



Jackson Hospital, UT College Form Partnership to Produce More Therapists

Jackson-Madison County General Hospital's (JMCGH) board of trustees recently passed a resolution to donate \$300,000 to the University of Tennessee Health Science Center's College of Allied Health Sciences.

The support will go toward helping the college recruit more physical and occupational therapy students, as well as provide renovated lab space for occupational therapy education, research and practice.

Currently, there is a national need for more physical and occupational therapists to serve patients in a variety of healthcare settings. Last year, the UT College of Allied Health Sciences in Memphis graduated 30 physical therapists and 12 occupational therapists.

Several of those graduates have been employed by West Tennessee Healthcare. Through the years, UT has been the main source of physical and occupational therapists employed by West Tennessee Healthcare. Anchored by the 612-bed JMCGH, West Tennessee Healthcare is headquartered in Jackson and provides healthcare services in a 17-county area.

Susan Mansfield, dean, UT College of Allied Health, stated, "We are excited about this venture with West Tennessee Healthcare. Many of our students and graduates come from the service area of West Tennessee Healthcare, and we appreciate the donation that will provide a state-of-the-art facility for our occupational therapy students. The donation will allow UT to renovate existing campus space to accommodate a new occupational therapy lab and purchase equipment. In honor of the donation and relationship between the two organizations, the lab will be known as the West Tennessee Healthcare Occupational Therapy Research and Practice Lab."

Vanderbilt Report Shows Largest Increase in RN Employment in Decades

The number of registered nurses entering the job market appears to be on a steady incline, with a total employment growth of over 200,000 registered nurses since 2001, the largest increase since the early 1980's, but experts at the Vanderbilt School of Nursing say it is still not enough to prevent a long-term crisis that threatens to cripple the entire healthcare system.

The new numbers come from Peter Buerhaus, PhD, and Valere Potter, professor of nursing; senior associate dean for research, Vanderbilt School of Nursing, in an article appearing in the November 17 health policy journal, *Health Affairs*. "While RNs

over age 50 have provided much of the expansion of hospital employment since 2001, it is striking that in 2003, employment of younger RNs grew by nearly 90,000, reaching the highest level observed for younger RNs since 1987,” said Buerhaus. “This entry of younger RNs into the workforce is consistent with reports of substantial gains in enrollments at nursing schools since 2001, and may represent the first wave of two-year program graduates.”

However, Buerhaus said the most surprising findings from his research show that even with the significant increase in nurses joining the workforce, the nursing shortage is far from over. He said it is unlikely that the recent increase in younger nurses will provide enough new nurses to solve the projected long-run shortage.

“The workforce is projected to peak at a size of 2.3 million in 2012 and shrink to 2.2 million by 2020 – a modest increase of roughly 60,000 RNs over forecasts without the new data. This total pales in comparison to the Health Resources and Services Administration’s latest forecast of 2.8 million full-time RNs that will be needed in 2020. Thus, a very, very large shortage still looms on the horizon, a shortage so large that it could easily cripple the entire healthcare system, not just hospitals,” he warned.

Rural Hospital Broadens Base with “Grow Your Own Strategies”

As a rural hospital, Laughlin Memorial Hospital (LMH) realized it must be creative in growing its own employees in order to maintain a highly trained and skilled workforce.

Hospital employees serve on boards and educational committees at regional colleges, universities and technology centers, in addition to providing speakers on health-related topics for schools, civic clubs, churches and other organizations. The hospital teamed with Mountain States Health Alliance, which includes eight hospitals in the East Tennessee region, and the Tennessee Hospital Association’s Center for Health Workforce Development to sponsor a health science summer institute for teachers in 2004. A “discover nursing camp” also is held at the hospital each summer for students interested in pursuing nursing as a career. In addition, the hospital sponsors a nursing extern program for senior RN students who are in an AD or BS program in an accredited school of nursing, which allows these students to become accustomed to the hospital.

High school and college student clinical training is welcome at LMH, where students find the most modern medical technology currently available. Departments include a totally digital radiology department, and an electronic medical records system that is capable of fully integrating physicians’ offices with the hospital computer system. The hospital serves as a clinical training site for nine colleges, universities and technology centers representing 15 healthcare programs. Internships are offered at the hospital for Tusculum College, East Tennessee State University and Duke University in six health-related programs.

The level of financial and intellectual investment by Laughlin Memorial Hospital to education in Greeneville and Greene County is an ongoing commitment to the collaborative effort between two key stakeholders in the healthcare workforce crisis. It also shows creative ways partnerships can work between hospitals and education.

HCA MidAmerica Division, Belmont Form Nursing Consortium Partnership

HCA's MidAmerica Division recently joined with Belmont University to announce a groundbreaking new educational partnership to address the growing shortage of nurses in Tennessee.

HCA's MidAmerica Division has committed \$7.5 million toward the construction of a college of health sciences building on the eastern edge of the Belmont campus. The building will include Belmont's nursing, occupational therapy and social work programs. The facility is phase one of a two-part project, and fundraising is underway now for a second building for Belmont's physical therapy program, and expansion space for nursing and other potential health sciences programs. When completed, the entire healthcare educational complex will be nearly 100,000 square feet, including an underground multi-level parking garage, and will be constructed at a total cost of approximately \$34 million. Phase one is a \$22.5 million project.

This unique partnership will create a new nursing consortium intended to help meet the needs of Middle Tennessee for quality education healthcare professionals, especially those in the field of nursing. Other area colleges and universities invited to join the consortium include: Trevecca Nazarene University, Martin Methodist University and Columbia State Community College, which is intended to attract and educate a large number of new nurses to alleviate the growing shortage and to lay the foundation of a new synergistic approach to educating nurses and other healthcare professionals.

HCA's MidAmerica Division and Belmont University's College of Health Sciences will share resources in this collaborative effort to capitalize on the strengths of each partner in order to meet the healthcare needs of the region each serves. "The need for quality healthcare professionals is a community-wide issue," said Paul Rutledge, president of HCA's MidAmerica Division, which includes the 17 hospitals of TriStar Health System. "When the provider community can join forces with the educational community, it's a winning combination. The real winners are the patients that will be cared for by the highly trained professionals coming out of this educational experience."

Belmont University has since received the single largest gift, in school history: \$10.5 million from Gordon Inman, a Nashville businessman and philanthropist. Inman said HCA's contribution of \$7.5 million, his work on the university's board of trustees, and the support of his wife and family were strong considerations in his decision to donate. The university's college of health sciences and nursing will be renamed the Gordon E. Inman College of Health Sciences and Nursing.