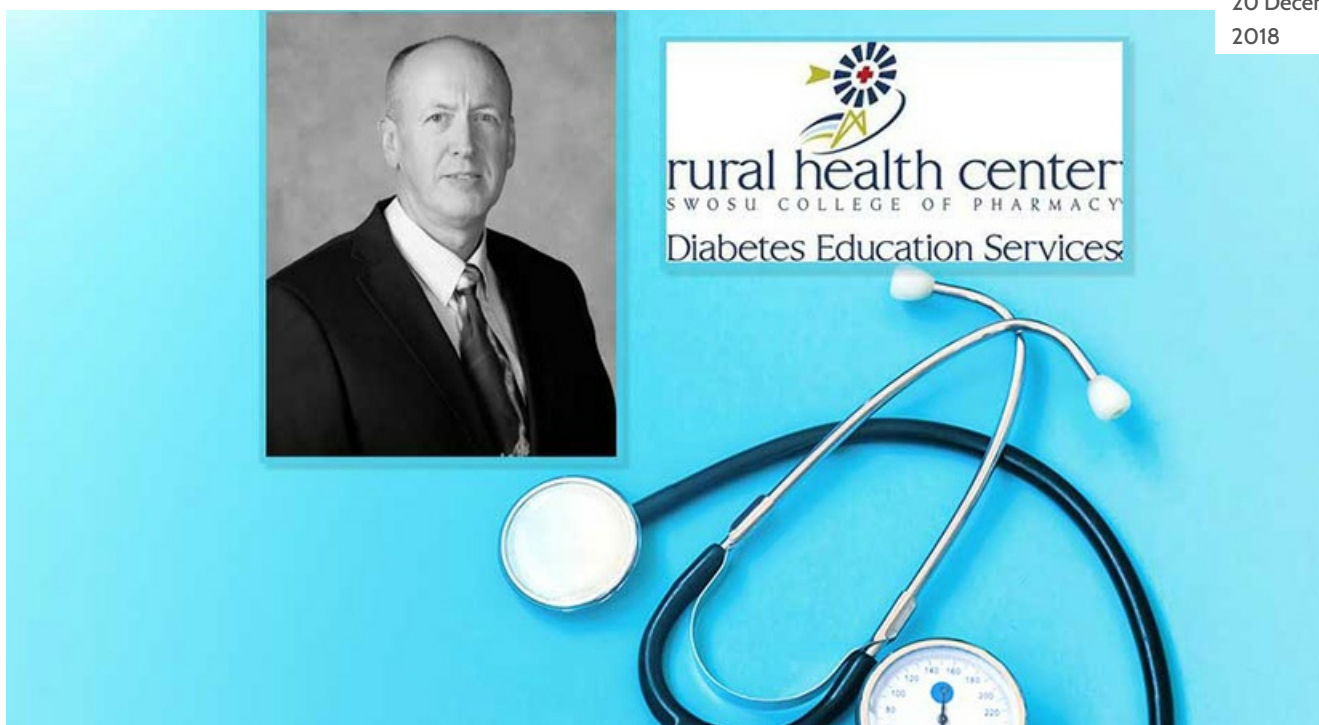




News

20 December,
2018



SWOSU's Rural Health Coordinator Helps with New Reports Highlighting Nursing Workforce Challenges

Dr. Randy Curry, who is rural health coordinator for the Southwestern Oklahoma State University College of Pharmacy in Weatherford, was one of 15 individuals to serve on a statewide committee that studied health workforce trends and recently released two reports on Oklahoma's nursing workforce.

Oklahoma is facing a shortage of health professionals as the need for more health care workers increases. An aging population, expanded health coverage, aging nursing workforce and other economic conditions have led to these workforce shortages, according to the reports.

The study and reports were conducted by the State's Health Workforce Subcommittee of the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development. Since 2016, the group has been working to close health workforce shortages across Oklahoma.

“All of our research has shown the state must take several steps to overcome our health workforce challenges, including a focus on data collection and analysis, recruitment and retention, capacity building among education and training institutions, and health workforce policy and evaluation strategies,” said Shelly Dunham, CEO of Okeene Municipal Hospital and Chair of the Health Workforce Subcommittee.

According to the reports, Oklahoma’s nursing shortage is complicated by slow growth in the number of nursing professionals available to fill jobs and a lack of capacity among education institutions to produce enough nursing professionals. To address workforce needs, the Issue Brief recommends:

*Increasing training capacity through program partnerships and financial incentives for nursing faculty and preceptors.

*Decreasing turnover and improving safety through tuition reimbursement, loan repayment, funding for nurse preceptors and residency programs, and expanded protections against workplace violence.

*Improving understanding of workforce needs through information gathering about nurse supply, demand, education levels, turnover, and rural and urban distribution.

The two reports—2018 Nursing Workforce Oklahoma Report and 2018 Nursing Professions Oklahoma: Issue Brief—can be downloaded at <https://oklahomaworks.gov/about/governors-council-for-workforce-and-economic-development-gcwed/healthcare-workforce-subcommittee/>.

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