



Blount Memorial Hospital 'Grows' Its Own

Blount Memorial Hospital is now addressing the nurse shortage by training its own nurses through a new partnership with Lincoln Memorial University. The university and hospital have agreed on an arrangement that has enabled the university to have a Blount county presence and provide training for students seeking to become registered nurses.

The agreement involves an initial five-year commitment by the hospital to provide a minimum number of students annually for an accelerated, 15-month associate's degree in nursing program. Program graduates will be eligible to take state examinations required for registered nurse licensure.

The hospital provides students for the program by awarding scholarships to qualified employees. For the first class of enrollees who began course work in January, the hospital more than doubled its student minimum. Scholarships were offered to licensed practical nurses that already were on staff and interested in becoming registered nurses. Because of their LPN status, those participants also were eligible to take a National League of Nursing exam that, if passed, exempted them from 13 hours of course work otherwise required for the associate degree.

The employee-students will complete their clinical work at the hospital. Upon graduating, scholarship recipients are obligated to work for the hospital for a time that corresponds to the value of their scholarship award. Graduates will be credited a specified amount per hour worked toward the scholarship's total worth and, whether as full- or part-time employees, must remain on staff at the hospital until they have completed the hours necessary to satisfy their obligation.

The first class that graduated this spring included a paramedic and the rest were licensed practical nurses (LPNs). Enrollment also is open to the public and includes non-hospital employees. Any Blount Memorial Hospital employee is eligible to apply for a scholarship toward the nursing associate's degree program, but must commit to enrolling as a full-time student only in the 15-month program. Those unable to enroll as full-time students can pursue the hospital's tuition reimbursement benefit for employees and take courses toward an LMU associate's degree in nursing at their own pace. LMU also offers a 25 percent tuition discount to all BMH employees, their spouses or dependent children on any courses taken at any LMU site.

For more information, contact Patricia Naff at pnaff@bmnet.com.

VUSN Pursuing Educational Partnership with Fisk University

The Vanderbilt University School of Nursing (VUSN) is planning to expand its current relationship with Fisk University and offer courses to meet requirements of a bachelor of science in nursing degree to be awarded by Fisk.

Students must complete a specified curriculum of the liberal arts courses at Fisk University and all three semesters of the VUSN pre-specialty curriculum in order to be awarded a bachelor's degree in nursing from Fisk. The program will be administered by Fisk, whereby Vanderbilt nursing courses are coordinated in the Fisk curriculum through Linda Norman, VUSN senior associate dean for academics, who initially will serve jointly as the director of nursing at Fisk.

This relationship provides a nursing program at an institution that has a high percentage of minority students. The partnership prevents Fisk University from having to incur the expense of providing the classrooms and skills labs, or having to employ a department of nursing faculty.

VUSN has had a contractual relationship with Fisk since 1989, offering a senior year in absentia option for Fisk students who wish to pursue the master's of science degree in nursing at VUSN.

The letter of intent recently was approved by the Tennessee Board of Nursing, and now awaits official approval, which is expected this fall.

For more information, contact Linda Norman at 615-343-3241, linda.norman@vanderbilt.edu.

Partnership Responds to Nursing Shortage in Middle Tennessee

TriStar Health System has teamed up with Tennessee State University's (TSU) associate degree nursing program to expand the university's program on the Nashville State Community College (NSCC) campus to meet the healthcare industry's growing need for nurses.

Through the partnership, TriStar has donated \$100,000 to bring the Tennessee State University associate degree nursing program to NSCC.

NSCC and TSU partnered on the program expansion in response to the critical shortage of registered nurses and need for qualified caregivers. The program is designed to allow students to complete TSU's associate of applied science in nursing degree on the NSCC campus. NSCC faculty will provide general education courses and TSU faculty will provide nursing courses.

The financial resources provided by TriStar will pay for renovations for a classroom, laboratory and subsidizing nursing faculty salaries. TriStar also has committed to numerous clinical faculty from their master's prepared clinicians, who will serve as clinical faculty and receive a joint appointment from TSU.

For more information, contact Larry Burkhart at larry.burkhart@hcahealthcare.com.

Baptist College of Health Sciences Hosts Consortium Institute

Baptist College of Health Sciences hosted an annual Health Sciences Consortium Summer Institute in June, which was developed for secondary teachers and piloted it a year ago.

The program is designed to update teachers' professional skills through clinical experiences so they will be better prepared to provide high school students with the tools they will need for success in a health sciences career.

This year, the 36 participants rotated through clinical experiences in respiratory care, nuclear medicine technology, diagnostic medical sonography, medical radiography, MRI/CT, radiation therapy and nursing. The program introduced teachers to six high demand health careers and exposed them to leading edge technology in each clinical area.

Teachers also developed lesson plans that integrate mathematics and science concepts inherent in all health science instruction.

For more information, contact Bill Sobotor, PhD, at Bill.Sobotor@BCHS.edu.

Hospital Recruits from Abroad

High Point Regional Health System, Highpoint, NC, has contracted to hire eight nurses from the former Soviet Republic of Moldova.

The hospital has signed a contract with Strategic Staffing Resources (SSR), Greensboro, to bring the nurses to work in High Point but the recruitment of these nurses does not indicate a staffing shortage at the hospital. The institution has a vacancy rate of 3 percent for nurses. It also is a magnet hospital with magnet status for its nursing program.

THA Supports Nurse Reinvestment Act

The Tennessee Hospital Association (THA) is advocating for at least \$175 million in funding for the nursing workforce development programs contained in Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act during the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2004 appropriations process.

These dollars would help address the growing shortage of nurses in Tennessee and the nation, and should be provided in addition to current federal nurse education funding.

Last year, President Bush signed the Nurse Reinvestment Act (PL 107-205) into law, which expanded and reinforced the programs of Title VIII. These programs hold the promise of attracting more individuals to the nursing profession, increasing the capacity for nursing education, and encouraging practicing nurses to remain in the profession.

To help alleviate the current nursing shortage, a \$175 million appropriation request has been made for these programs in FFY 2004, which is supported by 34 senators. This funding request also has the strong support of many national organizations, including the American Organization of Nurse Executives (AONE), American Nurses Association (ANA) and American Hospital Association (AHA).

Hospital Uses Grant to Recruit Men and Minorities

Wayne Memorial Hospital in North Carolina will use a three-year grant to recruit more men and minorities into the healthcare profession.

The hospital will share a \$950,000 grant with three other rural hospitals in the state. Wayne Memorial's portion will be \$237,000 -- or \$79,166 each year.

The other hospitals are Caldwell Memorial in Lenoir, Rowan Regional Medical Center in Salisbury and Heritage Hospital in Tarboro.

The grant is designed to draw more men and minority workers to healthcare jobs, as well as young people and older workers. Those groups are under-represented in the profession. The grant will help pay for a work force development and recruitment coordinator. A consultant will be shared by the four hospitals receiving the grant. Read more online at <http://www.newsargus.com/newspost/today.html>.

Partnership Relationships: Hospitals and Colleges

In Kinston, NC, the Lenoir Memorial Hospital human resource leadership staff is in a partnership with the Lenoir Community College health career leadership staff.

The Lenoir partnership meets monthly to discuss current and evolving healthcare workforce needs at the hospital, training capacity in the college, and identify obstacles impacting their respective areas of responsibility. They work together to expedite a process that favorably addresses needs at the hospital and programs at the college.

The partnership is an example of how to expedite problem solving. The group is an effective tool in staying abreast of evolving healthcare work force needs in the county.