



Southern Economic Development Region

CSSI Partners Answer Call To Region's Healthcare Worker Shortage

*This is the fourth 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 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

Southeastern Illinois College Nursing Programs: A Pathway to Success

From a single Practical Nursing class begun by Shirley Oshel, RN, MS, fifty years ago to a comprehensive health care curriculum today, Southeastern Illinois College (SIC) provides quality education that leads to multiple workforce opportunities for students. Students can enter and exit their own customized career paths, from dual credit health occupation courses while in high school through the Associate Degree Nurse level.

Through the Federal Perkins Grant, professional nursing tutors are available to students to assist in achieving educational goals. The tutors assist students with theory and lab skills to ensure successful learning outcomes as students complete their journeys on their educational paths. Along these paths are job opportunity benchmarks.

Total Training Time	Average Annual Salary
CNA2-4 Months . . .	\$22,140.00
LPN11 Months . . .	\$36,541.00
ADN9 Months . . .	\$55,524.00

(after graduation from PN program)

Salary figures are based upon national averages provided by www.salary.com.

Students may exit and re-enter at a later date to continue the SIC health

care instructional plan. This SIC curriculum has resulted in pass rates which exceed state and national averages. The successful pass rates prepare graduates to provide quality-nursing services to southern Illinois residents, as well as to residents in other areas.

Nancy Colbert, Director of Nursing Programs at Southeastern, explained, "Our program here is really thriving and competitive. Our faculty members are highly qualified, have a variety of professional experiences, and are very dedicated."

Many SIC Nursing graduates accept positions in area long-term-care facilities, clinics, and hospitals. For example, Southern Illinois Healthcare facilities employ approximately 40 Southeastern Illinois College Nursing graduates.

The health care field is a growth-industry leader of southern Illinois. The Illinois Department of Labor projects that nursing employment is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through 2012. Southeastern Illinois College is

a strong force in meeting this need. Through the offering of quality nursing education programs and instruction, the pathway to success starts at Southeastern Illinois College.

Southeastern Illinois College's Nursing program has produced many success stories.

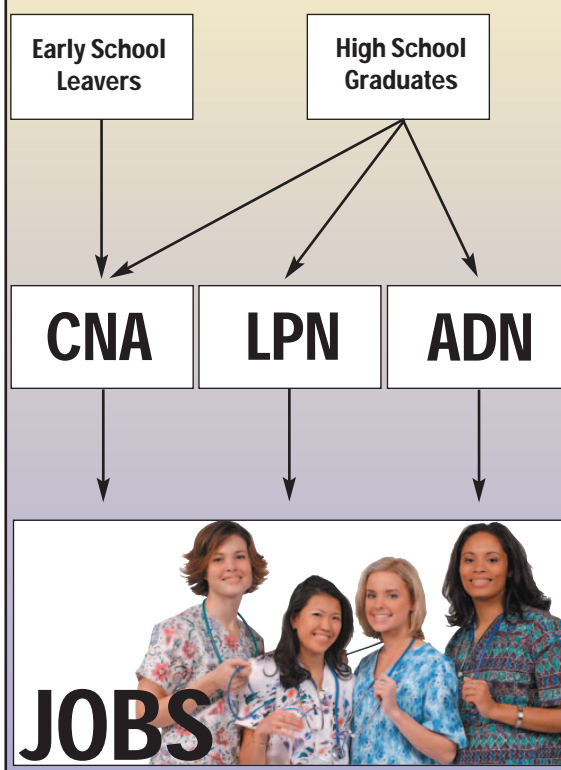
Amber (Hull) Ollis is an excellent example.

Amber began her educational path by attending dual credit Health Occupations classes at Harrisburg High School offered by Southeastern.

After graduating from high school, Amber enrolled in Southeastern's Practical Nurse (PN) and Associate Degree in Nursing (AND) programs.

"SIC provided me with quality instruction that has assisted me in my nursing career. The small class size made learning more individualized. The clinical education I received at Southeastern was excellent. I received a variety of 'hands-on' patient care experiences with nursing instructors available to assist and encourage me,"

The Southeastern Illinois College Healthcare Pathway to Success Starts Here!



said Amber.

Upon graduation from SIC, Amber accepted a position as an ICU nurse. She also applied her Southeastern ADN credits and completed a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. Now employed as a cardiac cath nurse at Memorial Hospital of Carbondale, Amber attributes her career success to the educational experience provided by Southeastern Illinois College. Adds Colbert, "At Southeastern Illinois College, we say 'Success Starts Here,' and we have so many wonderful success stories from Nursing graduates."

