



Workforce Update

Latest information on hospitals' attraction and retention of talent:

February 10, 2004

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1. Grant Helps Hospital Workers Climb Career Ladder

A \$1.2 million grant from The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to the Ohio Hospital Association's Research and Educational Foundation, will assist hospitals in creating incumbent worker training programs to help individuals already working in hospitals attain higher education- the first step in the health care career ladder.

Participants in the program can work toward becoming a registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, radiology technician, medical record transcriptist or another health career requiring post secondary education

"Inception of these training programs is a fundamental piece of the puzzle to helping our hospitals retain their talented employees by offering opportunities to grow within their organizations," said James R. Castle, president and CEO of the Ohio Hospital Association. "OHA and its member hospitals strive to create a valued workforce, which is essential to ensuring quality care for all Ohioans."

Under the grant, Ohio hospitals are eligible to receive up to \$3,000 per worker per year for their tuition. Hospitals are responsible for providing up to \$1,000 for books, transportation, and other expenses for each participant. See the grant at <http://www.ohanet.org/workforce/>

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2. Seeking Hospital Heroes

Make a hit with one of your hospital's heroes by making a nomination for OHA's 2004 Albert E. Dyckes Health Care Worker of the Year Award. OHA is now accepting nominations for the award, which honors caregivers who routinely go beyond the call of duty and give back to the community.

OHA invites every member hospital to nominate one individual to represent its facility for the award. All nominees will be celebrated at the OHA Recognition Dinner June 14, in conjunction with the OHA Annual Meeting June 14-15. The ultimate recipient of the award and four finalists will be named during the dinner, along with recipients of several other OHA awards.

Nomination materials are available online at <http://www.ohanet.org/annualmeeting/Awards/default.htm>. Please submit nominations by Feb. 27. All nominations must be made by e-mailing the official nomination form to Tiffany Himmelreich at tiffanyh@ohanet.org.

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3. Workforce on CEOs' Mind

The AHA's ongoing survey of administrators at member institutions indicates that workforce issues remain the number two worry on CEOs' minds. Fifty-four percent of those surveyed indicated workforce as the number two worry, down from 2002 when 70 percent brought up the issue. Reimbursement issues remain the number one concern, medical liability/tort reform came in at number three, jumping from 19 to 27 percent between 2002 and 2003. *This information is according to AHA News Now, Jan. 29, 2004*

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4. Enrollment of Nursing Schools on the Rise, Students Still Turned Away

Enrollment in entry-level baccalaureate programs in nursing increased by 16.6 percent in fall of 2003, but despite this gain more than 11,000 qualified students were turned away from nursing programs due to the limited number of faculty, clinical sites, and classroom space. Enrollment steadily declined from 1995-2000 by almost 19 percent, but has been on the increase for the past three years. Enrollment

in master's and doctoral degree nursing programs has risen. Though enrollment has increased, the number of graduates from these programs continues to decline.

The preliminary report of the National League for Nursing (NLN) shows an increase in the number of graduations, admissions and enrollments in RN nursing programs for the 2002-2003 academic year. The data surveyed and analyzed all types of nursing education programs. Enrollment for associate degrees has increased by five percent; baccalaureate programs increased by 21 percent while diploma programs are rapidly declining. The NLN will publish a final report this spring. *This information is according to the results of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) annual survey.*

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5. Bernard Hodes Group Survey Reports on Nursing, Allied Health Vacancies and Turnovers

Bernard Hodes Group found, in a survey of hospital and other health care recruiters, that the average vacancy rate of nurses is 13.9 percent. An online survey of 151 recruiters conducted from April 22 to Oct. 1, 2003, reported vacancies averaged 15.7 percent for occupational therapists, 14.6 percent for physical therapists, 14.4 percent for speech and language therapist and 14.2% for respiratory therapists. The highest turnover rate was RNs at 15.5 percent. Eighty percent of survey respondents worked in acute-care facilities. The survey can be found at www.hodes.com/hcrecruiting/.

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6. Lawsuit Filed In California by Hospitals to Modify Interpretation of Nurse Staffing Regulations.

The California Healthcare Association (CHA) filed a lawsuit against California's Department of Health Services (DHS). The lawsuit alleges that DHS' interpretation of new nurse staffing regulations will result in every hospital being unable to comply. The new nurse staffing regulations took effect on New Years Day.

The lawsuit seeks to prevent DHS from interpreting the new nurse-to-patient ratio regulations in such a manner as to require additional fill-in nursing coverage any time a nurse is temporarily away from patients. If DHS does not modify the regulation, nurses will be unable to take a short break unless a qualified nurse is available to provide fill-in coverage. With the severity of California's nursing shortage, there are not enough nurses to put this requirement into practice.

