

# Generation RN<sup>SM</sup>

Addressing the Critical Shortage of Nurses in Florida



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# Florida Blue Foundation Nursing Investments Impact Report

Improving the Quality and Safety  
of Patient Care 2001-2019

## Executive Summary

Twenty years of corporate philanthropy invested in alleviating Florida's nursing shortage has provided an opportunity to more than 9,000 nursing students, and placed Florida Blue at the forefront of addressing this workforce and patient health care issue. *Since 2001, Florida Blue has invested nearly \$30 Million to ensure that more nurses are prepared for and working to support high-quality patient care.* Florida Blue and its philanthropic arm, The Florida Blue Foundation, have been key players in every movement to educate nurses at all levels, elevate the profession, and ensure their voices were heard. Florida Blue and the Florida Blue Foundation developed Generation RN<sup>SM</sup> to create a pathway for students to enter the nursing profession, especially underrepresented men and women. The Foundation recognized the value of the Florida Center of Nursing at the University of Central Florida by funding its operations, programs, and serving in policymaking positions. When Congress passed the Affordable Care Act, the Foundation recognized that nurses would play a prominent role in reshaping health care and funded the Florida Action Coalition – an initiative recommended to the States by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Institute of Medicine.

- **Generation RN is one of three areas where Florida Blue and the Florida Blue Foundation made investments in nursing**
- **Next is the Florida Center for Nursing at the University of Central Florida, which is mandated to “address issues of supply and demand for nursing”**
- **The final area of investment is the Quality of Patient Care, which promotes programs and research to improve patient outcomes and better prepare the health care workforce**
- **Each of these investment areas is designed to call attention to the importance of nurses in health care facilities and the community**

Embodying how best to direct corporate philanthropy, Florida Blue recognized a need and deployed its resources – time, talent, and treasure – to make a difference and remained steadfast and committed for two decades. Each investment built upon the work that came before in alignment with the primary goal for Generation RN; increase the nursing workforce, and improve care. The result is a fully built and funded infrastructure that attracts and retains nurses within higher education, and the workforce – this is the legacy of Generation RN.

# Investing In Nursing

In 2001, The Florida Center for Nursing projected a shortfall of 52,500 nurses by 2020. With over 2 million professionals in the early 2000s, nursing was and still is the largest segment of the nation's health care workforce. A shortage of nursing is not just a workforce development issue. A low nurse staffing ratio threatens patient safety and quality of care in every health care setting. No health care professionals are as omnipresent as nurses. Other health care team members play their part, but it is the time nurses spend caring and advocating for patients that makes the difference. The absence of nurses in health care settings is a matter of life and death.

Without a doubt, nursing is the foundation for health care systems in the United States and around the world. With that in mind, it is no surprise that the World Health Organization deemed 2020 as the Year of the Nurse, which frames the need to focus on the concerns echoed 20 years prior as follows.

- **Nurses account for nearly 50% of the global health workforce.**
- **Nurses play a critical role in health promotion, disease prevention, and the delivery of primary and community care.** They provide care in diverse clinical settings and will be crucial for achieving universal health coverage.
- **Having an adequate nurse workforce increases the quality of care and improves clinical outcomes.** Higher nurse staffing levels are linked to fewer deaths, lower failure-to-rescue incidents, lower rates of infection, shorter hospital stays, and lower hospital readmission rates.



Nurses account for nearly 50% of the global health workforce.



- **There is a global shortage of health workers.** In particular, nurses represent more than 50% of the current shortfall.
- **A well-trained nursing staff increases high-quality care and improves clinical outcomes.** In hospitals, a 10% increase in the proportion of nurses holding BSN degrees decreased the risk of patient death and failure to rescue by 5%.
- **Achieving health for all will depend on there being sufficient numbers of well-trained and well-supported nurses.** Pay and recognition needs to be commensurate with the services and quality of care they provide.
- **Investing in nurses extends beyond a financial return.** The report of the UN High Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth concluded that investments in education and job creation in the health and social sectors result in a triple return of improved health outcomes, global health security, and inclusive economic growth.
- **As part of strong multidisciplinary health care teams, nurses make a significant contribution to delivering on the commitments made in the 2018 Astana Declaration on Primary Health Care.** This helps ensure patient-centered care close to the community.

As the Florida Blue Foundation transitions away from its nursing investments, it is clear that the impact of its work will continue in perpetuity, and the importance of the outcomes as a result of these efforts now have a worldwide stage.

# Three Areas of Work

Florida Blue convened statewide meetings with legislators, educators, and business executives to find ways to combine public and private resources to invest in nursing education. Through this extensive research and deliberation, Florida Blue and the Florida Blue Foundation's executive leadership (formerly the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Foundation) moved to address the State's nursing shortage as both a workforce development crisis and a threat to patient care through the development of Generation RN, a statewide corporate philanthropic effort to make strategic investments and leverage the company's capabilities and relationships. The goal of building and sustaining an adequate and well-trained nurse workforce was to improve Florida's health care system and, thereby, the health of all people in Florida.

