



**Regionally Increasing Baccalaureate Nurses
Transition to Employment and Professional Practice Guidelines**

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Regionally Increasing Baccalaureate Nurses (RIBN)

Transition to Employment and Professional Practice Guidelines

Background:

RIBN is a partnership between community or private colleges and universities that utilizes a dual enrollment and four-year shared curriculum pathway for students to achieve a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing (BSN) at the beginning of their nursing careers. While a successful *Transition to Employment and Professional Practice program* has similar expectations and outcomes for all new graduate RNs, the RIBN student/new graduate RN requires an alteration in timeline and scheduling to meet the outlined orientation goals for completion. The purpose of this document is to describe the joint partnership by the RIBN student, academic institution, and the employer to create an environment in which the RIBN student/new graduate RN is ready to assume clinical leadership at the point of patient care.

STUDENTS IN THE RIBN TRACK:

- Are dually admitted both to the Associate Degree college and the university BSN program from the beginning;
- Complete the first three years home-based at the community or private college with prerequisite, general study courses the first year and then nursing courses the second and third years, while also taking one university course per semester;
- Receive their Associate Degree in Nursing at the end of the third year, successfully pass the NCLEX-RN to be eligible to progress into fourth year of the program;
- Complete the fourth year at the university with particular emphasis on gerontological, community health nursing, use of evidenced-based nursing knowledge, and leadership development to complete the BSN degree.

- During the 4th year, RIBN students have the option to work as a Registered Nurse (RN) while completing their BSN degree.

Transition to Employment and Professional Practice Guidelines: Evidence-Based

Successful Transition to Employment and Professional Practice is a joint responsibility of the student, academic educators, and profession practice employers. The guidelines in this document are built upon the Stages of Clinical Competence defined by Patricia Benner (1984) noting that the student must move through the stages of novice to advanced beginner to competent professional RN. This acquisition of knowledge and skills happens best when learning is planned, conscious, deliberate, efficient, and organized both in the academic and practice setting. The promotion of clinical learning, assimilation of knowledge, and evaluation of goal achievement both by the individual new RN and the employer are critical factors for successful transition to employment and to ongoing professional practice.

Transition to Practice and Employment Programs are recommended for new graduate nurses by the Institute of Medicine 2010 report “The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health”. (Institute of Medicine, 2011) In addition, the Carnegie Foundation Report (2009), The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (2009), and the Joint Commission (2012) have all voiced support of a post-graduation nurse residency program (Goode, Lynn, & McElroy, 2013).

The stresses of transitioning from nursing student to professional RN have been well documented (Casey, Fink, Krugman, & Propst, 2004; Anderson, Hair, & Todero, 2012). New graduate RNs, as advanced beginners according to Benner’s (1984) theory, lack expertise and experience in prioritizing, and they lack confidence in caring for patients with complex clinical problems.

Data from new graduate residents who participated in the University Health System Consortium/American Association of Colleges of Nursing residency from 2002 through 2012 indicate that retention rates for new graduates in the residency increased considerably in the participating hospitals. Residents’ perception of their ability to organize and prioritize their work, communicate, and provide clinical leadership showed statistically significant increases over the 1-year program (Goode, Lynn, & McElroy, 2013). Numerous other studies report that Nurse Residency Programs promote job satisfaction and reduce turnover (Rhodes, Radziewicz, Amato, & Bowden, 2013; Goode, Lynn, Krsek, & Bednash, 2009; Olson-Sitke, Wendler, & Forbes, 2012). In summary, Rush, Adamack, Gordon, Lilly & Janke (2013) reported that Transition Programs have three common features:

- a defined resource person assigned in a one-to-one relationship with the new RN
- mentorship; and

- peer support opportunities.

While the RIBN program does not take a position regarding the length of time of new graduate RN orientation for the RIBN student, it is clear that orientation must continue beyond the initial full-time summer employment period. The RIBN Academic Curriculum and this *Transition to Employment and Professional Practice Guidelines* document are intended to serve as a foundation for academic-practice partnerships and collaborations that will be developed at the local and regional level. The *RIBN Transition to Employment and Professional Practice Guidelines* document emphasizes three goals: enhance skills necessary for patient safety, prepare the new RN to become a competent practitioner, and support the new RN in their socialization to the RN role and the nursing profession.

