



**The Institute of Medicine's Initiative on the Future of Nursing
Supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**

Implications for the Colorado Nursing Workforce

What is the Initiative on the Future of Nursing?

In 2008, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) launched a two-year initiative to respond to the need to assess and transform the nursing profession. The IOM appointed the Committee on the RWJF Initiative on the Future of Nursing, and on October 5, 2010 the IOM released a report with eight recommendations as action-oriented blueprint for the future of nursing.

With more than 3 million members, the nursing profession is the largest segment of the nation's health care workforce. Working on the front lines of patient care, nurses can play a vital role in helping realize the objectives set forth in the 2010 Affordable Care Act, legislation that represents the broadest health care overhaul since the 1965 creation of the Medicare and Medicaid programs. A number of barriers prevent nurses from being able to respond effectively to rapidly changing health care settings and an evolving health care system. These barriers need to be overcome to ensure that nurses are well-positioned to lead change and advance health.

According to the IOM, the United States has the opportunity to transform its health care system, and nurses can and should play a fundamental role in this transformation. However, the power to improve the current regulatory, business, and organizational conditions does not rest solely with nurses; government, businesses, health care organizations, professional associations, and the insurance industry all must play a role. Working together, these many diverse parties can help ensure that the health care system provides seamless, affordable, quality care that is accessible to all and leads to improved health outcomes.

What are the key recommendations for the future of nursing?

Recommendation 1: Remove scope-of-practice barriers. Advanced practice registered nurses should be able to practice to the full extent of their education and training.

Recommendation 2: Expand opportunities for nurses to lead and diffuse collaborative improvement efforts.

Recommendation 3: Implement nurse residency programs.

Recommendation 4: Increase the proportion of nurses with a baccalaureate degree to 80 percent by 2020.

Recommendation 6: Ensure that nurses engage in lifelong learning.

Recommendation 7: Prepare and enable nurses to lead change to advance health.

Recommendation 8: Build an infrastructure for the collection and analysis of Interprofessional health care workforce data.

How is Colorado doing toward meeting the recommendations?

Colorado has made great strides toward meeting many of the IOM recommendations. For instance, the Colorado Nurses Association has successfully advocated for a new transitional model for advance practice nurses that moves nurses into an independent role from a dependent role requiring physician supervision. Colorado's philanthropic community including but not limited to the Colorado Trust, the Colorado Health Foundation and Caring for Colorado have invested millions in loan payback programs to increase nursing faculty, prepare clinical scholars, develop leadership and quality educational programs and other efforts aimed at supporting nursing, nursing education and the healthcare workforce in Colorado.

What is the role of the Colorado Center for Nursing Excellence in working on the recommendations?

The Colorado Center for Nursing Excellence supports innovation and builds partnerships to enhance the Colorado nursing and health care workforce. With leadership from practicing nurses, the Center is a neutral convener of health care providers, educators and governmental agencies to generate innovative solutions, projects and programs focused on education, recruitment and retention of nurses and health care professionals in Colorado.

We contribute to the promise for health by helping to develop an excellent nursing and health care workforce that meets the needs of all Coloradans. Through collaboration and innovation we are a catalyst for change and advocates for health, education and policy.

We aim to convene partners and potential partners to advance the recommendations and continue to move toward a preferred future for delivery of health care for all Coloradans and assure that Coloradans have access to a talented and dedicated nursing and healthcare workforce.