

**Texas Statewide Health Coordinating Council  
Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) Advisory Committee  
Minutes of Meeting Held Wednesday, March 3, 2021  
10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was conducted virtually. There was not a physical location for this meeting.**

**Members Attending**

Angel Angco-Barrera, MBA, BSN, RN  
Jennifer DM Cook, PhD, MBA, RN  
Diana Dolan, PhD, CNML, RN  
April Ernst, MSN, RN, CNE  
Rachel Hammon, BSN, RN  
Cheryl L. Johnson, RN, MSN, CDP, CADDCT  
Karen Kendrick, MSN, RN, CPHQ  
Fu-An Lin, PhD  
Lula Pelayo, PhD, RN, FAAN  
Linda Rounds, PhD, RN, FNP, FAANP, FAAN  
Susan Ruppert, PhD, APRN, FNP-C, ANP-BC, FNAP, FCCM, FAANP, FAAN  
Courtney P. Sherman, DNP, MHA, APRN, WHNP-BC, CPH  
Lisa Taylor, PhD, RN, CNS, FNP  
Katherine Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN  
Remy Tolentino, MSN, RN, NEA-BC  
Sally Harper Williams  
Linda H. Yoder, PhD, MBA, RN, AOCN, FAAN  
Cindy Zolnierrek, PhD, RN

**Members Absent**

Pamela Burns, LVN (Unexcused)  
Sheila Fata (Excused)  
Katherine Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN (Excused)  
Linda H. Yoder, PhD, MBA, RN, AOCN, FAAN (Excused)

**Public Present**

Virginia Ayars, EdD, MS, RN, CNE  
Kristin Benton, DNP, RN  
Kim Gutierrez, DNP Student  
Janice Hooper, PhD, RN

**Staff Present**

Cate Campbell, MPH  
Kayla Davis, MS  
Pam Lauer, MPH  
Maria Perez

<p><b>1. Welcome and Introductions</b></p>	<p>Cindy Zolnierrek called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., and welcomed the committee members, staff, and guests present, who introduced themselves. Dr. Zolnierrek announced that the meeting would be recorded as required by the Administrative Procedures Act and the Open Meetings Act, and that members should state their name for the record when making motions.</p>
<p><b>2. Establish Quorum and Approval of Excused Absences</b></p>	<p>With 18 out of 22 members present, a quorum was established.</p> <p>Sheila Fata, Katherine Thomas and Linda Yoder requested excused absences.</p> <p>Motion to approve excused absences made by Remy Tolentino and seconded by Diana Dolan. The motion carried.</p>
<p><b>3. Review of March 3, 2021 Agenda</b></p>	<p>The agenda was not reordered.</p>
<p><b>4A. Approval of Minutes from the October 14, 2020 Meeting</b></p>	<p>Revisions for the October 15, 2020 meeting minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fu-An Lin provided a revision to section 4c. Trinity Valley Community College – “Valley” needs to be added</li> </ul> <p>Motion to approve minutes with revisions made by Cheryl Johnson and seconded by Angel Angco-Barrera. The motion carried.</p>
<p><b>4B. 2020 Nursing Education Program Information Survey Reports</b></p>	<p>Vocational Nursing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Characteristics - Pg 2. Add bullet related to net reduction of 10 programs over the last decade</li> <li>• Admissions, Enrollment, Graduation – No comments from committee</li> <li>• Student Demographics – No comments from committee</li> <li>• Faculty Demographics: Fu-An suggested to add actual numbers to go along with %s related to FT and PT faculty (Figure 1) and clarify the bulleted language so it is clear how the % change was calculated</li> </ul> <p>Motion to approve reports with revisions made by April Ernst and seconded by Susan Ruppert. The motion carried.</p> <p>Professional Nursing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Characteristics- A note will be added to the report related to the COVID related instructions as well as a note that the data may not reflect the impact until 2022. Suggestion to add a question related to what the programs learned and whether there is anything that they changed in response to COVID that they may keep.</li> <li>• Admissions, Enrollments, Graduation - Karen Kendrick suggested to add area of state/geographic information to “Level of Difficult for Graduates to Find a Job in Nursing” section on page 4. Fu-An suggested to report by types of programs</li> <li>• Student Demographics -</li> </ul>