The following goals are suggested by the University Health System Consortium and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2008) for a successful new RN's first year of professional practice:

- Transition from advanced beginner, entry level nurse to competent professional nurse as defined by Benner's "Novice to Expert" theory (1984)
- Develop effective decision making skills related to clinical judgment and performance
- Provide clinical leadership at the point of patient care
- Strengthen commitment to nursing as a professional career choice
- Incorporate research-based evidence into their practices
- Formulate individual career development plans

For more information regarding the development of a formalized Nurse Residency Program, a simple literature search will identify programs that have been developed and are in current utilization across the United States. In addition, note the References and Additional Reading on Transition to Employment and Professional Practice at the end of this document.

Angel and Moseman (2012), in a paper written as partial fulfillment of their MSN Research Project requirement, examined the RIBN option as it was in its formative development in the Western North Carolina region and identified four "pillars of support" for a Transition to Practice/Employment program. These are:

- Aligning RIBN students with the desired employer and work setting to promote new nurse retention
- Regional employer collaboration and supportive nursing leadership

- Sufficient NCLEX preparation for completion of regulatory requirements, and
- Purposeful mentoring

For details about the implementation of these four pillars of support, see the full manuscript at <http://www.ribn.org/library/library/collaborative-toolkit/15-transition-to-employment-for-ribn-students-unpublished-project-paper-by-angel-moseman.pdf>.

Focus on the RIBN Student/New Graduate RN:

While we recognize that all new graduate RNs need the above pillars of support, the RIBN student/new graduate RN faces additional time related challenges of orientation and adaptation to a new role as RN. The RIBN student/new graduate RN needs to take the NCLEX exam as soon as possible after graduation then begin employment immediately upon licensure in order to have full-time work experience prior to returning to school, reducing work hours, and taking a full-time student course load.

Specifically, the RIBN student/new graduate RN will be available for full-time employment for approximately 8 weeks then will need to decrease work hours to a part-time status (16 -24 hours) for fall and spring semesters of Year 4. During semester breaks and holidays the RIBN student/new graduate RN will be available for full-time work. Workplace orientation must continue beyond the initial full-time employment period. During Year 4, the RIBN new graduate RN will be applying theory to practice both in the classroom, clinical practicums, assignments, and the workplace.

In the Western North Carolina RIBN pilot project, the focus on planning for graduation, licensure, and *Transition to Employment and Professional Practice* begins in the fall semester of Year 3 of the RIBN curriculum. As the Associate Degree program plans for the North Carolina Board of Nursing required Focused Clinical Client Care (often called Transition to Practice - TTP) clinical practicum, the RIBN student is strongly encouraged to reflect and decide their first priority location for their initial RN position/employment practice setting. All effort is made by faculty to place the student in the organizational setting in which they would like to be employed after graduation and licensure. Emphasis is placed on the practicum experience taking place in a medical-surgical unit rather than a specialty unit. Meetings between practice partners and third year RIBN students have taken place in a variety of ways. In spring of Year 2, group meetings were held whereby facilities presented the attributes of their facility to the students. In fall of year 3, a pilot project was undertaken to have students interview for TTP placement. The interviewing process was used to facilitate placement for TTP in nursing units with potential upcoming position openings in the summer after completion of the student's Associate Degree and NCLEX passing score. The goal of the pilot project was to increase the amount of time the student spent on the nursing unit that may serve to make the student more comfortable with unit staff, protocols, etc. and potentially, enhance future job-based orientation time.

The following objectives for the new graduate RN are identified through a review and synthesis of the literature. They are sequenced as much as feasible recognizing that the ability to meet goals and objectives in the "real life" clinical unit is based on a variety of factors. These factors will vary from organization to organization based on patient population, organizational capacity and resources, and the previous experiences of the individual RIBN student/new graduate RN.

