Foreign-Trained Nurses Ahead of the Curve in United States

The number of U.S. healthcare organizations actively seeking foreign-trained nurses is increasing. Healthcare administrators cite everything from bedside manner to reliability for why they’re so useful; however, as PassportUSA has covered before, foreign-trained nurses arrive to the United States with an advantage before they even step into a hospital. That’s because the vast majority all carry a bachelor’s degree. And according to an article in *The Wall Street Journal*, that’s what nearly every nurse is going to need soon.

Anna Louie Sussman spoke with a U.S. nurse who earned her associate’s degree in nursing yet cannot land a full-time role nursing despite applying to over three dozen listings.

“Truthfully, an associate’s program is not really going to get you anywhere anymore,” said nurse Megan Goodman to Sussman in the article.

According to Sussman’s article, the number of nursing programs rocketed 41 percent between 2002 and 2014. During that time, the amount of new nurses ballooned about 80 percent; however, the number of nurses over 50 doubled, as many would-be retirees remained working.

This brings us to the ever-popular “silver tsunami” term used in most national nursing shortage reports. A bulk of the nursing demographic is nearing retirement – senior nurses, nurse educators, etc. – and they’ll need to be replaced.
The Institute of Medicine recognized the problem, and in 2010, the third-party advisory group called for 80 percent of the nursing workforce to have a bachelor’s degree by 2020. The goal was based on research dating to the early 2000’s, research that showed how hospitals with a higher amount of nurses with a bachelor’s degree scored higher on indicators of “overall quality care.”

On top of The Institute of Medicine’s advisory, The Affordable Care Act puts more focus on preventative care, which of course makes hospitals rely on nurses for more leadership and coordination skills – skills, as the article says, that are not part of the nursing associate degree curriculum.

That’s why foreign-trained nurses have made for an exceptional alternative. Facilities need flexible nurses who have the skills that a bachelor’s degree curriculum demands.

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