Future Directions of Credentialing Research in Nursing

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IOM Standing Committee on Credentialing Research in Nursing

- Standing committees **do not make recommendations**; they are a “sounding board”

- Our charge:
  - Discuss issues related to research on credentialing of nurses and organizations
  - Short- and long-term strategic planning
  - Surveillance of the field
  - Serve as a focal point for discussions and potential ad hoc studies

- 5 meetings 2013-2015
IOM Standing Committee on Credentialing Research in Nursing

• Topics we addressed:
  – emerging priorities for nursing credentialing research
  – research methodologies and measures
  – the impact of individual and organizational credentialing on improving healthcare performance, quality, and outcomes
  – strategic planning for moving the field forward

• Outcomes:
  – Three discussion papers
  – Workshop (separate planning committee)
Workshop focus

- Short- and long-term strategies to advance the field
  - conceptual framework
  - research agenda to evaluate the impacts of nurse and organization credentialing
  - emphasis on nurse and patient outcomes

- Specifically….
  - Emergent priorities for research in nursing credentialing
  - Critical knowledge gaps and methodological limitations
  - Promising developments in research methodologies, health metrics, and data infrastructures
  - Short- and long-term strategies to encourage continued activity
Planning Committee

- Bobbie Berkowitz (Chair), Columbia University School of Nursing
- Linda Burnes Bolton, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center
- Robert Dittus, Vanderbilt University
- Karen Drenkard, GetWellNetwork, Inc.
- Lynne Grief, Blake Medical Center
- Kenneth W. Kizer, University of California, Davis
- Jack Needleman, University of California, Los Angeles
- Robin Newhouse, University of Maryland School of Nursing
- Joanne Spetz, University of California, San Francisco
- Joan Stanley, American Association of Colleges of Nursing
Theme 1. A Shared Research Framework

- A common vision or **conceptual model** is needed

- Current research on nursing credentialing research is limited and inconsistent

- Determining the **impact** of nursing credentialing on institutions, nurses, and patient outcomes should be a primary goal of any national agenda
ANCC Research Council Model for Credentialing Research

- **Standards**
  - Individual
  - Organizational

- **Credentials**
  - Individual
  - Organizational

- **Intervening Variables**

- **Outcomes**
  - Patient
  - Population
  - Community
  - Organization
  - Nurse

- **Environment**
  - Organizational
  - Social
  - Economic
  - Political
The Expanded Conceptual Model (ECM)

- Competencies/Capabilities = What a credential/standard measures and how it translates to practice

Seek Credential: (Influenced by internal and external factors)
- Obtain Credential

Invisible Architecture (e.g., climate/culture/leadership)
- Work Organization
- Nurse Performance

Environmental Confounders and Effect Modifiers
- Institutional: (e.g., size/market/teaching)
- Individual: (e.g., training/education/attitude)

Organization (e.g., outcomes/retention/payment/financial)
- Nurse Outcomes
- Patient Care
- Patient Outcomes

Business Model
- Population Health Outcomes
Breakout Group Ideas: Modify ECM

- Influence of teams and inter-professional collaboration on work environments and health professionals
- Layers of organization that intervene between institutions and individual nurses
- Visible architecture & the “invisible” one (norms and expectations)
- Environmental components that affect individuals and institutions
- Reflect the role of payers and professional organizations
- Include a temporal element (recent grads vs experienced nurses)
- Expand the number of feedback loops
- Differentiate between what is measured in the credentialing process and how it relates to competency or capability
Theme 2. Improved Data Availability, Harmonization, and Interoperability

- Nursing credentialing research requires **extensive data**
  - Complex data sets to control for numerous intervening and possibly confounding variables
- Need for **greater data harmonization and interoperability**
- To improve interoperability:
  - Standardized performance measures
  - Standardized data collection procedures on credentials
- A common data model could answer specific research questions across organizations, systems, and databases
Theme 3. Examine Causality

- Research designs and methods need to explore causal links between evidence-based practice, nurse certification or nursing credentialing, and health-related outcomes.

