

# The (R)Evolution of the DNP: Years in the Making

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## Introduction

- In 2004, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) endorsed the "Position Statement on the Practice Doctorate in Nursing".
- The nursing profession, with more than 3 million members, represents the largest segment of the health care workforce and is a critical part of our healthcare system.
- Increase in complexity of the healthcare system as health care delivery is changing dramatically and rapidly.
- Focus on patient safety and care quality (IOM, 1999).
- Rapid advances in clinical technologies and care modalities.
- Shortage of doctorally prepared nursing faculty required to prepare future nurses and leaders.
- The Doctorate of Nursing Practice degree reflects the expert clinical competencies required by healthcare providers to meet the challenging healthcare needs of individuals and changing healthcare systems (AACN, 2006).

## Purpose and Objectives

- The purpose of the presentation is to provide an historical review and perspective of the DNP degree and to discuss some of the more prominent debates its development has sparked.
- By the end of this presentation the participant will be able to will be able to trace the historical development of the DNP degree.
- By the end of this presentation the participant will be able to discuss opposing viewpoints on the role of the DNP degree and its place in nursing.
- By the end of this presentation the participant will be able to discuss the role of the DNP prepared nurse in the advancement of nursing.

## The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice

- I. Scientific Underpinnings for Practice
- II. Organizational and Systems Leadership for Quality Improvement and Systems Thinking
- III. Clinical Scholarship and Analytical Methods for Evidence-Based Practice
- IV. Information Systems/Technology and Patient Care Technology for the Improvement and Transformation of Health Care
- V. Health Care Policy for Advocacy in Health Care
- VI. Inter-professional Collaboration for Improving Patient and Population Health Outcomes
- VII. Clinical Prevention and Population Health for Improving the Nation's Health
- VIII. Advanced Nursing Practice

## Discussion

- Does the DNP degree still have a particularly difficult challenge in today's healthcare environment since the degree is a relatively new educational pathway – 10 years later?
- DNP degree.....discord and controversy within the nursing profession. Why?
- Two terminal degrees in nursing – DNP and PhD; Should we be concerned?
- Can the DNP prepared nurse be an answer to the nation-wide crisis of a nursing faculty shortage?
- Do the DNP Essentials uniquely qualify the DNP prepared nurse for leadership roles in the healthcare industry focused on inter-professional collaboration and improved outcomes for individuals, groups and populations?

## Implications for Practice

- Demonstrate advanced levels of clinical judgment/scholarship in nursing practice.
- Critique and selectively translate science to analyze complex clinical situations and practice systems.
- Integrate advanced knowledge of nursing theories and research in order to improve healthcare of individuals, communities and populations.
- Systematically investigate a clinically focused area of nursing in order to improve and advance health care and health care systems.
- Examine the social, economic, political, and policy components of healthcare systems which affect health care delivery.
- Collaborate with others to foster interdisciplinary teams that promote health, reduce risk, improve patient outcomes and advance complex health care delivery systems.
- Utilize leadership skills to influence health policy; implement ethical, cost effective and evidence-based changes in multiple health care arenas.

## Interprofessional Collaboration

- Employ effective communication skills with other healthcare professionals to improve the health of individuals and populations.
- Collaborate with other health care team members for the provision of high quality care to individuals and populations.
- Collaborate with other professions to advocate for and develop healthcare policies which will improve the health of populations.
- Collaborate with other professions to advocate for and develop healthcare policies that are aimed at decreasing healthcare disparities based on various underlying conditions of life.

## Conclusion

- Preparing more nurses in research-focused (PhD, DNS) and practice-focused (DNP) doctoral programs is a priority for the profession.
- Enrollment in PhD programs increased by 3.2% last year while escalating support for the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree generated a 26.2% increase in enrollments during the same timeframe. (AACN, 2015).
- The DNP is a terminal degree in nursing practice and provides an opportunity to advance the nursing profession ensuring that clinical care meets the highest of quality standards.
- DNP Task Force - nurses prepared at the doctoral level with a blend of clinical, organizational, economic, health care improvement, and leadership skills are most likely to be able to design and continuously improve systems of care delivery based on best evidence (AACN, 2006).
- DNP prepared nurses will advance the nursing profession by researching new methods of care and delivery of care.
- Further outcome studies are needed to assess the impact DNP graduates are having in work environments, on patient care, in academia.

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