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The Beginnings Of Associate Degree Nursing Education In North Carolina

By: **Phoebe Pollitt**

Abstract

A brief history of how community colleges helped advance nursing education in North Carolina after World War II.

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The Beginnings of Associate Degree Nursing Education in North Carolina

By NCNA Member Dr. Phoebe Pollitt, RN; Nursing History Council Member

Editor's note: as part of NCNA's efforts to address the nursing shortage, increased funding for nursing school faculty has been one of the association's ongoing legislative priorities.

Before World War II, 3-year hospital-based nursing programs were the only providers of nursing education in North Carolina. These 3-year schools are commonly referred to as Diploma Programs. Thirty-six months of classroom and clinical education were necessary for graduates to sit for state licensing examinations and for diploma programs to receive national accreditation.

World War II was a catalyst for many changes in nursing and nursing education. There were not enough Registered Nurses to serve the needs of the civilian population and to meet the needs of the US military around the world.

After WWII, many changes in higher education occurred, including the creation of community colleges. Typically, community college students commuted to their classes rather than reside on campus. Programs focused on vocational and technical training with course requirements ranging from a few months to two years. The first seven experimental ADN programs in the US, funded by the Kellogg Foundation, took place in community and junior colleges in the late 1950s. The Kellogg experiment in ADN education was deemed a great success across the board.

Excitement about this new way to educate nurses spread rapidly across the country. Nursing leaders in NC were watching this national development. Because the state had not yet developed the community college

system, the NC Board of Nursing and the NC Nurse Association worked with leaders at NC Women's College (now UNC-Greensboro) to establish the state's first Associate Degree in Nursing program. It operated for a decade from 1957-1967. UNC-G did not have a school of nursing of any sort in the 1950s.

Mary Mansfield was hired as the first director of the first ADN program in NC and Dr. Alice Boehret was the first faculty member. They worked hard to create a new curriculum, secure appropriate clinical placements, and teach all the courses.



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