- Research must determine whether the process of nursing credentialing or other factors associated with nursing credentialing influence health-related outcomes.

- It may be sufficient to demonstrate that credentialing encourages evidence-based practices, which lead to improved outcomes.
Simplified Conceptual Model of Credentialing Pathway

Credentialing process

Enhanced:
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Attitudes

Improved:
- Workplace behavior
- Organization of work tasks
- Architecture of work environment

Earlier recognition and intervention resulting in better patient outcomes

Source: Romano, 2014
Theme 4. The Changing Roles of Nurses in a Complex Health Care Environment

- The field of nursing is changing
  - Increasingly complex and dynamic health care services
  - Different health care delivery structures and care settings
  - This affects research strategies

- Performance assessment methodologies must be more dynamic

- Emerging technologies may change the practice of nursing
  - Some certification requirements may not reflect new skill needs

- The ACA has created new opportunities for nurses and research to help better understand the role that nurses play
Theme 5. Credentialing Research and Other Health Care Improvement Initiatives

- Research on nursing credentialing can be linked to general health care quality improvement activities.
- The ACA has expanded the sources of data available.
- Previous efforts to promote a culture of excellence and integrated health care systems could be used as a model.
- Research is also subject to larger forces within the health care system.
  - Payment reform
  - Communication strategies
  - Marketplace factors
Theme 6. Additional Resources to Advance Research

- Promising advances in data collection / data infrastructures, and research designs require additional resources

- Alternative funding strategies are needed
  - Upgrading data environments to improve interoperability are expensive
  - Good causal research requires sustained funding

- Different stakeholders value credentialing differently

- Potential role of independent bodies to prioritize different long- and short-term strategies
Different Stakeholders Value Credentialing Differently

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<th>Nurse</th>
<th>Delivery Organization</th>
<th>Oversight Organization</th>
<th>Credentialing Organization</th>
<th>Consumer</th>
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<td>Improve quality</td>
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<td>Improve processes of care</td>
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<td>Improve culture</td>
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<td>Provide professional support</td>
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<td>Shape future practice</td>
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<td>Improve job satisfaction</td>
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<td>Improve recruitment and retention</td>
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- Source: Needleman, 2014.
Breakout Group Ideas: Most Important Knowledge Gaps

- What additional data about nursing credentialing and certification can be developed?
  - How many people are certified?
  - What certifications do they have?
  - How are certifications distributed?
- What is the value of a credential to an individual nurse?
- What is the economic value to the organization for employing credentialed nurses?
- Does certification improve nurses’ ability to implement evidence-based practices?
- Which credentials matter for which outcomes?
Breakout Group Ideas: Improving Access to Sufficient Data

- Adopt a common data model and standardized method for data collection
- Collect minimum dataset elements by state boards of nursing in their re-licensure surveys
- Add credentialing information to employers’ human resource databases
- Improve researcher access to data
- Use standardized, organization-specific data on patient outcomes
Breakout Group Ideas: Short- & Long-Term Strategies to Encourage Activity

- Get data house and information management tools in order
- Identify data gaps and strategies to fill them
- Develop and implement a strategic communications plan
- Consider a range of possible funders & make the case
- Build research capacity among the nurse credentialing organizations to promote consistent research
- Identify research methods best able to answer the questions
- Consider leveraging mandates to stimulate research in related areas (e.g., licensing requirements)
Breakout Group Ideas: Outreach and Communication

- Identify all stakeholders
  - Payers
  - Employers
  - New nurses
  - Risk managers
  - National Council of State Boards of Nursing
  - Nursing faculty, academia,
  - Accreditation and regulatory agencies
  - Patients and families
Breakout Group Ideas: Outreach and Communication (continued)

- Develop a broad-based promotional campaign
- Create a standardized taxonomy for certification
- Engage risk managers specifically with respect to the need for research
- Develop transition-to-practice programs for new nurses that culminate in obtaining certification
Thank You!

- Workshop Summary released January 7, 2015

- Free PDFs of the report available: www.nap.edu