To the Editor:

I write this letter regarding the Leadership and Development column article, “Another Level of Leadership: Nurses on Boards” (Bleich, 2014). I would like to express my appreciation to the Journal for publishing the article, as I enjoyed reading it and agree with the author’s views. However, I would like to add that I believe holding a baccalaureate in nursing (BSN), as opposed to an associate degree in nursing, makes a nurse more qualified for the position of board member.

Bleich (2014) pointed out that having nurses as board members would be beneficial because they already possess many of the qualities desired in such individuals. Some of those qualities include people skills, problem-solving skills, and resource and time management skills. In the article, Bleich did not designate the education level of the nurses to whom he is referring. However, I believe that although most nurses possess the skills previously listed, those holding a BSN degree acquire one additional, imperative skill—leadership. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing stated, “BSN nurses are prized for their skills in critical thinking, leadership, case management, and health promotion, and for their ability to practice across a variety of inpatient and outpatient settings” (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2014, para. 1). Being able to lead when necessary is an important skill for a board member to have.

Many facilities, including my own, require any nurse holding a management position to have a BSN, and some require a master’s degree in nursing. I currently hold an associate degree in nursing, but I am in an RN-to-BSN program. BSN programs teach the same nursing skills as those taught by an associate degree program; however, BSN programs require students to take leadership and management courses.

This letter is not to say that nurses holding an associate degree cannot be effective board members. I just want to point out that nurses with a BSN have been trained in other areas, such as leadership and management, which can make these nurses better choices as members of a professional board.

REFERENCES


Sarah Kelley, RN
RN-to-BSN Student
University of North Carolina at Wilmington

REPLY:

Many different kinds of boards exist and each requires proven competencies to match the mission and purpose to be fulfilled. Advancing one’s education is surely one way of acquiring leadership skills, and I would be the last to dissuade that thinking. But a degree, in and of itself, may not qualify one for board membership as much as passion, matching skill sets, collaboration and political skills, and more. I know of several associate degree- and diploma-prepared nurses who serve on mental health, food pantry, and other community-based boards, offering exceptional service.

Let us use the entire village of competent nurses to fill the many opportunities that present, where a nursing perspective adds value.

Michael R. Bleich, PhD, FN, FAAN
Maxine Clark and Bob Fox Dean and Professor
Goldfarb School of Nursing at Barnes-Jewish College

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