



NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE

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GOVERNOR CUOMO SIGNS MORELLE AND FLANAGAN LEGISLATION TO STRENGTHEN EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS FOR FUTURE REGISTERED NURSES

New Education Standards for Future Nurses Will Improve Patient Care and Outcomes

December 21, 2017 (Albany, NY) -- Today, Senate Majority Leader John J. Flanagan and Assembly Majority Leader Joseph D. Morelle announced that Governor Andrew Cuomo has signed legislation ([S6768/A1842B](#)) that strengthens education requirements for future registered nurses – which has been directly linked to improved care and patient outcomes. This legislation will require registered nurses to attain a bachelor's degree or higher in nursing within ten years of their initial licensure. In addition, the bill establishes a temporary commission to evaluate and report on barriers to entry into the nursing profession.

Shorter lengths of stays, higher patient acuity, and more sophisticated technologies and procedures are increasing the complexity of patient care - which in turn places great demands on nursing expertise. The National Advisory Council on Nursing Education and Practice, policy advisors to Congress and the U.S. Secretary of Health and Education, and the Future of Nursing Report from the Institute of Medicine has recommended that 80% of nurses should hold a baccalaureate or higher degree. These recommendations are based on their analysis of evolving needs associated with patient care and public protection.

In New York, and across the nation, there remains a scarcity of nurses with higher degrees of education. The New York State Board for Nursing, recognizing the evolving needs associated with patient care and nursing workforce planning, unanimously passed a motion in December 2003 recommending that statutory change be sought requiring future licensed registered professional nurses to attain a baccalaureate degree in nursing ten years after initial licensure in order to continue to practice in New York. This bill is designed to mirror the educational requirements of teachers throughout the state. All current RNs, as well as those currently enrolled in an associate's degree program or on a waitlist to a nursing program, would be "grandfathered" and their licenses forever protected from this mandatory additional educational requirement.

Furthermore, this legislation establishes a commission to evaluate barriers to entry in the nursing field and make appropriate recommendations with the goal of increasing availability and accessibility of nursing programs. The commission shall report their findings twelve months after this legislation becomes law.

This legislation will take effect immediately; however, the requirement that nurses obtain a baccalaureate degree or higher within 10 years of licensure shall take effect thirty months after this legislation becomes law.