

Population-Based Program Proposal

Expanding Georgia's Nursing Education Capacity Through Data-Driven Workforce Strategies

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Executive Summary

Georgia's nursing workforce shortage is a significant public health challenge driven by faculty shortages, limited clinical training capacity, fragmented workforce planning systems, and rising healthcare demand. Population growth, aging demographics, and increasing chronic disease prevalence continue to strain Georgia's healthcare infrastructure, while nursing education programs face persistent barriers that restrict the number of new nurses entering the workforce (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023; American Association of Colleges of Nursing [AACN], 2024).

Faculty shortages, inadequate clinical placements, and insufficient educational resources limit student enrollment capacity, with these challenges disproportionately affecting rural and underserved communities (Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce [GBHCW], 2026).

This proposal presents a scalable, data-driven strategy to strengthen Georgia's nursing workforce pipeline by expanding nursing education capacity through targeted faculty recruitment and retention initiatives, coordinated statewide clinical placement systems, and integrated workforce data modernization. Key objectives include increasing student enrollment capacity, improving faculty recruitment and retention, expanding clinical placement opportunities, implementing a unified workforce data system, and improving statewide student performance outcomes.

Core program strategies include academic–practice partnerships, competitive faculty incentives, simulation-based training expansion, centralized placement coordination, and predictive workforce analytics. Through phased implementation, stakeholder collaboration, and continuous evaluation, this initiative seeks to improve workforce distribution, strengthen healthcare access, reduce disparities, and build a more sustainable nursing workforce infrastructure.

By addressing structural barriers within Georgia's nursing education and workforce systems, this program supports long-term healthcare system resilience, promotes health equity, and provides a practical framework for statewide workforce modernization.

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1. Program Goal and Objectives

Program Goal:

To expand Georgia's nursing education capacity and strengthen the state's nursing workforce pipeline through targeted faculty recruitment, coordinated clinical placement systems, and integrated, data-driven workforce planning.

Objectives:

1. Increase nursing program enrollment capacity across Georgia's public and technical institutions by 15% within three years through expanded faculty recruitment, infrastructure investment, and enhanced clinical training resources, addressing documented educational bottlenecks that currently limit qualified applicant acceptance (AACN, 2024).
2. Increase nursing faculty recruitment by 10% within two years and improve faculty retention by 15% within three years through competitive salary incentives, mentorship programs, and academic-practice partnerships designed to address persistent faculty vacancy rates and educator shortages (AACN, 2024; GBHCW, 2026).
3. Expand statewide clinical placement opportunities by 20% within three years through centralized coordination systems, expanded healthcare partnerships, and simulation-based training models to reduce placement shortages that constrain nursing education capacity (AACN, 2024).
4. Develop and implement an integrated statewide nursing workforce data system within 24 months to improve workforce forecasting, educational planning, and evidence-based

policy development, consistent with Georgia workforce modernization priorities (GBHCW, 2026).

5. Improve student outcomes by increasing NCLEX pass rates by 5% statewide within three years while improving workforce distribution in rural and underserved communities, using current Georgia nursing performance data and targeted workforce equity initiatives as baseline indicators (Georgia Board of Nursing, 2025; GBHCW, 2026).

2. Background and Need

Georgia faces a growing nursing workforce shortage due to significant structural limitations within its nursing education pipeline. Population growth, increasing chronic disease prevalence, and an aging population are rapidly increasing healthcare service demand across the state (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). Simultaneously, nursing schools face major barriers in expanding student enrollment due to persistent faculty shortages, insufficient clinical training placements, and limited educational infrastructure (AACN, 2024).

Faculty shortages remain one of the most significant barriers to nursing workforce expansion. In 2023, U.S. nursing schools turned away more than 65,000 qualified applicants due primarily to faculty shortages, insufficient preceptors, and limited classroom capacity (AACN, 2024).

Nursing schools require qualified graduate-prepared educators, yet lower academic salaries compared to clinical practice often discourage nurses from entering faculty roles. Georgia's ability to expand enrollment is therefore directly constrained by educator shortages.

Clinical placement shortages present an additional bottleneck. Competition among nursing programs for limited hospital and community placement opportunities restricts student

progression and reduces educational throughput. Rural and underserved regions are particularly affected due to reduced healthcare infrastructure and fewer training sites.

Workforce planning is further hindered by fragmented data systems. Education, licensure, and employment data are often siloed across agencies, limiting policymakers' ability to accurately assess workforce shortages, forecast future needs, or allocate resources strategically (HRSA, 2022; GBHCW, 2026).

A coordinated, population-based strategy is essential because Georgia's nursing shortage is not solely an educational issue but a statewide public health systems challenge requiring collaboration among academic institutions, healthcare organizations, workforce agencies, and policymakers.

3. Target Population

Primary Populations:

- Pre-licensure nursing students (BSN, ADN, LPN)
- Nursing faculty and prospective nurse educators
- Healthcare organizations serving as clinical training partners

Secondary Populations:

- University System of Georgia (USG) institutions
- Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) institutions
- Georgia Board of Nursing

- Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce
- Rural and underserved communities experiencing disproportionate workforce shortages

Rationale for Rural and Underserved Focus:

Rural and underserved communities are prioritized because these populations frequently experience more severe provider shortages, reduced healthcare access, poorer health outcomes, and greater healthcare disparities. Strengthening nursing workforce distribution in these areas promotes health equity while addressing Georgia’s most critical workforce gaps (GBHCW, 2026).

