Literature Review

In 2010, the Institutes of Medicine (IOM) released its report “The Future of Nursing, Leading the Change, Advancing Health”. The IOM identified strong and capable nursing leadership as an essential component of healthcare transformation. The American Nurses Association supports the report by engaging in activities that promote the four key messages:

1. Nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training.
2. Nurses should achieve higher levels of education and training through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression.
3. Nurses should be full partners, with physicians and other health professionals, in redesigning health care in the United States.
4. Effective workforce planning and policy making require better data collection and an improved information infrastructure.

In response to IOM recommendation 7: Prepare and enable nurses to lead change to advance health, nurses, nursing education, and nursing association should prepare the nursing workforce to assume leadership positions across all levels, while public, private, and governmental health care decision makers should ensure that leadership positions are available and filled by nurses, many national and state nursing associations have developed specific competencies for advancing leadership among the membership. Competencies are comprised of knowledge, skills, attitude, abilities, and behaviors (Calhoun, Davidson, Sinioris, Vincent, &
Griffith, 2002). The American Organization of Nurses Executives, in an effort to “shape the future of nursing through innovative nursing leadership” has developed competencies that can be used as a self-assessment tool, organizational guidelines for job descriptions, expectations, and evaluations and curriculum development in academia (2005). The important components of the AONE are specific to nurses’ position within an organization. The AONE competencies address: 1) communication and relationship building; 2) knowledge of the health care environment; 3) leadership skills; professionalism; and 4) business skills.

The American Hospital Association’s Center for Healthcare Governance has identified competencies for nurses who are on hospital boards. They recommend that nurses should possess knowledge and skills in health care delivery, finances, business and personal capabilities of collaborative practice, innovative thinking, organizational awareness, strategic orientation, and team leadership (Hassmiller, 2012).

Jennings & colleagues (2007) conducted a literature review to evaluate the difference between leadership and management competencies. The findings revealed that the boundaries between nursing leadership and management competencies is narrow requiring educators to consider both when teaching nurse administrators. It is important to consider interpersonal and critical thinking skills, personal qualities, establishing a vision that is congruent with the organization, communicating with others, and initiation of change when appropriate.

The IOM report identifies the significance of leadership at every level of nursing and the need for innovative and creative ways to promote nursing leadership across all practice settings. The American Nephrology Nurses Association recognizes the need for strong and competent nurse leaders. The 2012-13 board approved the creation of a task force to recommend an implementation process for transition to national governance structure and to establish a
mechanism for utilizing competency measurements for ANNA members in national leadership positions.

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