

Career Opportunities

Higher Education Gives Nurses A Healthier Career

(NAPSA)—If you've ever considered a nursing career, now may be the time to follow that dream. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that nursing job opportunities will grow by 26 percent, or nearly 750,000 new jobs, by 2020, making it the fastest-growing occupation, on average.

Attending a two- or four-year college program can jump-start a nursing career by developing the teamwork, organizational and technical skills that health care employers seek, according to a group of educators, nurses and health care executives brought together by Apollo Research Institute. "In addition to improved patient care quality, nurses reap personal benefits by pursuing higher education because it boosts career options," says Dr. Tracey Wilen-Daugenti, Apollo Research Institute's vice president and managing director.

Although nurses without bachelor's degrees may be quite competent at patient care, they are more likely to be "passed over" when employers fill supervisory positions, says Diane Wilson, a 20-year registered nurse who now hires nurses as part of her role as chief operating officer of the Community Blood Center/Community Tissue Services in Dayton, Ohio. "You can be an excellent nurse but [you] won't meet the requirements for many job postings unless you have a college diploma."

In fact, the Institute of Medicine recommends nursing school leaders work together to boost the number of nurses with bachelor's degrees from 50 percent to 80 percent by 2020.

"Adults who pursue a college



Higher education helps nurses expand their career options by giving them the skills for today's jobs.

degree in nursing can earn a significant return on their tuition dollars," says Dr. Wilen-Daugenti, citing Apollo Research Institute's study comparing starting salaries of college graduates who enroll immediately after high school with those of working learners who self-fund their education while in the workforce.

According to the study, working adult students who graduated with a bachelor's degree in nursing were shown to earn, on average, a 36 percent return on their tuition dollars, compared to an average 18 percent return for students who did not have prior work experience or hold a job during college.

While there is no one educational path that is right for everyone, Dr. Wilen-Daugenti notes that nurses and health care professionals should seriously consider pursuing a degree, because "today's health care and nursing careers require more education and personal planning than in the past."

To learn more, visit <http://apolloresearchinstitute.org>.