



Southern Economic Development Region

CSSI Partners Answer Call To Region's Healthcare Worker Shortage

was offered at the Hospital, proved very successful with over 20 local residents receiving their CNA certificate. The

Hospital District allowed any employee to attend this training at no cost and a number of them took advantage. "This course offered residents an opportunity to get involved in healthcare and employees an opportunity to get certified and advance in their career" said Dauby.

In the fall of 2004, Hamilton Memorial Hospital District and Rend Lake College teamed up again to offer the CNA class to local high school students. A number of students completed this class, received their CNA certificate, and were employed by the Hospital District to work evenings and weekends while they continue their education. This introduction to the healthcare industry has been positive as at least four of these students have indicated they are enrolling in area community colleges to continue their education in a healthcare related program. "This program has not only introduced these

home health agency, a physician's clinic, and a number of specialty physicians who provide an array of care to the local residents.

Employee and Student Partnerships

Realizing the impact this shortage of qualified, trained healthcare professionals could have on the organization and its ability to provide healthcare to the local area, Hamilton Memorial Hospital District decided to take a proactive approach to addressing this issue. The leadership of the Hospital District realized that getting individuals interested in healthcare careers had to include the opportunity to be exposed to the industry at a local level. Dauby added "Due to the vast numbers of careers, it is often difficult to explain or describe the opportunities available in healthcare." After being active in a variety of workforce initiatives focusing on healthcare shortages, the organization's leadership made a commitment to its employees and the local residents to provide this career exposure. In 2004, Hamilton Memorial Hospital District and Rend Lake College partnered to offer a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) class in the summer. Dauby indicated that this class, which



Students from Hamilton County High School

job shadowing program that will allow students to interact with a professional healthcare provider for a number of weeks during the summer. The student will have the ability to really see what a particular job entails and if it is something they want to pursue for a career."

Education Assistance Program

Hamilton Memorial Hospital District also began offering a very comprehensive Education Assistance Program for its employees last year. The organization made a commitment to all employees with at least one year service that the organization will be willing to fund their education in a number of healthcare related fields. "We felt that the talent and ability exists with the employees of our organization, so why not try to address this dilemma by providing them with the resources to succeed" Dauby stated. "Therefore, we made the commitment to provide funding for their tuition, books, and fees in exchange for future service to the organization." This program has also proven very beneficial as a number of employees have taken advantage of the opportunity to further their education. "We are a small organization and right now, we have four employees completing their RN degree and a couple more studying to become LPNs." Dauby indicated. For each year of education provided, employees are required to provide the organization with a year of employment in their new career. "Also", Dauby added, "the group of employees who worked on putting this program together indicated that a reimbursement program was not feasible as the availability to come up with resources up front and wait to be reimbursed would significantly limit our pool of applicants. Therefore, the Hospital District pays for these

students to healthcare and provided them with a part-time job, it has sparked interest in many of them to further their education in healthcare and these types of partnerships will be crucial in addressing the shortage of qualified healthcare workers" Dauby added. "Also, we are working closely with the local high school to establish a formal

education expenses upfront meaning the employee has no out of pocket expenses for these items."

Scholarship Opportunities

In a similar program, Hamilton Memorial Hospital District began offering full scholarships to any graduating senior of Hamilton County High School entering one of a number of specified healthcare fields. Dauby added "In our first year of this program, we were able to have a few students take advantage of this program and expect it to grow rapidly this year. This is a wonderful opportunity for local students to have their education paid for and have a competitively paying job waiting for them in their hometown when they complete their education."

Hamilton Memorial Hospital District's Foundation, which is comprised of community volunteers, has helped raise funds to offset the cost of this program and also raise community awareness about the seriousness of this issue. Dauby indicated "Our Foundation has been instrumental in helping the organization raise the necessary funding for this project. The members have also helped spread the word about the potential shortage of qualified workers and what steps we, as an organization, are taking to try to resolve this issue on a local level. We are very thankful to them and proud of their commitment to the citizens of our area and to our

local healthcare facility." There is little question that this worker shortage is real and will



Brad Futrell, Assistant Administrator, Emily Allen, Student and Denise Browning, LPTA, Director of Rehabilitation Services for the Hospital District, during a job shadowing opportunity.

continue to impact the healthcare industry. However, instead of waiting for this to have a negative impact on their business and the healthcare of area residents, Hamilton Memorial Hospital District has taken positive and progressive steps to address this issue. "I don't

believe that healthcare organizations have the luxury of waiting to see what will happen with this issue. I think we must search for solutions and look for opportunities within our own backyard" Dauby stated. "We are blessed in our area to have a very valuable resource in our employees and local residents and we intend to nurture their growth to assure that quality healthcare will exist for our residents both now and in the future."