All these factors function in a dynamic and changing relationship. The objectives below are general, and it is suggested that each employer or clinical unit divide these general objectives into time-lined phases that meet the needs of that unit/organization and the needs of the new graduate RN.

Objectives for Clinical Practice:

The new graduate RN will:

1. Admit patients/clients to the clinical unit using established, accepted organizational protocols, policies, and procedures.
2. Assess physiological, psychological, and social needs of the patient/client.
3. Document assessment, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of patient data and patient responses to care according to established, accepted organizational protocols, policies, and procedures.
4. Administer medications safely and accurately noting knowledge of medication, reason for administration, dosage, route, and expected and actual patient's response.
5. Provide optimal pain management.
6. Provide patient and family education.
7. Implement evidence-based practices to maintain skin integrity.
8. Implement evidence-based practices to prevent falls.
9. Implement evidence-based practices to prevent nosocomial infections.
10. Demonstrate critical thinking skills to care for high frequency, high volume patient population prevalent on assigned clinical unit.
11. Provide culturally competent care.
12. Provide end-of-life care.

Objectives for Leadership Development

1. Identify organizational and unit resources to assist in providing optimal patient care.
2. Communicate effectively with patients, families, and health care team members.
3. Identify patients', families, or team members' conflicts.

4. Observe nurse leadership roles.
5. Identify the use of the interdisciplinary team and the role of the RN on this team – especially when there is a change in a patient’s condition.

Objectives for Role Transition

1. Apply the concept of evidenced-based practice.
2. Apply evidenced-based strategies to manage stress.
3. Adopt a culture of life-long learning.
4. Provide advocacy for patients identifying ethical concerns or dilemmas when and/or if they occur.

Orientation Components:

A Transition to Employment and Professional Practice program is a comprehensive, developmental, training that includes a variety of components designed to provide the RIBN student/new graduate RN the opportunity to perform the responsibilities of patient care. While performing these activities and procedures to an increasing number and variety of patients, the new graduate RN will also develop increasing confidence in knowledge, skill, and the integration and application of this knowledge and skill to changing patient populations and situations. Regardless of size of the organization or unit, the following components of orientation are essential:

- **Preceptor/Coach/Mentor:** This individual (or individuals if the organization has resources to differentiate preceptor from coach or mentor) should possess a BSN or higher degree and have received education in the preceptor role and responsibilities. In addition, the preceptor should be willing to participate actively in the dynamic, positive relationship of preceptor/coach/mentor to protégée by serving as a role model and resource person.
- **Monthly Didactic presentations** on topics selected by a team of educators and managers related to *high frequency, high volume, and/or high risk diagnoses, events, quality issues*, etc. Topics that may be considered include:
 - Patient assessment
 - Medication administration
 - Documentation and SBAR communication
 - Pain management

- Falls prevention
 - Infection control
 - Palliative care/end of life care
 - Skin and wound care
 - Shared governance and Model of nursing care
 - Evidence-based practice
 - Patient and family education
 - Cultural competency
 - Interdisciplinary team
 - Ethical decision making
 - Communication and conflict management
 - Reality shock, role transition, and stress management
- **Regular (monthly recommended) Discussion/Debriefing Group Meetings:** It is recommended that a case study and story- telling format be used to promote critical thinking and synthesis. RIBN students/new graduate RNs are expected to come to these sessions with a contribution from their clinical experiences.
 - **Simulation experiences:** It is suggested that simulation experiences focus on **high risk** events. If simulation resources are not available within an individual organization, it is recommended that a collaborative approach be initiated to share planning and resources among institutions and bring RIBN students/new graduate RNs together within a region to work on a designated patient simulation experience.
 - **Evaluation:** The evaluation component needs to be defined and applied consistently. All stakeholders including the RIBN student/new graduate RN, preceptor/coach/mentor, and the nurse manager should be involved in the evaluation process at the unit level with specific, written responsibilities identified for each. When available, patient outcomes data and feedback are used. Meetings of the RIBN student/new graduate RN and the preceptor/coach/mentor should be held on a regular schedule with documentation of topics discussed and feedback provided. Regular meetings of the RIBN student/new graduate RN, preceptor/coach/mentor, and the nurse manager should be held also. Tools should be developed to document progress, and these tools should be used consistently across the

organization. If feasible, standardized evaluation instruments (example: Casey-Fink Graduate Nurse Experience Survey), available through a literature search, should be utilized.

