DIVERSITY IN NURSING: WYOMING'S SOLUTION

The Wyoming Center for Nursing

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Diversity in Nursing: Wyoming's Solution

SECTION ONE: WYOMING'S NURSES AND STUDENT NURSES

In 2004, the Sullivan Commission Diversity in Healthcare Workforce, in an influential report called *Missing Persons: Minorities in the Health Professions*, cogently noted that:

> There is an imbalance in the makeup of the nation's physicians, dentists, and nurses. This imbalance contributes to the gap in health status and the impaired access to health care experienced by a significant portion of our population. The Sullivan Commission on Diversity in the Healthcare Workforce finds that African Americans, Hispanics, American Indians, and certain segments of the nation's Asian/Pacific Islander population are not present in significant numbers. Rather, they are missing! While some outstanding physicians, dentists, and nurses are minorities, access to a health professions career remains largely separate and unequal.

Nursing leaders recognize this disparity and have called for "a strong connection between a culturally diverse nursing workforce and the ability to provide quality, culturally competent patient care" (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2015). Diversity can have positive impacts on education, patient-clinician relationships, professional accountability and care in underserved communities.

Twelve years after the Sullivan Commission report how are we doing in Wyoming in relation to the diversity in nursing? This document reviews available data on diversity in nursing in the State of Wyoming. Moreover, recommendations for how to continue to diversify nursing in Wyoming are made based on successful programs and/or best practices specifically focusing on the pipeline into nursing.

Nursing Diversity in Wyoming

Diversity is defined a variety of ways. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2008) defines diversity as "The range of human variation, including age, race, gender, disability, ethnicity, nationality, religious and spiritual beliefs, sexual orientation, political beliefs, economic status, native language, and geographical background" (pg. 37).   The Wyoming Center for Nursing affirms this definition of diversity with its focus on the range of human variation.   Moreover, the Wyoming Center for Nursing affirms that increasing the diversity of nursing students and nurses is critical in Wyoming in order to meet the health needs of an increasingly diverse populace. Consequently, the Wyoming Center for Nursing will make diversity an important component of all its key initiatives and priorities.

In this document, available data on nursing diversity in Wyoming is reported on ethnicity/race and gender using data from 2015-2016. The focus is on the nursing student and nursing populations.
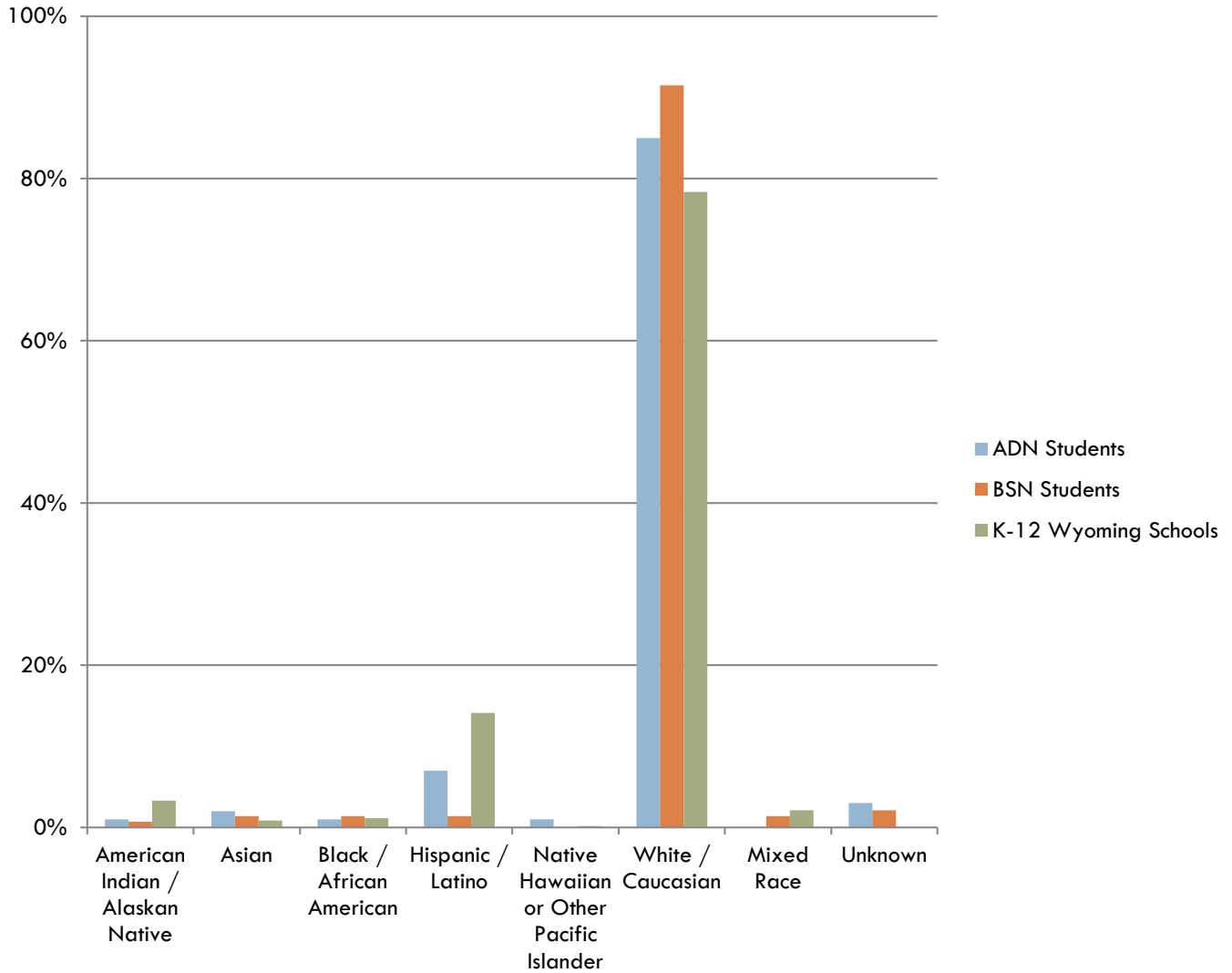
Race/Ethnicity

