 - what competencies you already have, if any, related to nursing education
 - cite opportunities, if any, that you have had to teach within the past 2 years
 - what challenges you envision while obtaining your education
 - cite leadership capabilities (list examples of leadership opportunities)
 - cite educational opportunities that you personally have had with faculty and students and underrepresented ethnic minority faculty and students
 - confirm your commitment to increasing mentoring, recruitment, and retention with future nursing students in the state of Massachusetts
- Letter of Acceptance to School of Nursing (for graduate program)
- Original College Transcript (from undergraduate and graduate education)
- Outline Program of Study
- Budget Outline with signature of a financial official at your School of Nursing
- Resume or Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Goal Identification Form
- Applicant's Signature Form

Calendar

- Contact Karen Nelson at knelson@mhalink.org or Anne Marie Boursiquot at annemarie_boursiquot@tufts-health.com with any questions related to the application process.
- Submit mailed application to MHA as noted above. Submission Response Deadline: Complete proposals must be received from applicants by May 2, 2008, regardless of post-mark date.

Program award announcements will be made no later than June 30, 2008.

Selection Procedure and Evaluation Criteria

All completed applications will be reviewed by a Selection Review Committee comprised of representatives of from the healthcare workforce field. Incomplete proposals will not be reviewed.

Evaluation Criteria include:

- Evidence of commitment to a career in nursing education in the state of Massachusetts and to mentoring, recruiting, and retaining future nurses and nurse colleagues.
- Commitment to and quality of nursing education professional development plan as submitted by applicant.
- Potential to contribute to the advancement of nursing education.
- Leadership potential.

APPLICANT DATA SHEET
Tufts Health Plan Nurse Scholars Program

Applicant Name: _____ Credentials: _____

Current Work Title: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone Numbers (at least one required): (H) _____

(W) _____ (C) _____

E-mail: _____

Fax: _____

Date of Birth (optional): _____

Citizenship: _____ Proof of Permanent U.S. Residency: _____

Provide number and copy of residency card.

Reminder: You must be a Massachusetts resident to apply for this scholarship.

How long have you been a Massachusetts Resident?

School of Nursing (SON) you are currently enrolled in or have been accepted to:

Business Address at SON: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Date of acceptance to the above named school: _____

Have you already begun your studies? Yes No

If Yes, when did you begin your studies? _____

If No, when will you begin your studies? _____

How many credits do you currently have? _____

How many credits are you enrolled in for next semester? _____

How did you find out about this scholarship program? _____

What specific degree are you seeking? _____

What is your focused area of study? _____

What is your projected graduation date? _____

Where do you plan to teach after you earn your degree?

CONFIDENTIAL REFERENCE REPORT
Tufts Health Plan Nurse Scholars Program

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANT:

Make three copies of this reference report to give to three different references:

1. A nursing faculty member from your undergraduate school of nursing;
2. an administrator in your clinical setting (university setting if you are currently teaching); and
3. a faculty member where you are currently enrolled in the graduate program.

If you are unable to have a faculty member from the your undergraduate school of nursing graduate program write a reference for you, then a second letter of support may come from a faculty member in your graduate school of nursing, or from a second administrator or professional colleague in your workplace.

If you have not yet begun graduate studies and are unable to have to have a faculty member from the graduate program write a reference for you, then a second letter of support may come from a faculty member in your undergraduate school of nursing or from a second administrator or professional colleague in your workplace.

This section is to be typed and signed by the applicant **before** giving it to the reference for completion. References are to return completed reference reports to the applicant in a sealed envelope, with the referee's signature across the seal. Signed references in the sealed envelopes must accompany the applications.

Applicant Full Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

I hereby waive my right to examine this reference material.

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

TO THE REFERENCE:

The above-named applicant has listed you as a reference for the **Tufts Health Plan Nurse Scholars Program**. This program is designed to increase the number of nurse faculty in the state of Massachusetts. Please provide the following items in a sealed envelope with your signature across the seal:

- This signed confidential reference report.
- A completed, signed, confidential reference score sheet (next page).
- A brief statement (no more than 200 words) which includes how long and in what capacity you know the applicant as well as his/her abilities and characteristics. Please address his/her commitment to nursing education, scholarliness, intellectual curiosity, interpersonal skills and ability to maintain relationships over time—relationships with peers in nursing education and other fields. Please cite specific examples.