**Generation RN** also gave Florida Blue valuable opportunities to interact with diverse stakeholder groups in positive and meaningful ways, including the public, hospital administrators, government officials, higher education, business leaders, and community leaders. Addressing the nursing shortage via corporate philanthropy was also an opportunity to bring positive public notice and recognition to Florida Blue for successfully shepherding better health outcomes through community impact activities. The Florida Blue Foundation's investments in nursing and allied health higher education established a renewable source of funding for student scholarships and endowed professorships. Funding for undergraduate scholarships provided entry to underrepresented nursing students to build a workforce reflecting Florida's ethnic and gender diversity. Graduate level scholarships focused on increasing the numbers of master's and doctoral level nurses qualified to educate undergraduate students to boost the instructional capacity of accredited nursing programs.

The Foundation's philanthropic support continued with robust investment in the Florida Center for Nursing (FCN), an agency mandated by Florida statute to address the nursing shortage at the same time that the Florida Blue Foundation ramped up its efforts. The Foundation supported the Center's general operations, and at least four of its initiatives aimed at advancing the nursing profession.

After a decade of investments in nursing education, the Foundation recognized the importance of supporting nurse-led research projects and initiatives focused on improving patient care. As has been noted,

nurses live at the health care system's front lines, and their provision of quality care is proven to affect patient outcomes. The Foundation's investments recognize nurses as a valued contributors to building a competent and compassionate system of care.

This focused philanthropy, intended to address the nursing shortage in Florida, provided the Florida Blue Foundation with opportunities to build relationships with nursing-centered agencies and organizations - not only to educate nurses - but improve their working conditions and heighten awareness about the profession.

## I. Generation RN (2003 - 2019)

**Florida Blue Investment:** ..... **\$24 Million**

**Funds leveraged or matched from public and private sources:**..... **\$25 Million**

The nursing shortage was an issue of immense magnitude, so large that it would require a collaboration of the public sector and the private sector to create sustainable solutions. Beyond training, the initiative sought to build a nursing workforce that could provide high-quality, culturally competent care to patients. A strategy emerged to leverage public funding and attract additional private donors to effectively double, and in some cases triple, the resources available.

Starting in 2003, Florida Blue made philanthropic investments of more than \$10 million in nursing and allied health higher education via grants and endowments at public and private colleges and universities across the State of Florida.

A \$1 million endowment to expand access to nursing education and to develop a more culturally diverse nursing workforce was first established at three South Florida universities in 2002. The unique partnership enrolled students the following year in a dual degree program. Biology majors at St. Thomas University (STU), a federally-designated Hispanic-Serving Institution, and at Florida Memorial University (FMU), a Historically Black University, were enrolled in the University of Miami's (UM) nursing program. Students completing the



program receive a Bachelor of Science in Biology from STU or FMU and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from UM. Florida Blue's initial investment has attracted more than \$6 million in private philanthropy and has grown to include enrollment of students at Florida International University.

Florida Blue made an unprecedented endowment in 2003 to the Florida State College Foundation, formerly the Foundation for Florida's Community Colleges, when it established the \$2.5 million Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship. It was the single largest gift ever made to the Foundation at the time. The gift was eligible for a 100% match by the Florida Legislature. Advocacy by Florida Blue and the Department of Education led to a funding appropriation, which immediately doubled the endowment. Each year, accredited nursing programs in the state college system draw down funds to award scholarships to eligible nursing and allied health students, based on financial need, cultural ethnicity and other under-represented groups in nursing such as men. State colleges are required to secure a local match for the funds, further leveraging the initial gift.

Endowed scholarships have also been established at public and private universities across the State of Florida. Capital improvements for classroom and lab space in nursing and allied health programs also received philanthropic investments, including Bethune-Cookman University, Jacksonville University, Florida A&M University, and the University of South Florida. Endowed professorships are in place as well to increase educational capabilities at institutions such as the University of Florida, the University of North Florida, and the University of Central Florida.

Through Generation RN, the Foundation engaged with organizations working to elevate the profession, such as the Florida Hospital Association, Florida Nurses Association, Florida Center for Nursing, Deans and Directors of Colleges of Nursing in Florida, the Department of Education, and Workforce Florida. The

Foundation also supported the collaboration of nurse executives and educators in the Jacksonville area to coordinate clinical placements and other education-to-workforce issues leading to membership in the First Coast Nurse Leaders group. These stakeholder relationships enabled the Foundation to address pressing nursing workforce and education issues. For example, the Florida Blue Foundation offered matching funds to nursing schools receiving SUCCEED funds from the State of Florida to expand instructional capacity and increase faculty. The Foundation also supported an online collaborative, so nurses in the Panhandle and North Florida were able to pursue doctoral degrees at the University of Florida without leaving their home communities.

Two significant efforts by Florida Blue were intended to both bolster workforce retention and make improvements in the workforce environment.