Interestingly, in relation to race/ethnicity, ADN and BSN nursing students are more diverse than licensed registered nurses in Wyoming (See Figure 1). Moreover, ADN nursing students are somewhat more diverse than BSN students.

Figure 1. Race/Ethnicity of Nursing Students and Licensed RNs
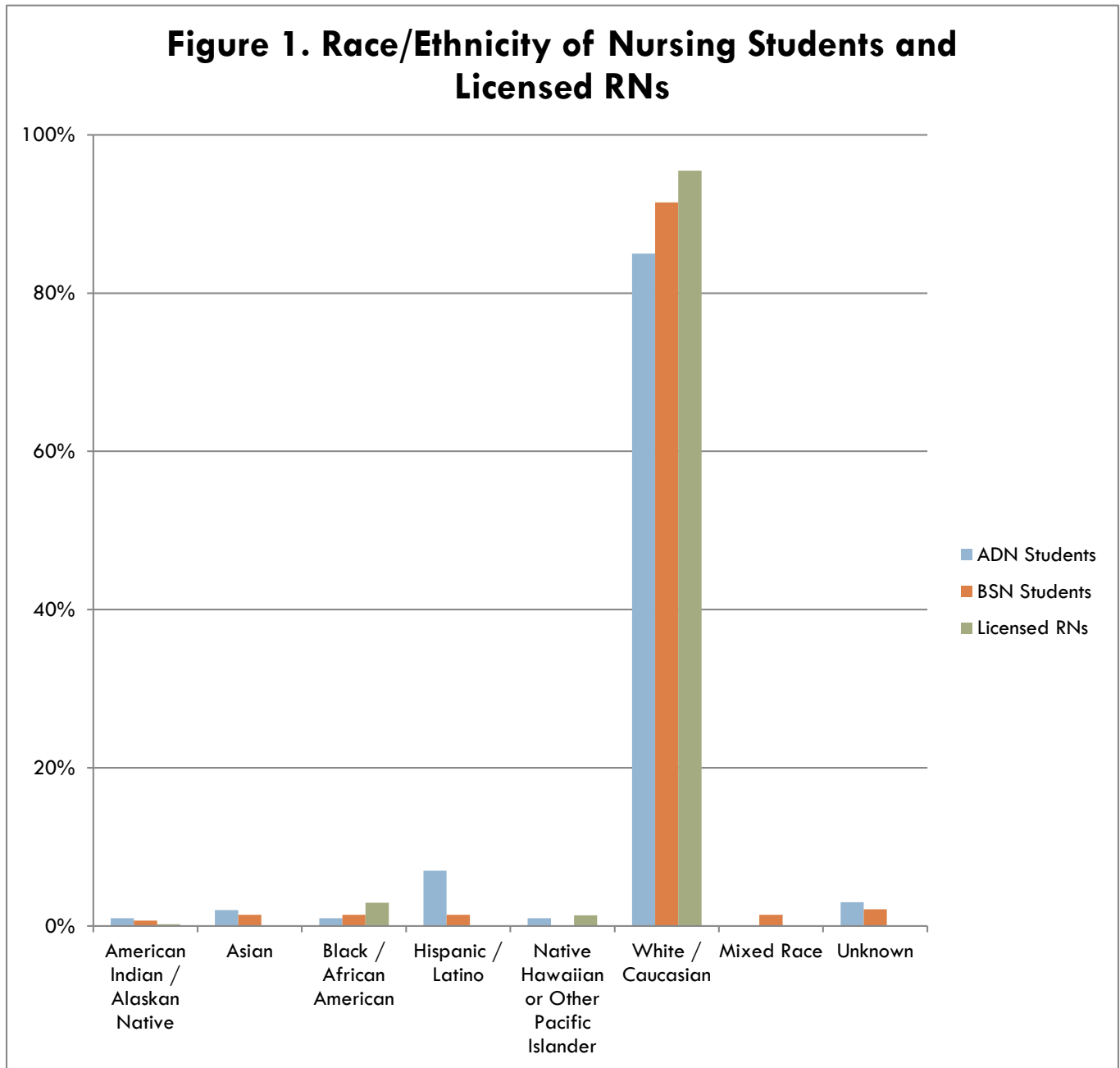
Source: Licensed RN data from Wyoming State Board of Nursing (WSBN) 2016 Renewal Workforce Data, ADN and BSN Student information from WSBN Annual Education Report AY 2014-2015