Please return these items to the applicant in a sealed envelope with your signature across the seal, **no later than April 20** to ensure that the applicant has time to submit all materials by the May 2 deadline. (MHA must receive all application materials by May 2, 2008 regardless of post-mark date.)

REFERENCE SCORE SHEET

Tufts Health Plan Nurse Scholars Program

Address the following items in the table below on a 1-5 scale.

1 = not competent

2 = below average

3 = average

4 = above average

5 = exceptional

n/a = do not have the knowledge to answer this question

Abilities/Characteristics	Score (0-5)
Ability to maintain safe clinical practice	
Commitment to updated, ongoing nursing education	
Intellectual curiosity	
Interpersonal skills	
Relationships with peers in nursing education and practice	
Relationships with other members of the interdisciplinary team	
Commitment to nursing education in the United States	
Ability as a role-model and mentor to future nursing students	

Additional Comments: (up to 200 words—you may use a separate sheet of paper)

Reminder: Please return the a) confidential reference report signed by the applicant, b) this reference score sheet and pertinent attachments, to the applicant in a sealed envelope with your signature across the seal, **no later than April 20** to ensure that the applicant has time to submit all materials by the May 2 deadline. (MHA must receive all materials by May 2, 2008 regardless of post-mark date.)

Reference Name: _____ Title: _____

Institution: _____ E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

BUDGET OUTLINE

Tufts Health Plan Nurse Scholars Program

Please provide an official statement from your institution detailing tuition and fees for your program. Applicants must include information about any additional grant, scholarship, or fellowship funds that you currently receive or will receive. You may use a separate sheet if necessary.

Expense Description	Cost
Tuition	\$
School Fees	\$
Other (Please list):	\$
	\$
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$

Income Description	Amount
Other Grant/Scholarship:	\$
Other Grant/Scholarship:	\$
Other Grant/Scholarship:	\$
Fellowship:	\$
TOTAL INCOME	\$

NOTES:

Budgets must be reviewed and approved by an appropriate official (signature below) at the proposed institution of study prior to application submission.

I have reviewed this budget and agree that it is appropriate for 2008-2009. I also understand that if I am receiving other forms of financial assistance that include teaching/service requirements, these obligations are cumulative and cannot be satisfied concurrently.

Signature of Applicant	Date
Print name of official who reviewed budget	Title of Official
Signature of Official	Date

OUTLINE PROGRAM OF STUDY
Tufts Health Plan Nurse Scholars Program

If you are currently enrolled in a BSN to doctoral program, what nursing courses have you already taken? (You may use a separate sheet of paper.)

<u>Course</u>	<u>Number of Credits</u>	<u>Semester</u>
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What courses do you still need to complete?

<u>Course</u>	<u>Number of Credits</u>	<u>Semester</u>
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To the best of your ability, how many semesters/quarters will you need to complete your undergraduate courses? _____

How would this be translated in years? _____

If you are currently enrolled in a graduate program, what graduate courses have you already completed? (You may use a separate sheet of paper.)

<u>Course</u>	<u>Number of Credits</u>	<u>Semester</u>
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What graduate courses do you still need to complete?

<u>Course</u>	<u>Number of Credits</u>	<u>Semester</u>
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To the best of your ability, how many semesters/quarters will you need to complete your graduate studies? _____

How would this be translated in years? _____

GOAL IDENTIFICATION FORM
Tufts Health Plan Nurse Scholars Program

List at least 3, no more than 5 measurable goals that you will have for the next 12 months.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

SIGNATURE FORM
Tufts Health Plan Nurse Scholars Program

Initial the following and sign below:

____ I understand that in order to qualify for this program, I must be enrolled as a full-time or part-time student in a doctoral nursing program (PhD, DNP) at the University of Massachusetts.

____ I further understand that if I cannot complete my degree, then I would be responsible for paying back whatever monies have been given to me at the time of my withdrawal.

____ I will also provide a written report of my progress and goal achievement at the end of each semester covered by the award. These updates will be provided to Tufts Health Plan and to MHREA. If I fail to provide these updates, I understand that my award will be withdrawn immediately, and I will be responsible for paying back monies that Tufts Health Plan has provided for my education.

____ I understand that if I am receiving other forms of financial assistance that include a teaching/service requirement, that these obligations will be cumulative and cannot be satisfied concurrently.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____