

Nurses in Genetics
Ann K. Cashion, Ph.D., R.N.

DR. McGRATH: The next speaker is Ann Cashion, who is representing ISONG.

DR. CASHION: Thank you for asking me here today. I want to give credit to Cindy Prows from the Cincinnati Children's Hospital for these slides. A longer version of this presentation was originally presented earlier this year at a consensus panel for nurses in genetic education.

How do nurses obtain genetic training. There are many avenues to obtain the various levels of genetic knowledge. However, there are about 3 million nurses to update and keep updated, and that is one of the areas that Beth Pestka has spoken about earlier.

Right now, in academic programs, we have less than 10 formal M.S.N. and pre- and post-doctoral programs. Two of the key areas that we have, or the significant players that have helped build our genomic capacity for nurses are the NINR NIH Summer Genetic Institute, which has had 121 graduates, and the Genetic Education Program for Nurses, that has been conducted through the Cincinnati Children's Hospital. Both of these have provided genetically, genomically trained nurses that have gone back to their individual institutions throughout the U.S. and have tried to incorporate genomics into their teaching models there.

We also have continuing education opportunities, and those were conducted through our professional organizations. Primarily, you will see that through the International Society of Nurses and Genetics, the Oncology Nursing Society, and our women's health and pediatric and developmental organizations.

There are many gaps that we have identified that need to be filled for us to continue this growing momentum amongst schools of nursing to incorporate more genetic and genomic content. Basically, we need to look at the levels of genetics and genomics education needed by faculty, and how do we need to make more existing and future opportunities accessible to more faculty.

Currently, the International Society of Nurses and Genetics has a Genetic and Genomics Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice. This particular document, that is published through the American Nurses Association, has actually helped us identify the different levels of genetic nurses that are out there and what competencies and scope of practice they have.

Another resource that has been provided over the last couple of years is the Essential Nursing Competencies and Curricular Guidelines for Genetics and Genomics. This helps us address what we think practicing nurses should know, so this is all practicing nurses. These are really genetic nurses. So we have that dichotomy going on in our own organization in how we think different levels and different skill sets are needed for the multitude of nurses in practice.

We also look at instructional resources, which are existing CEs, and how can we make them adapt instructional needs of faculty. How do we decrease the burden of adding yet more content to a dense curriculum but still allow for academic freedom and creativity. How do we help clinical faculty structure this content in their clinical settings.

Two big issues for us are that once instructional resources are created, how are they maintained and updated, and how will peer review be a part of this process.

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What can we do to influence the use of interdisciplinary courses. This is how we see sharing of our resources being applied. What can we do to influence the use of genetic nursing courses shared among universities without increasing the cost to students. The Southern Research Educational Board has a model for this. We are at this point trying to institute a molecular genomics course that has some clinical content in it as well. It would be actually taught online at one of our universities and then students from other universities could register for that course. So we are looking at shared resources as well.

Thank you very much.