However, nursing students are less ethnically/racially diverse than Wyoming K-12 students (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Race/Ethnicity of Nursing Students and K-12 Wyoming Students

Legend:
- ADN Students
- BSN Students
- K-12 Wyoming Schools

Categories (x-axis): American Indian / Alaskan Native, Asian, Black / African American, Hispanic / Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White / Caucasian, Mixed Race, Unknown

Source: Licensed RN data from Wyoming State Board of Nursing 2016 Renewal Workforce Data,
K-12 data from Statistical Report Series #2, 2008 to Present, State and District Fall Enrollment by Ethnicity and Gender For: 2015-16, Wyoming Department of Education

Based on these findings, ADN programs are an access point into nursing for more diverse students. Table 1 outlines the racial/ethnic diversity of nursing students among the Wyoming community colleges. Regional differences are evident, e.g., higher percentage of American Indian students at Central Wyoming College, with Hispanic/Latino students at Western Wyoming Community College and Laramie County Community College.

Table 1. Ethnicity of Community College Nursing Students

Ethnicity	CC	CWC	EWC	LCCC	NWC	NWCCD	WWCC
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	1%	10%	1%	1%	1%	4%	1%
Asian	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Black or African American	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Hispanic or Latino	5%	6%	7%	10%	7%	1%	11%
White	87%	75%	89%	79%	85%	89%	82%
2 or more (or other)	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%
Foreign Born	1%	1%	1%	1%	4%	1%	2%
Unknown	4%	3%	1%	4%	0%	0%	1%

CC = Casper College, CWN = Central Wyoming College, EWC = Eastern Wyoming College, LCCC= Laramie County Community College, NWC = Northwest College, NWCCD = Northern Wyoming Community College District, WWCC= Western Wyoming Community College

Similar to race/ethnicity, the percentage of ADN and BSN students who are male is higher than that in the registered nurse workforce, although, no surprise, lower than K-12 students.