First, the company established an endowment at the University of Florida for research in nursing best practices. Known as the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida Center for Health Care Access, Patient Safety and Quality Outcomes, the university will take a national leadership role identifying trends and making recommendations.

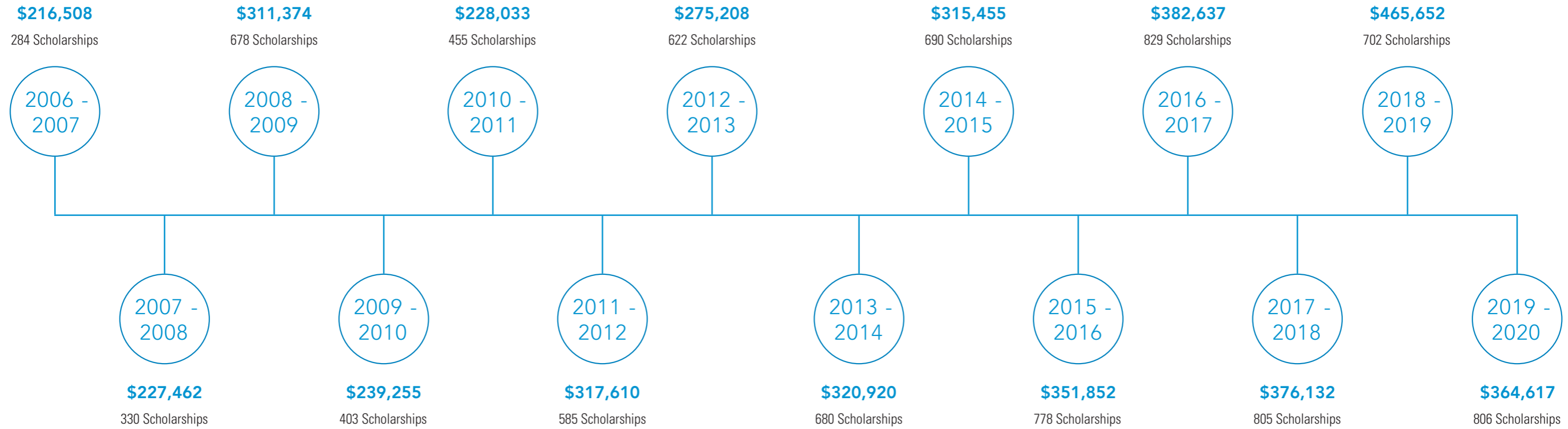
Second, Florida Blue funded research at Nova Southeastern University into the success and effects of Magnet-designated hospitals. The Magnet Recognition Program<sup>®</sup> was developed by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) to recognize health care organizations that provide nursing excellence. Magnet hospitals are shown to have improved workforce retention and recruitment and improved patient outcomes. Recognizing the value of this information to consumers, Florida Blue added the Magnet-designated status of hospitals in its network in online provider directories available to members.

## Beneficiaries

- **State Colleges (Former Community Colleges)**
  - Scholarships: Florida College System Foundation (28 state colleges)
    - Endowment value as of June 25, 2020: \$9,441,917
- **Four Year Institutions (Public and Private)**
  - Scholarships: Florida's State System (11 universities)
    - Four offering master's programs
    - Three offering doctoral programs
  - Scholarships: Private colleges and universities
    - Ten institutions of higher education
      - Two offering master's programs
      - Two offering doctoral programs
- Non-scholarship investments
  - Health care courses designed to increase student retention
  - Leadership development
  - Research workforce issues and patient outcomes
  - Scholar and clinician lectures
  - Nursing career promotion for middle school students
  - Simulation and informatics technologies
  - Uniforms, books, and laboratory fees



Over 9,000 Florida students have earned nursing and allied health scholarships since the inception of Generation RN.