Through a formal rulemaking process, DHS interpreted that nurses who were temporarily away could continue to be counted in the numeric ratios, according to Duane Dauner, president and CEO of the California Healthcare Association. Recently

DHS interpretation was changed to require assigned fill-in coverage by a new nurse whenever the assigned nurse is on break.

The filing of the lawsuit was the “last resort” after months of conversation with both the previous and current Administration.

Unless immediate action is taken, hospitals throughout California may be forced to reduce access to patient care by canceling elective surgeries, discharging patients sooner and delaying new hospital admissions.

Santa Teresita Hospital in Duarte, CA has ceased operating as a full-service hospital. Santa Teresita has suspended its general medical-surgical beds, intensive care beds, and perinatal beds. Skilled nursing beds were not affected. They cited the new staffing requirements as the key reason in their January 6 letter to the Department of Health Services. The California staffing ratios are the first of their kind in the nation.

Many hospitals surveyed by the California Healthcare Foundation indicated that they have been out of compliance with the new state’s new nurse-to-patient staffing ratios at some time, forcing many hospitals to divert ambulances to other facilities. Approximately 229 hospitals were surveyed, 86 percent reported they have been unable to comply with the regulation at times, and nearly 50 percent said they have had to divert ambulances from their emergency rooms as a result. The CHA survey was conducted over a two-week period. *This information is according to AHA News Now*

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7. Overtime Mandate Could Affect Patient Services

OHA will voice hospital concerns with legislation introduced in the Ohio House of Representatives today prohibiting hospitals from requiring registered nurses and licensed practical nurses to work overtime. The mandated prohibition of overtime outlined in House Bill 382, sponsored by Rep. John Widowfield (R-Cuyahoga Falls), could exacerbate the nursing shortage faced by many hospitals throughout the state and result in unsafe staffing of hospital beds, jeopardizing the health and safety of patients.

In December, OHA discussed an initial draft of the legislation with its Board of Trustees. The Board voted to oppose the draft legislation, however it did feel it is important that hospitals address concerns being raised by their nursing staffs, as well as concerns raised by a recent study of the Institutes of Medicine regarding nurse work hours. To that end, the Board asked the Ohio Organization of Nurse Executives (OONE) to develop safe-staffing principles to be shared with the OHA membership and used to evaluate any proposed legislative efforts on this issue. The

safe-staffing principles will be finalized by OONE and approved by the OHA Board in February. For more details on OHA's concerns with the overtime legislation visit

8. Update Overtime Protection for White-Collar Workers

Department Of Labor Secretary Chao testified before the Senate Labor-HHS-Ed committee to extol the virtues of the Bush Administration's plan to revise the overtime rules under the FLSA. Their plan would raise the salary threshold for overtime pay for low wage earners (which, the Admin. says, will increase the number of low wage earners who qualify to earn overtime). But the plan also changes other factors that influence whether you qualify for overtime pay.

Democrats have been going off the walls, and the AFL-CIO is going nuts. They're convinced this will destroy overtime pay for millions of white-collar, middle-class workers, including nurses, paramedics, firefighters, cops, and many other management-level professionals.

But Sec. Chao insists that existing overtime protections for nurses (and everyone else on the Democrat's list) would be strengthened, not threatened. It's a classic political fight of Labor vs. Management, with both political parties saying they speak for both groups.

AFL-CIO <http://www.aflcio.org/yourjobeconomy/overtimepay/underattack.cfm>

Sec. Chao's press release Jan 20

<http://www.dol.gov/opa/media/press/opa/OPA2004063.htm>

Sen. Kennedy's statement (Jan. 20): http://kenedy.senate.gov/index_high.html

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9. U.S. Spending Bill Includes Health Care Funding

Congress this week approved a fiscal year 2004 spending bill with \$139.76 billion in discretionary spending for Labor, Health and Human Services and Education department programs. The bill now goes to the president for his signature.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services appropriations in the bill include \$142.7 million for nursing education programs and the Nurse Reinvestment Act (\$30 million more than originally allocated), \$724.3 million for maternal and child health block grants, \$39.8 million for rural outreach grants and \$8.9 million for rural health research. The security/bioterrorism appropriations include \$1.63 billion for National Institutes of Health programs, \$1.12 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and \$518 million for hospital preparedness. The bill also includes \$305 million for Children's Graduate Medical Education.

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10. Labor Law Program

Mark your calendar for May 12; the Ohio Hospital Association will be presenting a labor law program in the OHA Board Room. Roger King will be the keynote speaker beginning the program at 9:00. The agenda for the day and more information will be sent out in the near future to members of the Labor Law project and other directors of human resource services.

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OHA Workforce Update

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