RIBN Year 4 Curriculum Supports Transition to Employment and Professional Practice

The RIBN Year 4 curriculum is intended to promote the different roles and responsibilities of a baccalaureate-educated Registered Nurse. Western Carolina University has served as the pilot model for implementation of the first North Carolina *Transition to Employment and Professional Practice* program. This curriculum uses *The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice* outlined by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing as a conceptual framework. Classroom activities, clinical practicums, and assignments build upon knowledge obtained in the Associate Degree curriculum and prepare the student to transition to the roles and responsibilities of a baccalaureate-educated nurse. Course aims and objectives for Year 4 are listed below:

Course Name: Essentials of Baccalaureate Nursing Practice I

Course Aims and Objectives:

- Aims: This course explores five of the nine essential components key to a baccalaureate level nursing education as outlined by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.
- Specific Learning Objectives: By the end of this course, students will:
 - Discuss the different roles and responsibilities of a baccalaureate-educated registered nurse.
 - Recognize the relevance, importance and application of knowledge obtained through a liberal arts education to nursing practice.
 - Discuss national and federal regulations and initiatives to improve patient quality care and patient safety and the impact of these efforts.
 - Examine the role of the registered nurse as a formal and informal leader in an organization, in the community and on a national/international level.
 - Evaluate technology-based strategies such as information management systems and advanced patient care technologies on the delivery of patient care.
 - Evaluate the impact of health care policy, finance and regulatory decisions on the consumer, health care facility, community and nation.

- Identify strategies for health promotion and disease prevention to improve individual and population health.

Course Name: Essentials of Baccalaureate Nursing Practice II

Course Aims and Objectives:

- Aims: This course explores four of the nine essential components key to baccalaureate level nursing education as outlined by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.
- Specific Learning Objectives: By the end of this course, students will:
 - Assess inter-professional communication and collaboration behaviors; identify current challenges and strategies to create a positive workplace environment.
 - Identify own professional values and beliefs.
 - Explore existing frameworks (legal, ethical) to improve healthcare outcomes for all patient populations.
 - Discuss the issues relevant to nursing today and in the future and the unique role of the BSN prepared nurse in leading change.
 - Recognize the need for evidence-based practice and strategies to implement evidence-based improvements in healthcare

Course Name: Essentials of Baccalaureate Nursing Practicum

Course Aims and Objectives:

- Aims: This course helps the associate degree-prepared nurse transition to the roles and responsibilities of a baccalaureate-educated nurse through practicum experiences.
- Specific Learning Objectives: By the end of this course, students will:
 - Demonstrate an understanding of the complex organizational structure of a healthcare facility with emphasis on evidence-based practice, infection control practices, financial, legal and ethical regulations, and advanced technology.
 - Begin to apply leadership skills in providing high-quality nursing care, healthcare team coordination and managing delivery of healthcare in a variety of settings to diverse populations.

- Employ principles of quality improvement and care quality indicators to improve patient care outcomes.
- Demonstrate professionalism in nursing practice.
- Identify the role of the baccalaureate nurse in leading improvements in healthcare.

Additional Curriculum Courses:

Other courses in the Year 4 curriculum emphasize gerontological, community health nursing, use of evidenced-based nursing knowledge, and leadership development to complete the BSN degree requirements. See the chart below for the RIBN Year 4 curriculum plan as developed by Western Carolina University (WCU). WCU School of Nursing has served as the pilot project for the development and implementation of the RIBN option in North Carolina.