\*\*Does not include local match amounts

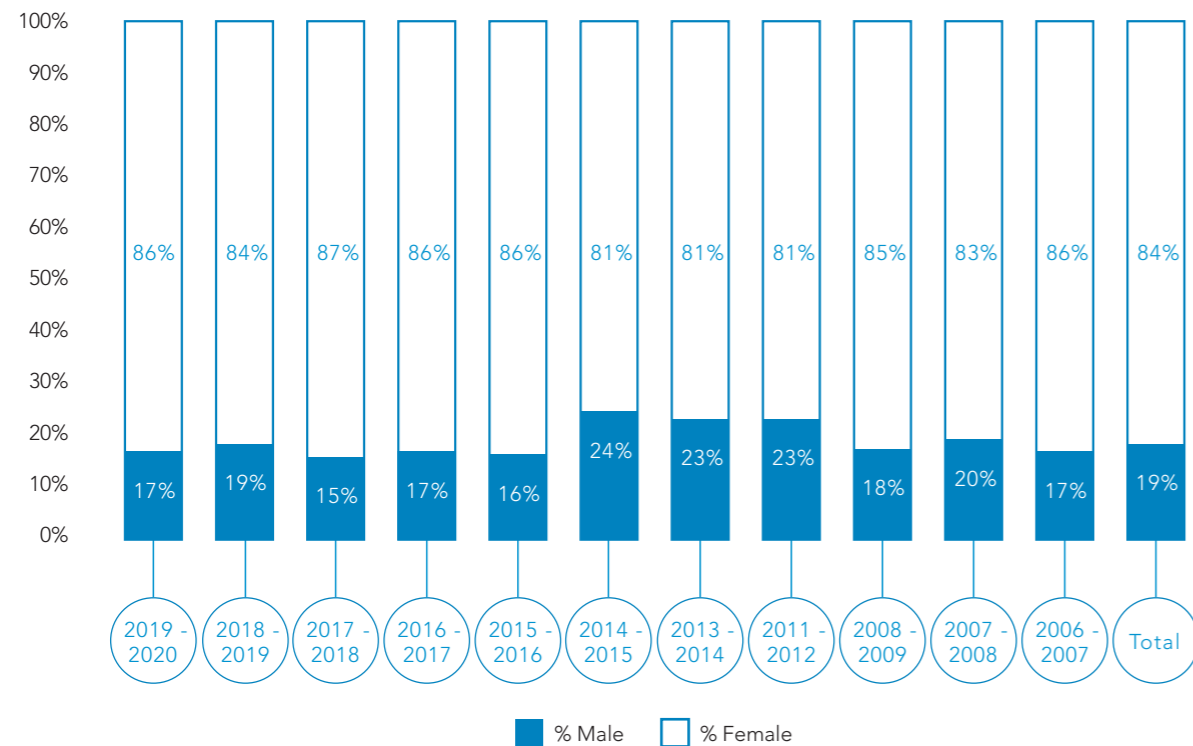
Florida College System Foundation Florida Blue Nursing and Allied Health Scholarships 2006-2020	
Total Florida Blue Investment**	\$4,392,715
Total Scholarships Awarded	8,647





As of April 2017, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation, 333,350 nurses identify themselves as male. Of the total nursing workforce, this equates to just over 9% of the cumulative nursing workforce. **Florida Blue Scholarship recipients attending state colleges have consistently surpassed that rate each year. For almost two decades, the average for male participation is 19%.**

### Florida College System Foundation Percentage of Student Scholarship Recipients by Gender



Information for 2009-10, 2010-11, 2012-13 was not available

Nursing education investments at four-year college programs resulted in 337 nurses with advanced degrees, representing 61% of those receiving Florida Blue Foundation scholarships at this level.

Four-Year College and Post Graduate Scholarship Programs Public and Private Higher Education Institutions (2006-2017)		
Degree Awarded	#	
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)	199	<b>Total Award Dollars</b> \$1,371,822.00 <hr/> <b>Average Award</b> \$2,485.00 <hr/> <b>Graduation Rate</b> 84%
Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)	220	
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) or Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP/Nurse Practitioner)	117	
Other (Not Reported)	16	
<b>Total Scholarships</b>	<b>552</b>	



**The Foundation's initial education-focused investments qualified for \$19.6 million in state funds and \$12 million in private donations. These resources have enhanced or established:**

- Nursing scholarships
- Faculty endowments
- Student mentoring
- Professional development
- Career path programs
- Educational opportunities for underrepresented groups and non-traditional students
- Research to develop and replicate nursing best practices

**Florida Blue's Generation RN efforts also received recognition at the state and national levels as a model of excellence in corporate social responsibility.**

- 2005 Community Leadership Award Finalist, America's Health Insurance Plans
- 2005 Image Award Florida Public Relations Association
- 2006 Best Corporate Social Responsibility Program, American Business Awards
- 2006 Workforce Champion Award, Workforce Florida, Inc., and the Agency for Workforce Innovation
- 2007 Corporate Citizen Award, American Association of Colleges of Nursing
- 2007 Excellence in Health Care Award, South Florida Business Journal

The notes below from current students, graduates, and education partners highlight the importance of financial assistance when students are working to make their dreams a reality. Reducing the cost burden for education lowers a primary barrier for entry into the health care professions, which in turn positively impacts the nursing shortage.

## Administrators

*"Florida Blue donated \$2.5 million to establish a Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship in 2004. With matching funds from the State Legislature through the Dr. Philip Benjamin Matching grant, a \$5 million endowment was created the following year. Since its inception, this scholarship has awarded over \$4 million and served over 8,500 students. If we continue to disburse funds at the same rate as we have in the past, we should serve an additional 2,000+ students over the next four years."*

[Judy Green, President, The Florida College System Foundation](#)

*"The funds contributed by Florida Blue are extremely important to the next generation of health care workers. Over and over again, recipients say that they feel encouraged and motivated when they receive a scholarship. They are inspired to keep working hard, and many say they're inspired to give back to future health care students one day. Florida Blue scholarships directly impact health care and the economy at the local level. As we consider our frontline heroes who have responded during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clear that more program graduates are needed. Many will be able to move right into the job market in the local community when they complete their education."*

