

Recommendation to Fund the CHSE Certification for Nursing Simulation Instructors

Prepared by the NCWS Simulation & Technology Committee

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Executive Summary

The Society for Simulation in Healthcare (SSH) defines health care simulation as a technique that creates a situation or environment to allow persons to experience a representation of a real health care event for the purpose of practice, learning, evaluation, testing, or to gain understanding of systems or human actions. Simulating patient care scenarios is a rapidly growing component of nursing education as it places students, nurses, and a variety of healthcare professionals into complex patient care situations where their decisions help to guide the outcome of the scenario. The simulation is followed by an organized debriefing, which serves to solidify the learning experience and offer opportunities for improvement.

Simulation education in nursing helps students develop essential skills, such as clinical decision-making, communication, and hands-on procedures, in a safe and controlled setting. Types of simulation include high-fidelity patient simulators that mimic physiological responses, mid-fidelity manikins for basic procedures, and virtual simulations. It allows learners to practice and refine their skills without risking patient safety. Furthermore, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, simulation emerged as the predominant method for clinical instruction for numerous students, emphasizing the need to ensure nursing programs across the state have the ability to provide simulation education if their clinical rotations are disrupted in the future.

A key finding from the recommendations put forth by the NCWS Simulation and Technology Committee in June 2024 was the need for state funds to support nursing educators in obtaining Certified Healthcare Simulation Educator (CHSE) certification. Certification enhances the quality of simulation education by standardizing best practices, improving patient safety, and validating educator competencies. The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) identified certification of simulation faculty and simulation center

accreditation as quality indicators (Spector, et al, 2020). The NCSBN Simulation Guidelines for Prelicensure Nursing Programs provide a framework for integrating simulation into nursing education and stress the importance of faculty member participation in simulation related professional development and certification in simulation (Hayden et al., 2015). These guidelines are endorsed by the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing (BORN) and used for program approval and ongoing compliance evaluation.

In the winter of 2023, the Massachusetts BORN revised Regulation 244CMR 6.04 2(b)c pertaining to lab and clinical faculty requiring a master's degree, pursuit of a master's degree, or a certification. This change resulted in significant discussions in the academic community, including concerns that this would add to the challenge colleges and universities face when hiring nursing faculty, increasing faculty vacancy rates and affecting enrollment.

In response to the regulation change, the NCWS Faculty and Education Committee made a recommendation to fund the Certified Academic Clinical Nurse Educator (CNE-cl) certification for didactic instructors in November 2023. While this investment will positively impact nursing faculty across the commonwealth, for faculty who teach in the lab and teach using simulation, the Certified Healthcare Simulation Educator (CHSE) exam is a more appropriate certification than the CNE-cl.

In Massachusetts, there are currently only 62 individuals with a CHSE certification, and only a portion of these individuals are working as educators in nursing programs.

Adoption of the Healthcare Simulation Standards established by the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning (INACSL) demonstrates a commitment to quality and implementation of rigorous evidence-based practices in healthcare education to improve patient care. To adhere to the INACSL standards, there is a need to increase the number of CHSE certified educators across the commonwealth.

Investing in CHSE certifications for nursing faculty both ensures Massachusetts has ample simulation instructors to prepare the next generation of healthcare professionals and satisfies the Massachusetts BORN requirement for certification of nursing faculty. To support educators interested in pursuing their CHSE certification, state funding to mitigate the costs is needed; see Table 1 for more information.

Table 1: Cost of CHSE Certification

	SSH* Member	Non-SSH* Member
Review course includes study resources (8 hours)	\$370.00	\$370.00
Salary to complete course (\$60/hour x 8 hours)	\$480.00	\$480.00
Practice exam	\$75.00	\$75.00
Certification exam	\$395.00	\$495.00
Total Cost	\$1,320.00	\$1,420.00

*SSH refers to members of the Society for Simulation in Healthcare

The recommendations for CHSE certification align well with the specialized needs of teaching clinical simulation, much like the CNE-cl certification does for direct patient care teaching. Both certifications play a crucial role in ensuring that educators are not only skilled but also meet standardized, evidence-based practices in their respective fields. While CNE-cl focuses on validating the educator's ability to teach clinical nursing at the bedside, CHSE certification is designed to equip educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively teach through simulation, a growing and vital component of nursing education.

Simulation-based education allows students to engage in hands-on learning without the risks associated with real patient care, enhancing clinical decision-making and critical thinking. CHSE certification guarantees that educators are trained to facilitate these experiences in a way that mimics real-life scenarios, promotes patient safety, and improves learning outcomes, making it just as essential for simulation education as CNE-cl is for direct care instruction.

Budget Proposal

We estimate that out of the 613 waived clinical faculty in Massachusetts (see Table 2 and Table 3 in the Appendix), approximately 400 may be interested in obtaining their CHSE certification. At a cost of \$1,420 per person, this would require an investment of approximately \$570,000 to fully fund these certifications.

This funding is critical to addressing the shortage of fully credentialed clinical faculty and to reduce the reliance on waivers. The current faculty-to-student ratio of 1:6 for clinical placements means that, if 400 nurses were to complete their certifications, it could directly provide education to up to 2,400 nursing students per semester across the commonwealth. This initiative would significantly enhance the quality of nursing education by increasing the number of certified educators and ensuring that students receive instruction from faculty with validated expertise in both direct patient care and simulation.

