

The Competition is Getting Stiffer

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Throughout the world nursing programs are impacted. In the U.S. this is even more of a problem! In the school year 2004-2005, approximately 147,000 qualified applicants to all degree levels in nursing programs were turned down according to figures released from the [National League for Nursing](#). In 2003-2004, 125,000 qualified applicants were turned away. This number continues to rise each year.

According to preliminary data for 2008 from the [AACN](#) (American Association of Colleges of Nursing), enrollment in BSN courses has continued to increase each year for the past eight years. However, the number of qualified students turned away from BSN program also remained high. While enrollment increased by 4.98% in 2007, there were approximately 30,709 qualified BSN candidates who were denied admission to a nursing program. The AACN expects the final number for 2008 to be even higher when exact data is available in mid 2009.

Shortage of Nurse Educators

The primary reason for turning away qualified applicants is that there is a shortage of nursing instructors. This is an issue The National League for Nursing has been addressing with Congress and the President. Each year, President Bush has proposed a cut in the **Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Funds** which provides among other things assistance to nurses who wish to become nurse educators, and nurse educators to further their education.

For FY 2010, President Obama proposes to increase this [Title VIII](#) funding slightly, but it may not be enough. The NLN asks nurses and those who wish to become nurses to support this legislation with their Senators and Congressional Representatives, but encourage them to increase this funding. Go to [Congress.org](#) to find out how to contact your legislators.

Not only is there a shortage of nurse educators because of education opportunities, but also because of low salaries. Nurses can earn more and have better benefits working in the industry than they can as educators. Funding to pay nurse educators more has got to become a reality before this problem will be resolved!

Impact on Nursing Students

For those interested in pursuing a career in nursing these statistics point out the fact that the competition for entrance into nursing programs is

getting much stiffer. This trend is likely to continue until the shortage of nurse educators is significantly reduced.

What does this mean for prospective students? It means you have to become the best possible candidate for the program you want to enter. It also means you cannot put all of your hopes into one program. You need to diversify and apply to several different options including LPN, ADN and BSN programs. The competition for the few spaces is very stiff.

- You need to have excellent grades in high school
 - You need to complete your pre-requisite courses and have excellent grades
 - You need to apply to several programs
 - You need to have experience in the health care field (i.e. work as a CNA, medical assistant, volunteer in a hospital or clinic)
 - You need to achieve a high score on any Nursing Entrance Exams
- Talk to the admissions department in the nursing programs you are interested in and see what you can find out about the type of candidate they are looking for. How do they rank applicants or do they have a first-come policy or perhaps a lottery? Each program will have different criteria. See [How Do I Find a Nursing Program](#) for more information.

Many schools have waiting lists. Find out if your application automatically places you on the waiting list and how many students they accept from the list each year. Do they accept students each term or only once each school year? If they enroll students all year long is it easier to get in at winter, spring or summer term vs. fall?

There are nursing programs that [don't have waiting lists](#). You may have to go out of state and pay higher tuition.

If you can't get into your chosen program(s), continue your education and work towards a degree in science such as biology or chemistry. Then apply to an accelerated nursing degree program. Don't give up and don't get discouraged.

One other thing you can do to help this situation is to continue to write to your (national and state) legislators and encourage them to support legislation to improve nursing education opportunities and [Title VIII](#) Nursing Workforce Development.