[Andrea Krieger, Executive Director of Institutional Development, Pensacola State College Foundation](#)

*"The Florida Blue scholarships are changing the trajectory of individual lives and the face of health care in our community. The funds have supported many underrepresented students over the years who are now successful health care professionals providing for their families and giving back to our local community. The Florida Blue scholarship funds were crucial in ensuring student completion in that they provided monetary relief that allowed the students to dedicate their time to their chosen program of study instead of working multiple jobs while simultaneously attending school."*

[Dr. Jodi Long, Associate Vice President of Health Science Programs, Santa Fe College](#)

*"A review of the demographics of the HCC nursing students reveals that the HCC students are many times first-time college students, older than their counterparts in the university setting, and require financial assistance to maintain their student status. For this reason, the opportunity to receive financial assistance from Florida Blue can make the difference in a student's ability to be successful in our program and to achieve their goal of a nursing career. This achievement impacts not only the student but their families, and the patients they will care for in our community. Without the support for our students from Florida Blue, the HCC program would be unable to continue providing our health care community the desperately needed qualified nurses they need to meet their needs."*

**Stephen Shear, Executive Director, Hillsborough Community College Foundation**

*"Since the inception of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Endowed Nursing Scholarship, over 75 nursing scholarships have been awarded to students who have become productive nurses in our community. The Florida Blue Foundation has empowered and helped launch the next generation of health care providers who will change our world. Because of your generous donations, the University of West Florida will continue to provide high-impact education practices, transform experiences for our students and programs, which change the future of our community, our industries, and our world. Thank you for believing in the University of West Florida."*

**Tori Bennett, Director, Division of University Advancement, University of West Florida**

## Students

*"I cannot express my gratitude enough. Neither can my mother. When I told her of the good news, she screamed from joy."*

**Alissa G., Student, Valencia College**

*"I am a single mother of four beautiful children. I have always wanted to become a nurse. I have been working as a medical assistant for 16 years, and now I am currently in the licensed practical nursing program. I am forever grateful for this opportunity."*

**April, Student, Pensacola State College**

*"I am proud to say that with this scholarship giving me a second chance, I was able to complete last semester with an A in Microbiology, and a B in Chemistry, which with hard work, can be achieved."*

**Kachina Kenton, Student, Indian River State College**

*"Thank you for believing in me enough to make such a generous investment in my future! I will certainly be working towards excellence throughout my senior year to ensure my financial aid award is put to good use. Thank you again!"*

**Kendall Weidamoyer, Student, Jacksonville University**

*"I never thought I would be the subject of a scholarship in my life, much less, finding myself in nursing school, so it means so much to me that I was selected. It means the world."*

**Ryan, Student, Pensacola State College**

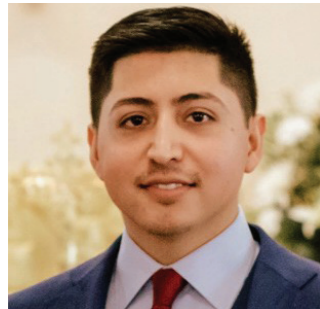
"I am a 29-year-old Florida resident with a six-year-old son that I take care of each day. This scholarship is important because it helps with funding for my classes.

*I just want to say thank you for giving me this opportunity and granting me this scholarship. I am truly thankful and know that I will not waste this chance."*

**Ta'Kara Frazier, Student, Santa Fe College**

*"Your gift of this scholarship allows me to continue following my dreams so that one day I can share the gift of hope with patients and families across the world."*

**Yalizeth C., Student, Valencia College**



*"My family and I, personally, experienced difficult times with a loved one who was in the hospital for a long time. After graduating from high school, I decided to choose a career in nursing because it would prepare me with the advanced skills and knowledge to care for the sick or well. I used the Florida Blue scholarship to help pay for my nursing program experience, including gas, food, and books."*

**Dennis Mejia, RN**



Mejia received the Florida Blue scholarship while a student at South Florida State College in December 2017. He currently works at Advent Health Sebring in the medical-surgical unit as a floor nurse and, occasionally, as a charge nurse.

*"It is such an honor, and a blessing to be nominated, let alone, be a recipient of an award such as this one. And I am grateful to Florida Blue and my instructors for being given the opportunity."*

**Melissa Acosta, RN, BSN, MSN**



Acosta received the Florida Blue scholarship while a student at SFSC in December 2015. In 2017, she continued her education at the University of South Florida and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in nursing, and later a Master of Science degree in nursing. Recently, she achieved national certification as a family nurse practitioner (FNP) through the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board. Acosta has also earned the following certifications: Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS), (Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), (Trauma Nursing Core Course (TNCC), and Emergency Nursing Pediatric Course (ENPC). In 2018, she became a Certified Emergency Nurse.