By investing in this program, we are not only ensuring compliance with regulatory standards but also preparing Massachusetts to meet the growing demands of the healthcare workforce. Funding this proposal supports the development of highly qualified nursing faculty who are essential to maintaining academic excellence, ensuring patient safety, and sustaining the pipeline of competent, confident nursing graduates. Given the projected impact on thousands of students, this funding will deliver long-term benefits, improving healthcare outcomes and helping to meet the state's critical nursing workforce needs.

The funding is intended for simulation instructors practicing in both public and private institutions. Additionally, it should be noted that simulation education occurs in multiple settings including practical nursing programs at the community college level as well as the vocational technical level. It is the intent of the committee to offer CHSE certification to any simulation instructor teaching in a nursing program. However, priority must first be given to those individuals who have a requirement for certification as part of compliance with Regulation 244CMR 6.04 2(b)c.

Future Recommendations

The Simulation and Technology Committee published extensive recommendations to expand and improve simulation education for nursing and other healthcare professions in June 2024. Several key points worth highlighting from those recommendations include:

- 1. State Simulation Alliance with Regional Consortia.** The recommendation emphasizes the creation of a State Simulation Alliance with Regional Consortia to expand simulation capacity and collaboration. These consortia would integrate academic sites and multi-program centers. Academic sites provide controlled curriculum integration, supporting consistent and structured learning, while regional consortia promote collaborative learning, resource sharing, and exposure to a broader range of clinical scenarios. This alliance fosters a more comprehensive approach to developing a competent nursing workforce across the state.
- 2. Alternative Clinical Hours.** Simulation is a highly effective pedagogy that can replace traditional clinical hours under certain conditions. Research has shown that simulation-based learning accelerates skill acquisition, allowing students to reach competency faster than with traditional clinical placements.
- 3. Faculty Compensation.** The recommendation suggests aligning the salaries of simulation instructors with clinical instructors to ensure equity and acknowledging the specialized skills required for simulation education. It is also recommended that achieving CHSE certification results in additional compensation.
- 4. Simulation Laboratory Accreditation.** As documented in the literature review, Delphi study, and site visit study, quality simulation is an important element of a successful nursing program and is an important curricular component for Boards of Nursing to evaluate. The site visit study found the quality of the materials in the simulation laboratory was poor with broken or out-of-date materials in failing programs. Often there was a lack of equipment for teaching medication administration, a critical curricular element. Simulation laboratory accreditation should be mandated for all programs substituting simulation for direct care clinical experiences.

Conclusion

In summary, recommending funding for the CHSE certification is based on the following:

- Support for simulation education in nursing allows programs to increase capacity while maintaining high quality.
- Simulation education in nursing helps students develop essential skills, such as clinical decision-making, communication, and hands-on procedures, in a safe and controlled setting.
- The recommendations for CHSE certification align well with the specialized needs of teaching clinical simulation.

- Certification in simulation is a best practice and therefore should be considered for those teaching in simulation labs.
- Investing in CHSE certifications for nursing faculty both ensures Massachusetts has ample simulation instructors to prepare the next generation of healthcare professionals and satisfies the Massachusetts BORN requirement for certification of nursing faculty.
- The recommendation of the Simulation & Technology Committee to Fund the CHSE certification for Nursing Simulation Instructors was presented to the full NCWS on November 12, 2024. A vote was then taken by the members of the NCWS to determine support of the recommendation. The NCWS voted to support the recommendation with 100% of the members voting in favor of the proposal to fund the CHSE.

References & Appendix Tables

<https://www.aacnnursing.org/news-data/fact-sheets/nursing-workforce-fact-sheet>

<https://www.forbes.com/advisor/education/nursing-school-cost/>

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/244-cmr-6-approval-of-nursing-education-programs-standards-and-procedures/download>

Table 2: Registered Nurse Pre-Licensure Faculty Data in MA (AY 2018-2019)

	Total	Doctoral	MSN	BSN
Number of FT Nurse Faculty	524	195	327	2
Number of PT Nurse Faculty	1941	110	924	907
Total Number of Nurse Faculty	2465	305	1251	909
Number of Faculty on Waivers	951 (38% of all faculty are on waivers)	17% on Option 1 (in graduate school) 5% on Option 2 (master's in another field) 77% are on Option 3 (five years RN experience within the last eight years & mentored by faculty with a graduate degree in nursing)		

Source: Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing Annual Reports, Academic Year 2018-2019

Table 3: Registered Nurse Pre-Licensure Faculty Data in MA (2021-2022)

	Total	Doctoral	MSN	BSN
Number of FT Nurse Faculty	348	144 (45.2%)	204 (64.2%)	0
Number of PT Nurse Faculty	1294	113 (<1%)	592 (45.2%)	589 (45%)

Total Number of Nurse Faculty	1642	257 (16%)	796 (49%)	589 (45%)
Number of Faculty on Waivers	613 (38% of faculty are on waivers)	21% on Option 1 (in graduate school) <5% on Option 2 (master's in another field) 75% are on Option 3 (five years RN experience within the last eight years & mentored by faculty with a graduate degree in nursing)		
On average, each school has 34% of its faculty on waivers.				
There is no correlation between the number of faculty on waivers and NCLEX pass rates.				

Source: Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing Annual Reports, Academic Year 2021-2022