**MEMO OF SUPPORT: BSN in Ten Bill – A-1842B/S-6768**

The New York Organization of Nurse Executives and Leaders, Inc. (NYONEL) **strongly supports** this legislation, which would require future Registered Nurse (RN) graduates of Diploma or AD programs to obtain a Baccalaureate degree within 10 years of graduation. The bill is grounded in evidence-based research and seeks to advance the profession of nursing while providing the highest quality and best outcomes to the recipients of nursing care.

In 2003, seminal research on this topic was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association. Conducted by Dr. Linda Aiken and colleagues, it proved that patient mortality decreased with incremental increases in the percent of baccalaureate-prepared RN’s caring for patients. Dr. Aiken’s research has been replicated many times, measuring mortality and other patient outcomes such as falls, pressure ulcers, length of stay and acute care readmissions. In every case, care from baccalaureate-prepared nurses yielded better outcomes.

As a result of better patient outcomes, the added benefit to this legislation is the reduction of cost to hospitals. This vital benefit comes at a time of health care funding uncertainty and hospitals across the state have come to recognize that this legislation’s double benefit assists them in keep funding steady without sacrificing patient safety. It comes at the right time and for the right purpose. Specifically, a the aforementioned Dr. Aiken study found that a 10 percent increase in the proportion of baccalaureate- prepared nurses decreases the risk of patient death by 5%. Further, with 60 percent of nurses prepared at the baccalaureate level, 6,000 fewer surgical deaths are projected for NYS, annually. Lastly, hospitals with a higher proportion of BS educated nurses have lower rates of congestive heart failure mortality, hospital acquired pressure ulcers, failure to rescue, and length of inpatient stay.

The bill supports entry to practice at diploma, AD or BSN level, thus continuing to make RN education available to a broader range of students, and enabling graduate RN’s to practice while obtaining a Baccalaureate Degree. The ten year time frame is modeled after the 5-year requirement for teachers to obtain a Master’s Degree. This is very generous and can be fulfilled with one completed course per semester over that 10 year period. Many more online options for continuation courses are available, thus reducing time in a physical classroom and assisting nurses who choose to go directly into practice an easy path to fulfilling the requirements of the legislation. Further, because completion courses do not require as many clinical hours, they are less faculty-intensive. It is important to note that no AD programs will be closed because of this legislation. In fact these programs are a crucial component of the education landscape as they are needed to ensure that there are sufficient classroom opportunities to meet the number of students who are looking to enter nursing school in hopes of fulfilling a desire to care for the public.

The BSN requirement would also play a very important role in assuring that there are faculty prepared to educate future RN students. Research shows that baccalaureate-prepared graduates are more likely to return for advanced degrees, which are required for faculty. Also, as nurses continue to obtain Baccalaureate Degrees, they will help “feed the faculty pipeline” to replace the number of baby boomer faculty who are retiring. NYONEL believe this legislation takes a fair and responsible approach to elevating the profession of nursing.

The bill has a most generous clause that grandparents current RN’s, anyone who is enrolled in a nursing program, accepted into a program or on a wait list for a program. Also, if a registered nurse is unable to complete the baccalaureate requirements within the 10 year time frame, extensions may be granted and the license simply put on hold. So no licenses will be surrendered.

The United States is far behind other countries that require a baccalaureate degree in nursing for entry into practice, and have for many years. Further, Nursing is far behind other health care professions that require a Baccalaureate or even a Master’s degree for entry into practice. In these times of health care transitions from acute (hospital) to community care, it is absolutely essential that RN’s be prepared academically to manage care of patients and families across the continuum. They must also be prepared to manage multidisciplinary teams of professionals, new and emerging roles of caregivers, and patients in all settings, particularly underserved and remote areas.

A summary of specific economic and quality outcomes that would result from a more highly educated RN workforce in New York State are attached to this memo.

New York is poised to be the first state in the nation to enact such legislation to elevate nursing practice and protect New York’s citizens. NYONEL **strongly supports** passage of A-1842B/S6867 into law.