*"I am so thankful for this scholarship. Today, I not only achieved my goal of becoming a nurse, but I know I am a role model for my kids. They know if you work hard, good things will follow. Thank you, Florida Blue!"*

**Olga Hatfield, RN, BSN**

Florida Blue Foundation scholarships helped clear the path for tenacious and dedicated students to enter the nursing profession. As they graduate and enter Florida's health care systems, these nurses will stay the course, advocate for their patients, and challenge the status quo because they exhibited those same qualities in the quest to become nurses. *By 2025 Florida Blue Foundation funding will have enabled approximately 11,000 barrier-breaking individuals from diverse backgrounds entry to nursing, helping to reduce the shortage and diversify the field.*

## II. Florida Center for Nursing (2007 - 2019)

Florida Blue Investment: ..... \$2.5 Million

*"I'm very comfortable saying that we would not continue to be here if it weren't for the Florida Blue Foundation. We would not have been able to continue the work and to achieve our research agenda. I mean, I just can't say enough. It's not just money, they are our partners, and that means that we can talk with them about things, and we gain suggestions on approaches. It's a partnership, not just funding."*

**Mary Lou Brunell, Executive Director, Florida Center for Nursing at the University of Central Florida**

The Florida Center for Nursing (FCN) was established in 2001 (FS 464.0195) to address issues of supply and demand for nursing, including issues of recruitment, retention, and utilization of nurse workforce resources. For over a decade, the Florida Blue Foundation partnered with FCN on multiple projects to advance the nursing profession, lead changes in nursing and health care delivery, and increase access to affordable, high-quality care. The Florida Blue Foundation began supporting FCN with a general support grant in 2007. The partnership continued to grow for over a decade, with investments in a range of nurse-centered projects outlined below.

2009

**Partners Investing in Nursing's Future (PIN) Grant:** Information from focus groups with nurse educators informed the completion of a statewide simulation resource inventory and identified unique characteristics and needs in specific geographic areas. An analysis of the data collected yielded a strategy for establishing state and regional models for using simulation technology in nursing education. Those strategies include facilitating communication protocols, a common infrastructure for technical expertise, the establishment of usage standards, sharing of equipment and scenarios/modules, and establishing outcome measures for evaluation.

2011

**The Florida Action Coalition (FLAC)** was established in response to the Institute of Medicine's landmark 2010 study *"The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health,"* which focused on the critical intersection between the health needs of diverse patient populations and the actions of the nursing workforce. The Florida Blue Foundation provided the required matching funds to the FCN to qualify for funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to create the FLAC.

2011

For eight years, the Foundation and FCN co-chaired FLAC, which is still the driving force for implementing the IOM's recommendations in four areas:

- Nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training.
- Nurses should achieve higher levels of education and training through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression.
- Nurses should be full partners, with physicians and other health professionals, in redesigning health care in the United States.
- Effective workforce planning and policymaking require better data collection and information infrastructure.

One of FLAC's great successes is its database of nurse leaders interested in and available to the legislature, corporations, and others to sit on boards and participate on committees focused on access to care, community health, and more.

FLAC has also invited elected officials, health industry executives, health care practitioners, educators, philanthropists, AARP Florida, and business leaders to participate in the Coalition. The Foundation also granted funds to hire a qualified nurse to serve as a coordinator and liaison with FLAC volunteers, and state and national leadership.

2012

**Florida Healthcare Simulation Alliance** is a statewide organization with the mission of advancing coordinating, and expanding the use of all forms of simulation in academic settings, health care institutions, and agencies across the state to advance health care education to foster patient safety. It serves as a resource to facilitate collaboration, networking, and the development and integration of best practices into the delivery of patient care and to improve patient safety.

2013

**Nursing Summit:** Showcased a wide range of nursing efforts, recognized Florida Blue Foundation nursing scholars, and hosted workshops led by national experts.

2015

**Healthcare Workforce Research Initiative:** FCN received a grant from CareerSource to form the Health Care Workforce Leadership Council to serve as the primary point of contact for statewide health care industry-specific labor market intelligence and facilitate policy and strategy development. The primary



outcome of this work was the establishment of the Healthcare Workforce Research Initiative, the organizational nucleus for health care occupations data to support informed decision-making by health care stakeholders, and facilitate research and grant proposals that support a healthier Florida.

Comprised of three research centers— Center for Health Care Providers; Center for Nursing; Center for Allied Health – HWRI contributes to better health care workforce strategies through:

- Identifying supply, demand, and education distribution and trends in health care to support the appropriate planning for future workforce needs
- Directing and informing policies to alleviate shortages in key areas
- Ascertaining the cost-effectiveness of staffing with particular professionals
- Analyzing the effect of workforce supply on population health outcomes
- Estimating changes in supply needed to meet the demands of new forms of health care delivery
- Providing a statewide and regional forecast and perspective on health care workforce issues
- Identifying new models of health care delivery
- Identifying emerging and evolving roles and occupations in health care

The foundation for the HWRI builds on the expertise and successful data analysis model of the Florida Center for Nursing. Susan Towler, Florida Blue Foundation Vice President, and the Executive Director of Corporate Social Responsibility, Florida Blue, was one of the founding advisors to the HWRI.