Southern Illinois is growing and so are the health care needs of its people. However, there is a shortage of qualified health care workers, especially nurses.

Southern Illinois Healthcare, its hospitals and health centers are health care leaders dedicated to providing the best possible medical care for the people they serve. To continue as a leader and to provide solutions to the nursing shortage, SIH has implemented several programs to develop a qualified, homegrown workforce for Memorial Hospital of Carbondale, Herrin Hospital, St. Joseph Memorial Hospital and Miners Memorial Health Center in West Frankfort.

"Young students typically 'see the lights' in the metropolitan areas," Scott Seaborn, vice president, SIH Human Resources explained. Guiding and assisting individuals to a health care career seemed to make sense. "We wanted those students to stay in Southern Illinois, to cultivate the crop, if you will, and we made the decision to invest in them."

Scholarship Programs

SIH Scholarship opportunities are available to students majoring in a variety of healthcare fields. This year, over 23 registered nurses will graduate through the SIH Scholarship and LPN to RN Scholarship program. These programs were launched three years ago and, to date, over 40 students who received nursing degrees have been placed in the SIH system.

The SIH scholarship brings together college scholarship money

with hands-on work opportunities. Qualified applicants are eligible for money to cover tuition, lab fee, books and educational supplies. Additional money may be available upon request based on individual needs. Scholarship recipients will be required to sign a contractual agreement stating they will work for SIH after graduation. The length of the work agreement is dependent on the



Southern Illinois Healthcare is looking for people dedicated to caring for others.



"The mentoring program really prepared me. I love working here now," Allison Campos, RN said.

amount awarded to each scholarship recipient. Those who leave their educational program or choose to work elsewhere after graduation will simply repay the scholarship as a loan.

Mary Falat, Carbondale nursing student, said the scholarship program augmented her college savings

and made it possible to spend more time on her studies. "The program is intense and requires a lot of focus," she said.

Programs are available in the following disciplines: accredited records technician, medical lab technician, radiologic technologist, registered nurse, respiratory therapist, surgical technologist and physical therapist. A great number of students have graduated through these programs and now work in the SIH system.

Mentoring

Students in the nursing program can also get first-hand training prior to graduation through internships and a mentorship program called Linking Education and Practice (LEAP). Students that are enrolled in an area nursing program, part time, will be able to apply to this program that combines work experience with education. Students can begin working and training at an SIH hospital alongside a veteran nurse/RN preceptor in various critical care areas.



Mentoring candidates must be students in good standing in the part-time nursing program at an approved community college and have



successfully completed one semester of the nursing program. They work at least 16 hours per week and must be able to be flexible in their schedules. Mentoring is available for CNA,



service partner, LPN and LPN II and tech partner students.

In addition, LEAP students are eligible for 100 percent tuition reimbursement or the scholarship program, and SIH shall reimburse students for all costs associated with LPN/RN boards.

Caitlin Edwards, RN, worked with a preceptor in ICU at Memorial before and after graduation from nursing school. "I wasn't sure where I wanted to work," she said. "I precepted in ICU and I loved it. It was a big help in getting

me prepared to work here."

Allison Campos, RN, was in the scholarship program for her final year of school at John A. Logan College and mentored through the LEAP program. "It worked very well for me," she said. "Critical care is very different from other kinds of nursing and it's very challenging. The mentoring program really prepared me. I love working here now."

Campos added that the nursing shortage is not expected to end soon. "So, if you are up to the challenge, there are lots of jobs."

Students participating in these programs get jobs with SIH. "And that is a plus for them and for SIH," Kristin King, employment coordinator said.

Southern Illinois Healthcare is a leader in employee satisfaction. People work there in modern, well-equipped settings. The recently started \$19 million addition to Herrin Hospital and the soon to be completed renovations of the birthing center at Memorial Hospital of Carbondale are both examples of how SIH is a growing, thriving health care leader.

In addition, SIH has recently embarked on a system-wide effort, Building the Best Workplace, that empowers staff and managers to help them create the best possible working environment.

"This is an exciting and fun place to work," King said.

To apply for scholarships or learn more about exciting employment opportunities at Southern Illinois Healthcare, contact Kristin King by e-mail at kristin.king@sih.net or by phone at (618) 457-5200, ext. 67803.

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

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