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Senate Committee on Health Hears How Partnerships Promote Clinical Placement

Clinical placements for nursing students can be a barrier to increasing nursing school enrollment and to students pursuing an educational pathway to advanced practice nursing. At an informational hearing of the Wisconsin State Senate Committee on Health on Aug. 18, in-state nursing schools and Froedtert ThedaCare health system were invited to share the challenges they face, the work they're doing together and their ideas for solutions. The Committee Chair, Senator Rachael Cabral-Guevara, also invited current students and nurse practitioners (NPs) to testify.

There were common themes to the challenges shared by schools, students and health systems: the importance of clinical training; the high volume of requests physicians, clinics and hospitals receive as the NP profession grows rapidly; and the intense effort schools, students and health care facilities must make to find and match students to clinical sites.

The Senate committee also heard about the mutual appreciation schools and clinical sites have for the efforts they undertake on behalf of students, and the difference having (or not having) such partnerships can make.

The Senate Committee heard testimony that identified critical departments within health systems and academic institutions that coordinate student clinical placements, and ensure enrollment does not exceed available clinical capacity. Katie Ball, Associate Vice President Nursing Excellence & Clinical Education and Rebecca Herman, Organizational Learning and Simulation, both from Froedtert ThedaCare emphasized that hospitals and clinics embrace the opportunity to provide hands-on learning opportunities to the next generation of the healthcare workforce; however, they can only accommodate as many students as available clinicians, preceptors, patient populations and clinical volumes can effectively support, in order to maintain safe, high-quality patient care.

Common ground was also found in the solutions offered. All agreed that helping students understand the clinical placement process and what to look for before they choose a school would be very helpful. In addition, it might help to provide an incentive to clinical sites to mitigate loss in patient access and revenue, since it takes time out of a clinician's day to be a preceptor. Finally, school leaders identified the potential to remove regulatory burden by removing the 1:1 ratio for preceptorships and allowing clinician and faculty judgement to determine the best approach within reasonable boundaries.

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EDUCATION EVENTS

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Caring for Wisconsin's Caregivers: 2026 WHA Healthcare Workforce Well-being Summit

Sep. 16, 2026

2026 Annual Wisconsin Organization of Nurse Leaders (WONL) Conference

Sep. 21, 2026

Swing-bed Fundamentals