FCN, in partnership with the Florida Blue Foundation, raised the nursing profession's profile by introducing new processes and practices, creating space for collegiality, and providing opportunities for coalition building across disciplines. As a result, nurses across Florida received enhanced training and developed significant insights on addressing challenges facing the profession. Moreover, those working outside the health care professions developed a better understanding of the role nurses play in building healthier communities.



### III. Quality of Patient Care - QPC (2014 - 2019)

Florida Blue Investment:..... \$3.3 Million

*"My colleague and I put in an application to take quality and safety training modules throughout Florida. And we received a \$45,000 three-year grant from FBF to do so in 2014. So, we dissected Florida and took quality safety training to all four points in Florida. We were very frugal with that money, and in the end, we had \$16,000 leftover, and Florida Blue said, "Spend it within the next six months on something quality and safety." So, in 2017 we put on our first interprofessional patient safety forum, and it was a half-day. And it was an overwhelming success, and at the end of March, we're going to be having our fourth one and every major hospital in Northeast Florida are now major sponsors. My nurse leader colleagues across the country are astounded; they cannot believe how much has come from what was called a mini-grant. I mean, these people are used to going out and getting millions of dollars in grants. And they can't get over that \$45,000 has not only taken quality and safety training across the state, but it's also launched a major conference, it's launched a degree."*

**Teri Chenot, Chair, Jacksonville University Health Care Quality and Safety programs, and Associate Professor, Keigwin School of Nursing**

*"VIM has partnered with UNF to provide individualized health plans and telehealth interventions to improve patients' health outcomes. Nursing students assess health parameters and educate, as well as collect health outcome data on blood pressure, weight, and blood glucose levels. Nutrition students provide dietary education and counseling, weight management, chronic disease prevention and treatment, and culinary instruction. Mental Health Counseling students offer education and guidance. Our work with UNF and Florida Blue has helped us make decisions at the national level. Most recently, our VIM America CEO developed a relationship with DOXY.ME (a Telemedicine platform) which is the software we have already begun using for our pilot. Our UNF team has agreed to help with training and implementation so that it can be used around the country."*

**Jennifer Ryan, Chief Executive Officer, Volunteers in Medicine (VIM)**

Quality of Patient Care supports nurses at the forefront of implementing evidence-based practices in quality improvement initiatives. Through a competitive process, the Foundation awards grants to support applied and translational research conducted within university and college training centers and hospital and nurse-led clinical settings. Grant recipients are working to improve patient care for individuals at every stage of the human life cycle, from birth through the end of life. The projects listed also provide practical training and education pathways for nursing and allied health students and professional nurses.

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**Orlando Health, Inc.**

***Orlando Health Dementia Education and Resource (DEAR) Program***

**Project Summary:** Support the development of the DEAR program to provide an effective, scalable model for training health providers and caregivers to improve the quality of care for patients living with dementia in Central Florida. Caregivers will be engaged through educational opportunities to strengthen their skills in caring and advocating for their family members with dementia. The DEAR program will not only benefit the Orlando Health system but hospitals across the state that care for an aging population.

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**University of Florida Foundation, Inc.**

***The Aging and Integrative Pain Assessment and Management Initiative***

**Project Summary:** Support development of the Aging and Integrative Pain Management Initiative to improve the quality of care and quality of life for aging adults living with chronic pain through education and training. The program will utilize person-centered, multidisciplinary, integrative approaches to pain management consisting of two separate but complementary programs.

1. *Integrative Pain Management* course for health care providers.
2. *Aging with Pain Workshop Series* geared towards aging patients and their caregivers utilizing multidisciplinary teams working in concert to improve patient outcomes and more adequately manage pain.

The Initiative is a partnership and collaboration among UF Health Jacksonville, Brooks Rehabilitation, Jacksonville Aging Center, and Center for Simulation Education and Safety Research.

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**Miami Children's Health System Foundation - Nicklaus Children's Hospital Foundation**

***Baby Steps: Telehealth Nursing Interventions to Improve Transition to Home for Pediatric Patients***

**Project Summary:** Support the Baby Steps program, which will utilize telehealth services to assist caregivers and improve the transition process from hospital to home. This transition period often comes with an increased risk for vulnerable children and their caregivers and can result in emergency department visits and re-hospitalization. These risks can be compounded by health care access issues, which are mitigated with telehealth services that assist caregivers and improve the transition process. The secondary purpose of the program is to address the nursing workforce shortage through training nurses and educating nursing students in the telehealth delivery model. This is a collaborative effort with the University of Miami, School of Nursing and Health Studies.