**This is the third of a year-long series of articles that will appear in the Southern Business Journal as part of the Critical Skill Shortages Initiative (CSSI). The Department of Commerce and Economic Development (DCEO) as part of the Governor's Opportunity Returns Initiative awarded the Southern Economic Development Region (SEDR) a Healthcare Training Grant in the amount of \$558,000 to support projects aimed at decreasing the critical nursing shortage in southern Illinois. Representatives from healthcare, community colleges, business K-12 education, labor, economic development and workforce development participated in focus group & consortia committee meetings during the last year to plan and implement these important projects*

Rend Lake College

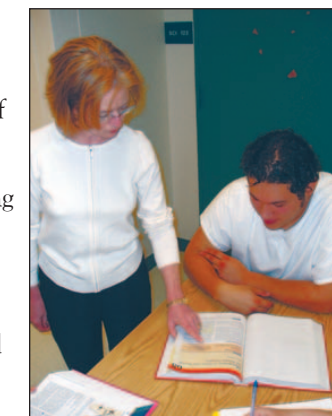
Submitted by Sharon Beasley, Division Chair/Allied Health

The demand for qualified nurses in the healthcare industry today is a well-known and long-studied crisis, but Rend Lake College is determined to do everything it can to help quell the shortage. The comprehensive community college, located in Ina, has a long-standing reputation for graduating excellent nurses, using instruction centering on evidence-based nursing practice and critical thinking. The dedicated faculty ensures students will acquire skills and knowledge which they can apply in today's nursing world.

Rend Lake College's nursing programs are designed to train well-prepared graduates to enter exciting and rewarding positions in the healthcare field. These programs provide students an easy transition from one level of nursing to the next: from Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) to Practical Nursing and Associate Degree Nursing.

Throughout the year, Rend Lake College offers a seven-credit-hour Certified Nurse Assistant course. Nursing students are not required to be a CNA to enter the subsequent Practical Nursing program, but those who are may be able to waive the Basic Nursing Skills course. The Practical Nursing curriculum is available in two convenient formats -- daytime for full-time students or evenings/weekends for part-time students. After completing the Practical Nursing program, students apply to take the

NCLEX-PN state board exam. At this stage, students may continue their education by entering the Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) program. Many students work as licensed practical nurses while attending ADN classes. The Associate Degree Nursing curriculum is a two-semester program open to graduates of a practical nursing program who have completed prerequisite courses. ADN graduates apply to take the NCLEX-RN state board exam. ADN graduates still have the option of continuing their education by obtaining bachelor's degrees in nursing, and



Instructor Vicki Seeburger with student Tony Catalfamo (Belle Rive)

Rend Lake College's ADN program allows these new registered nurses to articulate easily into several bachelor's degree completion programs. Also boosting RLC's variety of nursing programs are excellent working relationships with area healthcare institutions which assist the college in providing real-world



In back at right, Instructor Kristin Yosanovich Students (L-R), Camia Brown (Mt. Vernon), Art Maddox (West Frankfort) and Melinda Fry (Mt. Vernon)

experience. Affiliation agreements with several area hospitals keep many of RLC's nursing graduates working locally. These agreements have been set up with St. Mary's/Good Samaritan Inc. in Mt. Vernon and Centralia, Crossroads Community Hospital in Mt. Vernon, Pinckneyville Community Hospital, Hamilton Memorial Hospital and hospitals in the Southern Illinois Healthcare group (including Herrin Hospital and Carbondale Memorial). RLC student nurses and graduates also find employment and experience at many local long-term care facilities. Rend Lake College collaborates with many healthcare agencies which offer generous scholarships to nursing students. St. Mary's/Good Samaritan, Pinckneyville Community Hospital and Southern Illinois Healthcare offer financial aid, or "loan forgiveness" programs, in return for a work commitment from nursing students. Several agencies offer their employees tuition reimbursement for nursing courses. Even the college's own nurses help make paying for school easier for subsequent classes. Nursing students raise money each year for the Rend Lake College LPN Endowment, which recently reached \$40,000, to help pay for summer tuition, which often is not covered by usual forms of financial aid.



Instructor Vicki Seeburger with student Kay Anne Wagner (Mt. Vernon)

Questions about the initiative? Please feel free to contact these individuals if you have additional questions regarding the Critical Skill Shortages Initiative:

Mr. John S. Rendleman,
for Mr. William Armstrong
Southern Illinois
Workforce Investment Board
P.O. Box 1727
Marion, IL 62959
Phone: 618/998-0970
E-mail: jrendleman@fmgr.com

Ms. Kathy Lively, Executive Director
ManTraCon, Corp.
1301 Enterprise Way
Marion, IL 62959
Phone: 618/998-0970
E-mail: kathylively@mantracon.org

Mr. Bill Jackson, Chairman
Southern 14
Workforce Investment Board, Inc.
P.O. Box 186
Carmi, IL 62821
Phone: 618/382-5024

Ms. Mary Haley
Grant Planner/Monitor
Southern 14
Workforce Investment Board, Inc.
P.O. Box 186
Carmi, IL 62821
Phone: 618/382-5024
E-mail: maryhaley@shawneelink.net

Ms. Lucinda Pearce
Research & Development Analyst
ManTraCon, Corp.
1301 Enterprise Way
Marion, IL 62959
Phone: 618/998-0970, Ext. 226
E-mail: lucindapearce@mantracon.org

Ms. Zina Nolen
Special Projects Administrator
ManTraCon, Corp.
1301 Enterprise Way
Marion, IL 62959
Phone: 618/998-0970, Ext. 213
E-mail: zinanolen@mantracon.org

Cary Minnis
Healthcare Liaison
ManTraCon, Corp.
1301 Enterprise Way
Marion, IL 62959
Phone: 618/998-0970, Ext. 211
E-mail: CaryMinnis@mantracon.org