

U.S. faces nursing teacher shortage

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A shortage of teachers at U.S. nursing schools is reportedly limiting student capacity, while the demand for nurses continues to increase.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing blames budget constraints, an aging faculty, and increasing job competition from clinical sites for contributing to the "emerging crisis."

The Washington, D.C.-based AACN says U.S. nursing schools during 2005 turned away 41,683 qualified applicants to baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs and nearly three-quarters -- 73.5 percent -- of the nursing schools blamed faculty shortages for those rejections.

As of July 2006, an association survey determined there were 637 faculty vacancies at 329 nursing schools with baccalaureate and-or graduate programs across the nation. Most of the vacancies were faculty positions requiring a doctoral degree.

Part of the problem is compensation. According to a 2006 survey by The Nurse Practitioner, the average salary of a master's prepared nurse practitioner is \$72,480. By contrast, the AACN says master's prepared nursing faculty earn an annual average salary of \$55,712.

The association says unfilled faculty positions will pose a threat to the nursing workforce during the next five years.

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