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**Florida Atlantic University, College of Nursing**

***Caring-based Academic Program in Excellence (CAPE)***

**Project Summary:** Support the development of the Caring-based Academic Program in Excellence (CAPE), a part-time pre-licensure Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) track for working adults who have a degree in another discipline. This program will address the nursing workforce shortage by creating 223 new registered nurses using the CAPE curriculum. The program will be offered for six consecutive semesters on the Davie Campus. Also, the grant will support students who have unmet financial needs and provide mentoring for students in the program. This innovative part-time pre-licensure second-degree program has the goal of increasing the number of BSN graduates that will be practice-ready and willing to serve communities in Florida. No other part-time pre-licensure BSN program track exists in the state of Florida for working adults.

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**Pine Castle, Inc.**

***Nursing the Pine Castle Participant to Better Health***

**Project Summary:** Pine Castles' programs teach social skills, self-care skills, provide group activities, offer vocational training, and provide comfortable group homes. The purpose of this grant is to continue the campus clinic and residential nursing program by supporting a Registered Nurse for the day program and group home residents. A qualified nurse on-site enables Pine Castle to serve individuals with unique medical needs not met by other providers such as tube feedings, seizures, and blood pressure checks. On-site nursing care will increase the safety of participants ensuring the best possible health outcomes for these adults who are often forgotten.

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**Building Abilities of Special Children and Adults (BASCA), Inc.**

*Psychological/behavioral nursing services to individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDDs)*

**Project Summary:** Through this project, BASCA will use a three-pronged approach of psychological/behavioral nursing services/training, reactive strategies training, and music/movement therapy modalities to meet the unique mental health needs of individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities due to their limitations expressing and making decisions regarding their behavioral and psychological needs. Coordination of these therapeutic modalities will improve the behavior and the overall quality of life for these underserved individuals.

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**Hospice of the Florida Suncoast, Inc.**

*Improving the quality of hospice through palliative care*

**Project Summary:** Over 40% of the clients/patients served qualify as low-income, while another 23% utilize Medicaid. Hospice of the Florida Suncoast (part of the Empath Health integrated network of care) seeks to expand services by increasing palliative care clinical service hours to provide more patient/client services, including individuals in assisted living facilities and those in their own homes.

The program focuses on relieving pain, symptoms, and stress during a severe illness. In-home palliative care helps those dealing with chronic or advanced disease to maintain the most comfortable, independent, and active lifestyle possible, enjoying a better quality of life. Consultation provided by board-certified palliative arts clinicians or ARNPs - supported by specialized social workers and spiritual care providers – will offer expert assistance in managing pain and symptoms.



# Closing Statement

Nursing has always been a profession integral to the health and well-being of communities, as recognized most recently by the World Health Organization. Florida Blue has realized and valued the contributions of nurses and has for nearly 20 years worked proactively to elevate the profession. By increasing the pool of nursing candidates, bringing attention to the challenges nurses face, and heightening the critical importance of quality of patient care.

The Florida Blue Foundation has been a champion for the nursing profession since 2001, led by the goal to address the State’s nursing shortage. When **Generation RN** was launched to take on the task, the Florida Center for Nursing projected the need for an additional 52,500 nurses by 2020. In response, the Foundation has endowed scholarships at colleges and universities throughout Florida, and in 20 years, 9,199 nursing and allied health students received support to propel their health care careers.

A nursing shortage still plagues Florida like many other States; however, the remedy requires an intentional approach to solving this health care challenge. According to HRSA’s 2017 Supply and Demand Projections for the Nursing Workforce, Florida will have a surplus (53,700) of registered nurses by 2030. However, the projection does not consider an increase in demand for nursing services from an aging population with complex health issues, new requirements that may come about with health care reform, or critical health events like COVID-19.

At the same time, more than 40% of Florida’s nurses are approaching retirement age within the next ten years, and there are not enough future nurses in the pipeline to replace them. Furthermore, this loss of experienced nurses will create a knowledge gap that can affect patient care.

In April 2020, the Florida Center for Nursing reported that there are 324,000 nurses licensed to work in Florida, but only 236,000 are working – some are retired. Others have opted out of working in patient care because the shortage places high demands on current RNs. When there are not enough nurses, those working in the field feel the pressure and strain of high patient loads and long hours, therefore choosing to find more flexible and manageable careers.

In addition to working on increasing the number of nurses as noted in this closing statement and throughout this report, the Foundation also anticipated many of these impending challenges by fostering coalitions, building capacity within higher education, and incenting the creativity of nursing professionals. What the Foundation leaves behind is a network of nursing champions able to leverage their experiences and resources to address this next iteration of the nursing shortage.

20 YEARS OF *Generation RN*<sup>SM</sup>



**52,500**  
ORIGINAL PROJECTION OF NURSES NEEDED BY 2020

**9,199**

STUDENTS HELPED THROUGH FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS/ ENDOWMENTS

**2030:**

**+53,700**

A SURPLUS IS PROJECTED BY 2030, BUT...



**40%**

A LARGE PORTION OF FLORIDA NURSES WILL REACH RETIREMENT AGE IN THE NEXT 10 YEARS

**324,000** LICENSED

**236,000** WORKING



**We Pass On A Stronger Network And Coalition Prepared To Meet Future Needs**

