



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## THEARI Leads Major Nurse Refresher Change

After more than a year of [THEARI](#)'s efforts to measure and document outcomes and advocate for Colorado's nurse refresher students, the Colorado State Board of Nursing voted (October 27, 2021) to allow nurses with inactive licenses for 5-10 years the option to **demonstrate clinical competency 100% virtually**, beginning December 30, 2021, in addition to 120 hours of theory. Nurses who have inactive licenses for more than 10 years may complete **up to 75% of their requisite clinicals with simulation**. This decision situated Colorado as a state leader in improving and expanding clinical education for previously licensed nurses that will transform the way nurses can re-enter the workforce, while helping to remove barriers for rural and disadvantaged nurses.

Phase 1 of THEARI's [RN Refresher course](#) was developed to reduce barriers to re-entry by providing an entirely online, didactic course. However, for Phase 2, our RN Refresher course relied on in-person clinical training at local, and often remote sites, creating additional, prohibitive barriers for relicensing during the pandemic when clinical sites closed their doors to students. To address the needs of the community, THEARI collaborated with nurses, educators, and technology specialists, to develop the Virtually Simulated Clinicals (VSC) program for Phase 2, specifically for the RN Refresher course in Fall 2020.

The VSC is a robust and challenging experience allowing nurses from all over the state and beyond to receive equitable experiences regardless of where they live and provide nursing care. With nurse shortages and limited preceptors, it is difficult for students to have effective clinical experiences. The VSC program ensures a foundation of knowledge for all students, leading to well-trained and qualified healthcare providers. Our program was developed to include 50 unprompted, unfolding e-cases with real patient data and responses, weekly Zoom debriefing sessions, related online lessons of updated evidence-based practices and pharmacology, prioritization exercises, individual coaching sessions, and weekly written assignments.

Moving forward THEARI hopes to provide data and advocate for the 75% virtually simulated clinicals (students 10+ years inactive) to allow for 100% virtually simulated clinicals.

The THEARI Nurse Refresher Course has been developed to meet Colorado State Board of Nursing requirements for licensure in Colorado. Completing the course will allow previously licensed Registered Nurses (RN) and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) to update and enhance nursing knowledge and skills, develop confidence, renew their license, and re-enter the workforce. The online format of the course combined with rolling admission allow students to complete the course at their own pace anywhere, at any time. We also offer virtual simulation for clinical requirements and additional courses for continuing education.

Within an innovative framework, [The Health Education and Resources Institute \(THEARI\)](#) partners to create and implement inclusive healthcare education programs, addressing the dynamic needs of students, providers, and community members. Due to the population concentration, ethnic and cultural diversity, and social-economic issues in our communities, there is a high demand for healthcare services, providers, and efforts to mitigate health disparities. The work of our Board of Directors, staff, and service team, combined with funding from various grants and contracts, allows us to address the healthcare needs of our communities and increase diversity in all health disciplines.