Figure 3. Gender of Students and Nursing Workforce
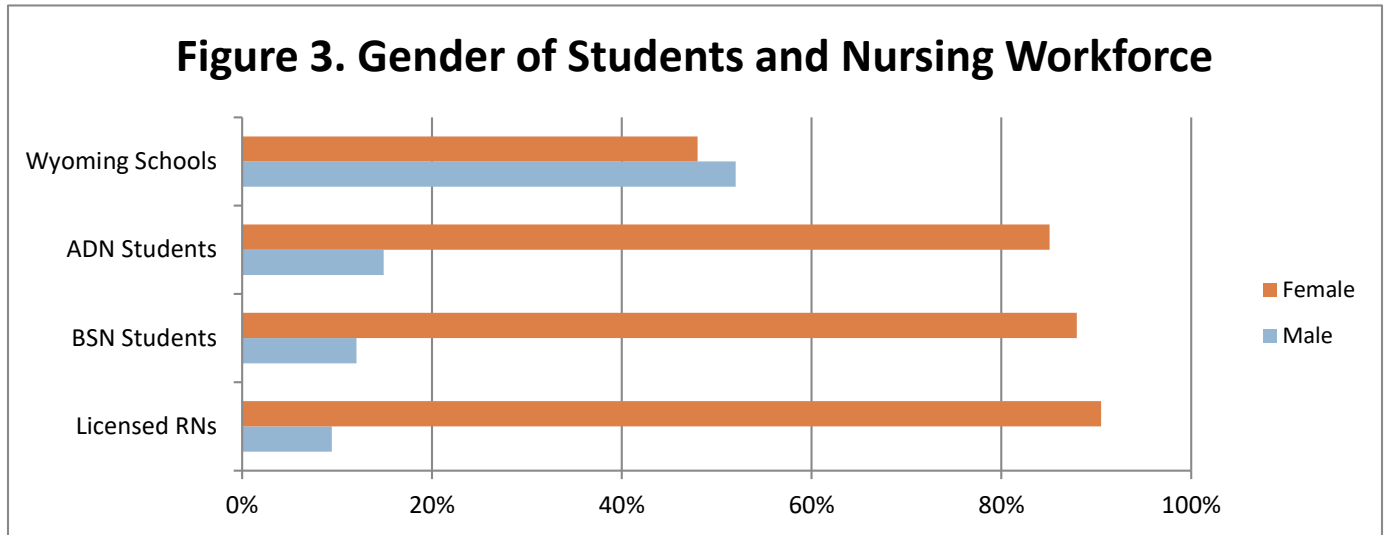
Source: Licensed RN data from Wyoming State Board of Nursing (WSBN) 2014 Renewal Workforce Data, ADN and BSN Student data from WSBN Annual Education Report AY 2014-2015, Wyoming School data from Statistical Report Series #2, 2008 to Present, State and District Fall Enrollment by Ethnicity and Gender For: 2015-16, Wyoming Department of Education

Conclusions

The Wyoming K-12 student population is more diverse than the nursing student population. In turn, the nursing student population is more diverse than the registered nurse population in Wyoming. Consequently, it makes sense to focus on strengthening the pipeline into nursing for diverse students.

SECTION TWO: DIVERSITY WORK PLAN

Overall Goal: Increase the diversity of the student nurse population in Wyoming.

After reviewing the available data on diversity in nursing in Wyoming, the Diversity Task Force made the decision to focus on diversity of the student nursing population, in other words the pipeline into nursing. The pipeline starts in middle/high school students, who as noted above are more diverse than current nursing students in Wyoming. That pipeline extends into the college/university setting focusing on pre-nursing/pre-clinical/pre-professional students who may or may not continue on to complete the nursing degree, and then into the actual nursing major and/or clinical component of the degree.   There the pipeline leads to the transition into nursing practice, and in some cases into additional education, including master's and doctoral degree programs. At any point along this pipeline, leaks can occur that can impact the diversity of nurses.

Objectives	Action Steps	Expected Outcome(s)	Timeline	Responsible Person/Organization	Evaluation
Develop partnerships between nursing programs and academic support/college readiness services to support potential/actual nursing students.	• Provide information to advisors and nursing faculty about academic support services, e.g., Student Success Services at UW, Educational Opportunity Centers across the state. • Provide information to advisors and nursing faculty on language programs.	Benchmarks: Gender of nursing and nursing student population: Race/Ethnicity of nursing and nursing student population:	2016-2017	WCN and Diversity Task Force	
Support career education and readiness in Wyoming	• Partner with AHEC to offer the health careers camp each summer.	Benchmarks: Number of students	Health Career Camp: Ongoing	AHEC WCN	

Objectives	Action Steps	Expected Outcome(s)	Timeline	Responsible Person/Organization	Evaluation
middle and high schools.	• Provide information to health care fairs, BOCES, high school counselors on nursing education opportunities.	attending camps: Number of students pursuing career in nursing:	Nursing education information: 2016-2017.		
Develop a repository of best practices to enhance diversity in Wyoming.	• Distribute *Diversity in Nursing: Wyoming's Solution* broadly around the state to nurses and nurse educators. • Solicit best practices • Develop a repository on the WCN website.	Benchmarks Development of the repository	2016-2017	WCN	
Monitor the diversity of nursing students and nurses in Wyoming.	• Evaluate the diversity of the nursing student population using data from the nursing program annual reports to the WSBN. • Evaluate the diversity of the nursing	Benchmarks: Gender – Race/Ethnicity -	Ongoing Nursing students: Annually starting in 2015. Nursing Population: Biennially starting in 2015. Pipeline into Graduate	WSBN WCN	

Objectives	Action Steps	Expected Outcome(s)	Timeline	Responsible Person/Organization	Evaluation
	population using the WSBN licensure renewal data. • Examine the pipeline into graduate education for nurses. • Update *Diversity in Nursing: Wyoming's solution*		Education: 2016-2017. Update *Diversity in Nursing: Wyoming's Solution* in 2017 after the WSBN biennial renewal.		

SECTION THREE: REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

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