The Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) project began in 2005 in response to the Institute of Medicine’s report, *To Err is Human: Building a Safer Health System*—the document that created national awareness of the hazards of healthcare. Funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and led by the University of North Carolina, QSEN’s mission is to provide all nurses with the “knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to continuously improve the quality and safety of the healthcare systems in which they work.” QSEN founders recognized that schools of nursing needed to better prepare nurses for these healthcare challenges. As its first deliverables, QSEN created quality and safety competencies for undergraduate and graduate nurses and teaching resources to facilitate integration into existing curricula.

To sustain the QSEN movement, nursing faculty leaders felt that the competencies and ways to attain them must be shared widely. The project launched an active website with free access to competencies and knowledge, skill, and attitude targets, along with companion learning modules and teaching strategies. QSEN offered an annual national conference as a salon for nurses to share ideas and research. The impact of the QSEN movement is evident by the adoption of QSEN competencies within the National State Boards of Nursing residency programs, the Future of Nursing Model, nursing textbooks, and professional organizations, such as the Association of PeriOperative Registered Nurses (an organizational affiliate of ANA).

Educational resources for healthcare professionals

The QSEN Institute, directed by the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing at Case Western Reserve University, expanded the QSEN.org website to provide resources for academia and practice. Nurses and students from across the world generated the resources found on the website. Also, the Institute provides access to a massive open online course offered free to all healthcare professionals to learn about evidence-based practice implementation using a quality improvement framework. The website is a one-stop site for quality and safety education for all healthcare professionals, as quality and safety are interprofessional endeavors.

During the decade-long QSEN journey, it became clear that efforts to prepare new nurses may be short-lived if the workforce they are about to enter does not continue to integrate quality and safety competencies. To unite academia and practice, ANA will highlight best practices that demonstrate the translation of QSEN competencies into practice at its upcoming conference “Connecting Quality, Safety and Staffing to Improve Outcomes” (March 9-11). Nurses from a variety of practice settings will share their stories of how QSEN competencies have been integrated into practice at their facilities, including orientation programs, clinical ladder activities, performance evaluations, and residency programs. QSEN experts from Colorado Children’s Hospital, Promedica, and The University of Alabama at Birmingham Medical Center will share their QSEN integration successes and challenges.

Uniting academia and practice is the key to moving the mission of delivering high-quality, safe health care. ANA has long promoted the critical role of the registered nurse in ensuring that patients receive quality care leading to exemplary outcomes. The QSEN Institute provides the vehicle to support a lifelong learning commitment to ensure that nurses work not only to provide care but also to improve care. United, we can make it happen.

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