



Position on the Requirement of Bachelor's Degree in Nursing (BSN) for Continued Practice

It is the position of the National Organization for Associate Degree Nursing (N-OADN) that a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing not be required for continued practice beyond initial licensure as a registered nurse (RN). The choice to pursue education beyond the associate degree in nursing (ADN) should remain the choice of each ADN graduate based on his or her personal preferences and professional career goals.

This position is based on the following:

- Graduates of all registered nurse pre-licensure programs (diploma, ADN, BSN) take the same NCLEX-RN licensure examination. This examination determines that the individual possesses the knowledge to provide safe entry-level nursing care regardless of education level.
- There is no differentiation in practice for registered nurses based on pre-licensure education preparation.
- The requirement to obtain a BSN within a specified time frame after graduation may dissuade individuals from seeking nursing as a career and thereby escalate the nursing shortage in certain areas. Results of a survey of its ADN graduates of the past 5 years conducted by the State University of New York Office of Community Colleges indicated that nearly half of the RNs would not have pursued nursing as a career if a bachelor's degree had been required.
- The majority of graduates from ADN programs express a desire to continue their education. However, many find that once they enter the workforce, time, financial constraints, inflexible schedules, and family obligations prevent them from pursuing further education.
- At a period of 5–10 years after graduation, the registered nurse is considered experienced and is able to think critically and manage clinical decision making comfortably and competently. N-OADN is unaware of evidence that a BSN should be required at this point in a nurse's career.
- Evidence used to determine the need for further education beyond the ADN should be based on valid and replicable research that demonstrates that educational level alone affects patient outcomes.
- Access to BSN programs is limited in some areas of the country. While there are online programs for RN to BSN education, not all students learn best using the online method of instruction.
- Current RN to BSN programs cannot handle the increased capacity that would be necessitated by the requirement of a BSN to continue practicing as a registered nurse after a certain time frame.
- RN to BSN programs that require additional clinical experience would create an increasing burden on healthcare institutions to provide space for clinical instruction for all pre-licensure programs.

Graduates of associate degree nursing programs who are practicing as registered nurses after successfully completing the NCLEX-RN examination should not be required to obtain an additional degree to maintain licensure. Associate degree nursing programs are encouraged to work with area universities to provide seamless articulation into RN to MSN programs which would provide a broader array of career options for the registered professional nurse.

Approved by the Board of Directors September 2008