	<p>Correct the spelling of "students" in the header for Newly Enrolled Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Faculty Demographics - Make same change as VN section re: adding #s to % on faculty FT/PT section/bullets Dr. Cook added that it might be interesting to know differences in characteristics by salaried versus contracted faculty or versus preceptor-level. What the formal education of these positions is. Dr. Dolan asked what's driving the use of PT faculty in nursing education programs</li> <li>Post-licensure RN to BSN - Add # RN to BSN programs over time Dr. Cook suggested that in future reports that data be reported separately for BSNs in community colleges in order to see how this growing option affects BSN production.</li> <li>High School Track - Check on the bullet about 1 program allowing program completion in high school and bullet about no programs allowing students to take NCLEX upon completion without some other requirement Dr. Hooper mentioned that the BON created a guideline and a link to it will be added to the fact sheet.</li> <li>COVID - No comments from committee</li> </ul> <p>Motion to approve reports with revisions made by Lula Pelayo and seconded by Jennifer Cook. The motion carried.</p> <p>Graduate NEPIS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program Characteristics - Check on Table 1 – says 5 CNS programs but everywhere else it says 3. Dr. Kristin Benton pointed out that the hours for the CRNA post-masters certificate are low. Program will check the numbers and follow up with the program. Fu-An suggested that the report note that only one CRNA program is master's level.</li> <li>Admissions, Enrollments, Graduation: Dr. Zolnierrek noted the big hump in #s in the Nursing Research profile. Program will check the numbers and note the reason. Dr. Dolan suggested adding an asterisk to 2019 that would relate back to the bullets/notes related to why the numbers are lower for 2019.</li> <li>Student Demographics: Figure 2 needs to be updated to say Texas RN Workforce.</li> <li>Faculty Demographics: Figure 2 update to be RN workforce rather than APRN Dr. Ruppert mentioned again that knowing more about the PT faculty would be helpful considering that 625 reported in graduate programs Dr. Lula Pelayo made a general comment about the race/ethnicity trends among students, faculty, nurses, and the Texas population and noted the disparity in Hispanic/Latinos in nursing compared to the Texas population and suggested that maybe schools should be asked what they are doing to increase</li> </ul>
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	<p>diversity. Dr. Zolnierек asked whether anything can be added to the Nursing Shortage reduction program to encourage increased diversity.</p> <p>Suggestion to add trends on faculty race/ethnicity.</p> <p>Motion to approve reports with revisions made by Linda Rounds and seconded by Remy Tolentino. The motion carried.</p>
<p><b>4C. Organizational Updates</b></p>	<p>Fu-An Lin gave an update on behalf of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) which included information on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A total of 12 programs in community colleges with BSN. Trinity Valley Community College was approved in December. Their first semester will be in Fall 2021 and they are approved to enroll 59 students.</li> <li>• The Nursing Innovation Grant Program – solicitation went out in late July for clinical learning experiences during COVID this included training for simulation and high fidelity virtual simulation with realistic and interactive scenarios, distance education debriefing, synchronous evaluation of student skills, and on campus practice when it is safe to return.</li> <li>• With COVID, programs were approved to make changes to use their funds as needed. 45 awards were made for a total of nearly 5 million dollars. The grant term began November 2, 2020 and will go until November 30, 2022. Among the funded, 27 from two-year colleges, 11 four-year institutions, 5 independent private institutions, and 2 health related institutions.</li> <li>• In collaboration with the TNA, THECB released a toolkit on Geriatric Competency and resources developed by Baylor University. Information on this will be shared with the staff to distribute to the committee.</li> </ul> <p>Kristin Benton gave an update on behalf of the Texas Board of Nursing (BON) which included information on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The legislative session senate finance committee hearing was on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. Kathy presented appropriated request with items asking for moving expenses to new building and requesting IT infrastructure to move servers to cloud.</li> <li>• All state agencies were requested to cut budgets by 5%, the agency was unable to hire temporary staff that they rely on seasonally when graduates are ready to apply for licensure. Asking for 5% back in appropriation request as well.</li> <li>• Other items include the ability to raise funds to pay out accumulated leave for their employees. Several staff have accrued maximum amount and if they retire it will be costly.</li> <li>• Requesting consideration that ED salary be moved from group 4 to group 5 set by legislature and move it to more comparable amount to other agencies who manage large licensee population.</li> </ul> <p>Karen Kendrick gave an update on behalf of the Texas Hospital Association (THA) which included information on the following:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• THA is supporting hospitals through the COVID pandemic. Primary issue is staffing – three categories             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Having adequate staffing</li> <li>2. Supporting the staff appropriately either safety or emotional/mental health</li> <li>3. Turnover, resiliency and maintaining staff.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• THA is working hard to help hospitals understand staffing resources. When the number of COVID cases goes down, the state is expecting to see the provided staffing numbers to go down.</li> <li>• There is a question in accordance with the number of staff who decided to leave hospital employer to work for staffing agencies; they are working hard to identify support opportunities for hospitals to help their staff emotionally and psychologically.