Year 4: WCU as Home School	Fall	Spring
All courses at WCU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NSG 322 Concepts of Geriatric Nursing (2credit hrs) ● NSG 327 Essentials of Baccalaureate Nursing Practice I (4 credit hrs) ● Community Health Nursing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NSG 302 Theory (3 credit hrs) ○ NSG 305 Interven. Proj. (1 credit hr) ○ NSG 384 Practicum (2 credit hrs) <p>12 Credit hours Upper Division WCU credit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NSG 328 Essentials of Baccalaureate Nursing Practice II (3 credit hrs) Hybrid ● NSG 329 Essentials of Baccalaureate Nursing Practice Practicum (3 credit hrs) ● Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NSG 471 Research Process (2 credit hrs) ○ NSG 472 Critical Reading (2 credit hrs) ○ NSG 473 Clinical Application (2 credit hrs) <p>12 Credit hours Upper Division WCU credit</p>

Guidelines: The following guidelines are provided in a **grid format** to assist all stakeholders in supporting the transition process for the RIBN student who decides to begin employment as a Registered Nurse upon successfully passing the NCLEX exam after Year 3 of the RIBN curriculum. This document will emphasize the key roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in assuring a smooth and successful *Transition to Employment and Professional Practice*.

The stakeholders are identified as:

1. Academic Institution Partners including Associate Degree and Baccalaureate Degree Programs at Colleges and Universities
2. Nursing Student
3. Employer

Time Lines: RIBN Curriculum	Nursing Student	Academic Partner Community College Associate Degree	Academic Partner University/College Baccalaureate Degree	Employer
<p>Year 1 and Year 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore career opportunities within region in which you plan to work as RN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain ongoing relationships with local employers for knowledge of future job opportunities for students Assign faculty responsibility for planning Focused Client Care Experience Meet with and educate all levels of staff to explain RIBN curriculum and impact on hiring and orientation. Include Chief Nurse Officer, Nurse Managers, and Nursing Staff Educators so that they may begin to plan for hiring of RIBN graduate RN and also identify needed alterations in orientation of RIBN new graduate RN. Include a variety of levels of staff from employing organizations in Local Advisory Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain ongoing relationships with local employers for knowledge of future job opportunities for students Assign faculty responsibility for RIBN Year 4 Course and Clinical Practicums Meet with and educate all levels of staff to explain RIBN curriculum and impact on hiring and orientation. Include Chief Nurse Officer, Nurse Managers, and Nursing Staff Educators so that they may begin to plan for hiring of RIBN graduate RN and also identify needed alterations in orientation of RIBN new graduate RN. Negotiate days of week for class and clinical practicums in Year 4 so employers will know RIBN student/new graduate RN days available for employment. Include a variety of levels of staff from employing organizations in Local Advisory Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in local/regional advisory meetings with your area Nursing Schools Discuss and plan for impact of hiring RIBN student/new graduate RN in a staff RN position. Include nurse managers, staff educators, and human resources in discussion and planning.

Time Lines: RIBN Curriculum	Nursing Student	Academic Partner Community College Associate Degree	Academic Partner University/College Baccalaureate Degree	Employer
Fall, Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify employer and clinical area in which you want to plan your Focused Client Care Experience (FCCE) (often termed Transition to Practice) as required by NC Board of Nursing (NCBON). This experience emphasizes behaviors in direct patient care reflective of entry-level work experience/professional practice. • Recommendation: Seek FCCE experience in the employment organization you want to pursue for your first RN job. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide academic advising regarding FCCE experiences available that may match with RIBN student's future career and employment plans. • Continue to meet and communicate with Employers (especially Department of Education/Orientation) to share Year 4 curriculum plan, school dates, and to communicate RIBN new graduate RNs orientation needs • Assist employers to set up interview dates for RIBN student placement in FCCE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to meet and communicate with Employers (especially Department of Education/Orientation) to share Year 4 curriculum plan, school dates, and to communicate RIBN new graduate RNs orientation needs • Assist employers to set up interview dates for RIBN student placement in FCCE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify clinical units for FCCE that may also have potential job opportunities • Hold interviews with unit Nurse Managers or hiring team to meet with and/or interview RIBN students in preparation for FCCE followed by employment upon receipt of RN status

