

Appalachian Highlands Center for Nursing Advancement at East Tennessee State University

The agreement between Ballad Health and ETSU focuses on three strategic areas:

Data and research:

- Provide essential, reliable forecasting and workforce information, resulting in equitable access and distribution of nurses
- Develop new data streams in the areas of wellness, job satisfaction and engagement
- Collaborate with regional and national institutions to capture data surrounding travel nurse programs, career progression and attrition to better understand these critical issues impacting the profession of nursing

Collaboration:

- Collaborate with key stakeholders to address the nursing shortage across the Appalachian Highlands
- Collaborate to build and maintain the current workforce through the development of innovative educational and employment programs
- Maintain the competency/skill level of the current workforce through the development of continuing education offerings in collaboration with other education institutions

Advocacy:

- Promote the value of the nursing profession
- Support the successful transition of student nurses into the practice of nursing, especially where the parties agree the workforce needs are the greatest
- Implement professional development programs for the faculty and staff of other Colleges of Nursing to ensure the portability of knowledge from these programs, so the Center may share innovative initiatives with other institutions
- Advance practice development and build leadership practices across the College of Nursing
- Develop innovative solutions to the key issues faced in nursing currently and plans to address those issues, such as recruitment and retention, moving into the future

- Support the shared initiatives of Ballad Health in the development of a local and global community agenda to promote health, reduce disease disparities, improve treatment outcomes and promote the organizations' shared commitment to equity and inclusion.

The Center will benefit from a multidisciplinary Advisory Board, and it will be led by a Chair of Excellence at ETSU. The Advisory Board will be comprised of strong professional and community leaders who would serve as champions for nursing education, research, clinical excellence and workforce development.

The specific goals and objectives of the Center will include, among other things:

- The Center will strive to collaborate with other institutions of higher education and regional collaborators in its management operation. ETSU will commence outreach to other educational institutions to pursue collaborations throughout the Appalachian Highlands.
- The Center will work with partner institutions to develop a common pipeline for high school students to identify those with aptitude for the sciences and help match those students with employment and pathways to certification as a nursing support professional or for a nursing degree. These programs could match students with jobs within Ballad Health while they're in high school, leading to certification by the time they graduate high school, therefore linking these students with the possibility of scholarships for nursing degrees, as well as employment opportunities within Ballad Health.
- The Center will pursue contracted programs for the ongoing professional development of nurses to help them advance their clinical, social and managerial skills, with an emphasis on competencies and person-to-person interaction. ETSU will implement the programs in collaboration with Ballad Health and other academic institutions that wish to participate in developing evidence-based protocols for deployment – and therefore support – to the current nursing workforce.

- The Center will be multidisciplinary, involving programs across multiple colleges and programs such as education, public health, arts and sciences, medicine and others in the development of programs and strategic alliances to build optimal and diverse training opportunities for nurses.
- The Center will establish and maintain a database on nursing supply and demand in Tennessee and Virginia, to include current supply and demand and future projections. Using this data as a working framework, the Center will develop a strategic regional plan and work with appropriate entities to be a resource in the development of nursing manpower in the Appalachian Highlands.
- The Center will convene various groups representative of nurses, other healthcare providers, business and industry, consumers, legislators and educators to:
 - Review and comment on data analysis prepared for the Center
 - Recommend systemic changes, including strategies for implementation of recommended changes
 - Evaluate and report the results of these efforts to policy, governmental and other relevant constituencies
 - Develop programs for thought leaders in nursing to work together on key issues within nursing
- The Center will enhance and promote recognition, reward and renewal activities for nurses in the Appalachian Highlands by:
 - Promoting nursing excellence programs
 - Proposing and creating additional reward, recognition and renewal activities for nurses
- Promoting media and positive image-building efforts for nursing
- Promote wellness and a holistic approach for nurses, recognizing the challenges of modern healthcare. The Center will develop an annual and five-year plan to address its priorities, as well as an annual report of its activities and progress toward its goals.
- The Center will focus on the development of research and innovative programs for nursing resilience. These programs will likely identify the characteristics of successful nurses and identify systems for healthcare employers to support nurses in the continuously changing environment of increased technology, higher patient acuity and the personal risk of exposure to harm from societal risk.
- The Center shall seek collaboration from regional nursing programs to prioritize regional educational and workforce needs. Any regional colleges or universities that agree to align the future development of their programs to meet the needs of the Appalachian Highlands will have access to the research, programmatic activity and other activities of the Center.
- The funding by Ballad Health is intended to ensure participating institutions prioritize the admission and retention of students who are likely to remain in the region, and the Center designs programs and communications to promote retention in the region.

Learn more about the ETSU College of Nursing at etsu.edu, and open nursing jobs with Ballad Health are listed at balladhealth.org/careers.