</li> <li>• Next week during the annual conference there will be two breakout sessions on providing emotional/mental health support and other related items to resilience and maintaining/retraining staff. We will continue to send out updates to hospitals twice a week and in public media (Facebook, LinkedIn) highlighting healthcare heroes and we will encourage hospitals to send those in.</li> </ul> <p>Cindy Zolnierек gave an update on behalf of the Texas Nurses Association (TNA) which included information on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TNA has a new president elect, Joyce Batcheller. She will assume her office as president elect in July, and will be in this position for one year. On July 22,2022 she will be the next TNA president.</li> <li>• Bills being tracked include: In response to disaster, nurses who have become ill and took time off from work have had issues accessing benefits such as paid time off. House Bill 396 and Senate Bill 433 would help these nurses access benefits. House Bill 2409 will put into statute a waiver that was in place during the pandemic that would allow nurses with a license that had been inactive for less than 4 years to return without reactivation fee or continuing education.</li> <li>• Workplace initiatives – a bill that would require organizations including hospitals, long term care, home health, and FECs to establish committees to develop workplace prevention plans. The bill is backed by perioperative nurses.</li> <li>• APRNs – full practice authority bill moves delegation requirements.</li> <li>• School Nurses – a bill related to requiring school nurses on each campus. Promoted by school nurses. A waiver is being worked on to enable the state to access funds, so school nurses can directly bill Medicaid.</li> <li>• Bill for nursing faculty loan repayment program that will allow part-time faculty to access those funds too as well as a bill that will establish a loan repayment program for nurses in long term care.</li> <li>• Also, Stephanie Klick filed companion House Bill 2062, Which addresses telemedicine and telehealth, these have to do with funding and parity from insurers in how they reimburse. Also</li> </ul>
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	<p>allowing audio only for behavioral health services. This is a convenient and effective tool for them to get their healthcare needs met. Go to our website to get our updates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently we are getting a lot of calls about the governors opening up and no longer requiring masking. As nurses, we know science, and that masking is advisable and demonstrate our own personal responsibility.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4D. TCNWS Update</b></p>	<p>Pam Lauer provided an update on behalf of the TCNWS related to current projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the approval of the NEPIS reports, we will wrap up final revisions, do a final editorial review, and get them posted on the web.</li> <li>• We will also update the nursing education dashboard with the latest data for RN and VN programs.</li> <li>• We will also debrief on our 2020 NEPIS survey and process and begin the revisions for 2021. We typically solicit feedback from the education subcommittee in late May before meeting with the education consultants to update the survey instruments.</li> <li>• The team is also working on a dashboard for the graduate NEPIS. The dashboard will present the data in the most standardized way we have it.</li> <li>• Employer surveys, at the suggestion of our taskforces, are getting postponed until Spring 2022.</li> <li>• Our individual nurse surveys on APRNs and workplace violence are also postponed until then.</li> <li>• School health survey may go out before Spring 2022. We met with that taskforce in January and will be scheduling another meeting with that taskforce over the next several weeks.</li> <li>• As for the Workplace Violence Grant Program –working on amending contracts for awardees to extend their grant term from August 31<sup>st</sup> until April 30<sup>th</sup> 2022. COVID has had a huge impact on their abilities to carry out the projects they proposed and we’re just trying to work with everyone as best as we can to give them as much time as we can to implement their programs.</li> <li>• Working on the next RFP for the grant program. We hope to release it this summer. We are going to try something different this time to try to target nursing facilities, home health agencies, and the FECs in hopes to get applications from these other eligible types of facilities.</li> <li>• Recently updated our website to improve everyone’s ability to find our data, reports, our dashboards, etc. We’ve also created a new link to our website – it’s now <a href="http://www.dshs.texas.gov/nursingworkforce">www.dshs.texas.gov/nursingworkforce</a></li> <li>• Working on just “Other” things – including creating more data products intended for “print,” white papers, working on pulling our data together into master files rather than individual files for each year, exploring other data that’s available, and doing more indepth analysis.</li> <li>• Kayla working on a faculty trends report that is based on both faculty data from the NEPIS and as well as BON licensure data.</li> </ul>

<p><b>4E. Membership Terms</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Last year we updated the committee bylaws to add term limits for our members. 1/3 of our members have terms that will expire in August of this year, another third in August of 2022, and the final third in August of 2023. Every new member from this point forward will be appointed for a three-year term.</li> <li>• The term end dates were based on two things: the date of appointment to the committee and the distribution of positions by composition. In general, the longest serving members are in the first group and no representative category would all be assigned to the same group.</li> <li>• There are no term limits, so we encourage everyone who wants to be appointed to a new 3-year term to communicate that when the time comes. If you're representing an organization, please communicate with the organization you're representing.</li> <li>• Before mid-June, the TCNWS will reach out to everyone whose term is expiring this August to ask for your intent to either be appointed to a new 3-year term or to transition off from the committee.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Public Comment</b></p>	<p>No public comment.</p>
<p><b>6. Adjourn</b></p>	<p>The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 PM.</p>