Time Lines: RIBN Curriculum	Nursing Student	Academic Partner Community College Associate Degree	Academic Partner University/College Baccalaureate Degree	Employer
Spring & Early Summer Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to take NCLEX exam within 2 weeks following program completion • Approximately 2 months before completion, submit NC BON application including online application, payment, and Criminal Background Check (CBC) • Go to www.ncbon.com Review Licensure by Examination for Exam Requirements, etc. • Register and pay at Pearson Vue Testing Center • Receive eligibility from the NC BON • Receive Authorization to Test (ATT) letter from Pearson Vu • Schedule your examination appointment with Pearson Vue. • Arrive for examination appointment and present your ATT letter and acceptable identification (ID) Note that ID must match Registration or changes must be made according to instructions on NC BON website • Receive licensure test results from NC BON approximately 4 weeks after examination date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete all necessary NC BON requirements for verification of program completion as soon as possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with registration for Year 4 Fall semester courses • Inform all stakeholders of Year 4 start date, school break dates, and program completion date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify units within organization that have potential job openings • Interview job candidates • Set earliest feasible employment start date to facilitate maximum full-time orientation

Time Lines: RIBN Curriculum	Nursing Student	Academic Partner Community College Associate Degree	Academic Partner University/College Baccalaureate Degree	Employer
Summer, Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide whether or not to seek employment noting the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RIBN students are not required to work in order to progress to Year 4 of RIBN curriculum ○ RIBN students are encouraged to work full-time only during the time between initial RN licensure and the beginning of Year 4 and during semester breaks and holidays until the completion of Year 4 ○ RIBN students are encouraged to reduce work hours to part-time status (16-20 hours per week) during Year 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate communication of Associate Degree graduation and RIBN continuation requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate communication of RIBN continuation requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan Year 4 courses and clinical practicums days of the week to facilitate student employment as feasible • Work with area facility educators to operationalize how to orient, support and help RIBN students thrive in the first year of employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide general organizational and unit based orientation • Identify phases, topics, preceptors, and process of full-time and part-time continuing orientation • Design critical objectives to be achieved during full-time employment and ongoing objectives to be met during part-time employment/ continuing student status. • Note that full-time status will be approximately 6 – 8 weeks • Note that BSN preceptor is recommended • Educators from employer organizations may choose to collaborate on orientation classes where feasible to facilitate efficient use of teaching resources • Consider the development of a residency program within organization

Time Lines: RIBN Curriculum	Nursing Student	Academic Partner Community College Associate Degree	Academic Partner University/College Baccalaureate Degree	Employer
Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to meet academic requirements for BSN completion • Reduce employment work hours to part-time status of 16-20 hours per week during semester study with option to work full-time during semester breaks and holidays. • Participate in any activities provided by employer organization or academic offering that focuses on socialization to your new professional role and coping well with workplace stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor RIBN student outcomes on NCLEX exam • Facilitate remediation or retake of NCLEX exam if student unsuccessful on first test attempt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor RIBN student outcomes on NCLEX exam • Have policies in place to address RIBN student readmission if student is not successful in academic coursework or in licensure exam results. • Delay face to face course meetings by 2-3 weeks if possible so that RIBN student/New Graduate RN may complete orientation to new RN employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide ongoing orientation on part-time basis as student reduces work hours to complete BSN degree requirements successfully • Monitor and document RIBN graduate RN performance and career success within the organization

Summary:

The RIBN option for baccalaureate nursing education provides a strong curriculum, optimal clinical practice experience, and an emphasis on synthesis, assimilation, and application of theory to practice. Mentoring is provided throughout the curriculum and the *Transition to Employment and Professional Practice* program.

This joint partnership by the RIBN student, academic institution, and the employer will yield an excellent return on investment. The expected outcome is a RN, BSN who is ready to assume clinical leadership at the point of patient care.

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Regionally Increasing Baccalaureate Nurses (RIBN) www.ribn.org

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