In response to the halting of clinical activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the entry-level faculty at our large, urban, public academic health center moved all clinical activities to virtual simulated activities.

To date, in-person clinical activities continued to be restricted to the number of students a unit would accept, and some placements continued to be closed to students.

Through this pandemic year, three clinical initiatives were implemented to support clinical learning: increase in virtual simulation, early start practicum, and student support of mass vaccine clinic.

Objectives

1. Design activities that meet clinical learning objectives despite a global pandemic and loss of traditional experiences.
2. Develop a process of tracking and approving clinical activities.
3. Evaluate clinical activities meeting program outcomes.
4. Continue to assure a pipeline of nursing graduates ready to care for the population of Maryland.

Development

UMSON Leadership, the Maryland Board of Nursing, Maryland Higher Education Commission, and the Governor of Maryland dealt swiftly to make every attempt to keep our schools of nursing operational and providing a steady stream of new nurses during the COVID pandemic. As the need for mass vaccination clinics grew, our faculty made ready to support students learning to be vaccinators and mechanisms were put in place to allow pre-licensure students to vaccinate. Working with our clinical partners, we moved to have about 1/3 of each graduating class begin practicum before the start of classes and SON leadership provided the needed resources to expand the use of virtual simulation within the program.