



1235 E. Concord St.
P.O. Box 536985
Orlando, FL 32853-6985
407-896-3261 • FAX 407-896-9042
Email: info@floridanurse.org

LEAH KINNAIRD, EdD, MSN, RN
PRESIDENT

WILLA FULLER, RN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FNA Position Paper 2016

Nursing Education

- The Florida Nurses Association supports legislation (SB 146, HB 123) that would sanction for-profit universities that have high student loan default rates.
- FNA opposes any efforts to cap four-year baccalaureate programs at community colleges.

Background:

Recent media reports have outlined significant problems with for-profit nursing programs that recruit students with hopes of landing lucrative jobs. But the education is lacking – many cannot pass the nursing exam for licensure – and they cannot get jobs that will enable them to pay back their student loans. In addition, most hospitals will not hire newly licensed nurses who have graduated from an institution that lacks national accreditation. Nursing students are not told this when they are aggressively recruited by “career colleges,” according to a recent series in the Miami Herald.

The Florida Nurses Association and other nursing organizations have engaged in a campaign to educate nursing students about this problem. But tougher policies need to be implemented.

SB 146 (Ring, Gaetz) and HB 123 (Rodriguez) would require higher education institutions to inform students of their national accreditation status. The legislation would also crack down on those institutions that have high student loan default rates.

Under federal law, higher education institutions with a default rate of 30 percent or more face sanctions and lose eligibility to participate in federal loan programs for their students. SB 146/HB 123 would apply that as an accountability measure to Florida’s for-profit colleges. If their student loan default rate exceeds 30 percent, they would also be prohibited from participating in state student loan programs.

Meanwhile, efforts have been made in previous legislative sessions to cap enrollment in four-year degree programs offered at community colleges. This is problematic, as a national initiative calls for 80 percent of RNs to have their four-year bachelor’s degree in nursing by 2020. In Florida, many RNs rely on community colleges to earn their BSN degrees. Stifling the growth of four-year nursing programs at community colleges in effect stifles the very increase in nursing school graduates that are greatly needed in Florida’s healthcare pipeline. According to the Florida Center for Nursing, the state faces a shortage of 50,000 RNs in the next decade.