4. Program Components

A. Faculty Recruitment and Retention

Strategies:

- Competitive salary supplements funded through academic–practice partnerships
- Loan repayment programs for graduate-prepared nurse educators
- Tuition assistance for advanced nursing education
- Joint clinical–academic appointments
- Faculty mentorship and leadership development programs

Rationale:

These interventions improve recruitment by making academic careers more financially competitive while improving retention through professional development, mentorship, and sustainable career pathways (AACN, 2024).

B. Shared Clinical Placement Model

Strategies:

- Centralized statewide clinical placement coordination system
- Expanded partnerships between healthcare systems and academic institutions
- Increased use of simulation-based education
- Prioritized placement allocation for rural and high-need communities

Rationale:

A coordinated placement model maximizes available clinical resources, reduces institutional competition, and improves training efficiency while expanding student capacity.

C. Data-Driven Workforce Planning

Strategies:

- Integration of education, licensure, and employment data
- Development of real-time workforce dashboards
- Predictive analytics for workforce forecasting
- Standardized statewide reporting

Rationale:

Integrated data systems enable proactive workforce planning, improve policy responsiveness, and support evidence-based resource allocation (HRSA, 2022).

5. Implementation Plan

Phase 1 (Months 1–3): Stakeholder Engagement and Strategic Planning

- Convene stakeholders
- Conduct statewide needs assessments
- Establish governance structures
- Finalize measurable benchmarks

Phase 2 (Months 4–8): Program Development and Infrastructure Design

- Design workforce dashboards
- Develop faculty incentive structures
- Build clinical placement systems

Phase 3 (Months 9–16): Pilot Implementation

- Launch faculty recruitment initiatives
- Deploy placement systems
- Begin dashboard integration

- Evaluate pilot outcomes

Phase 4 (Ongoing): Statewide Expansion and Continuous Improvement

- Scale successful interventions
- Conduct annual evaluations
- Refine strategies based on performance data

Key Partners:

- University System of Georgia
- Technical College System of Georgia
- Georgia Board of Nursing
- Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce
- Georgia Department of Public Health
- Northside Hospital
- Piedmont Healthcare
- Wellstar Health System
- Rural healthcare organizations

6. Logic Model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
State funding, academic partnerships, workforce data systems	Faculty recruitment, clinical system development, dashboard creation	Faculty hired, faculty retained, clinical slots created, dashboards implemented	Increased capacity, improved retention, expanded placements	Reduced shortages, increased workforce supply, improved health outcomes

Measurable Deliverables:

- 15% increased student capacity
- 10% faculty recruitment increase
- 15% faculty retention increase
- 20% clinical placement increase
- 5% NCLEX pass rate increase

7. Gantt Chart Timeline

A Gantt chart is a project management tool that visually outlines tasks, timelines, and implementation phases.

Task	Months 1–3	Months 4–8	Months 9–16	Ongoing
Stakeholder planning	✓			
Program design		✓		
Pilot implementation			✓	
Evaluation			✓	✓
Statewide expansion				✓

8. Evaluation Plan

Data Collection Methods:

- Enrollment databases
- Faculty workforce records
- Clinical placement tracking systems
- NCLEX reports
- Workforce dashboards

- Stakeholder surveys and interviews

Process Measures:

- Number of faculty recruited
- Number of faculty retained
- Number of clinical placements created
- Stakeholder participation rates
- Number of participating institutions

Short-Term Outcomes:

- Increased educational capacity
- Expanded student progression
- Improved faculty stability
- Improved placement infrastructure

Long-Term Outcomes:

- Increased NCLEX pass rates
- Increased licensed nurse supply
- Improved workforce distribution
- Reduced statewide nursing shortages
- Enhanced healthcare access

Continuous Quality Improvement:

Annual reviews will guide strategic adjustments to ensure sustainability, efficiency, and measurable progress.

9. Expected Impact

By addressing faculty shortages, clinical bottlenecks, and workforce planning deficiencies, this program will significantly expand Georgia's nursing workforce pipeline. Increased workforce capacity will strengthen healthcare delivery systems, improve healthcare access, and reduce geographic disparities.

Prioritizing underserved communities will improve workforce equity while promoting stronger public health outcomes. Long-term impacts include improved healthcare quality, reduced provider shortages, and greater statewide healthcare resilience.

10. Conclusion

Georgia's nursing shortage requires a systems-level, data-driven solution that addresses root structural barriers rather than temporary workforce fixes. Through strategic faculty investments, coordinated clinical placement systems, integrated workforce analytics, and sustained stakeholder collaboration, Georgia can modernize its nursing education infrastructure and strengthen long-term workforce sustainability.

This proposal provides a scalable framework capable of improving educational capacity, reducing disparities, and strengthening public health outcomes statewide. By prioritizing measurable outcomes, evidence-based planning, and health equity, Georgia can build a resilient

nursing workforce prepared to meet future healthcare demands while serving as a national model for innovative workforce planning.

References

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