



Workforce Update

Latest information on hospitals' attraction and retention of talent:

March 25, 2004

Topics:

1. **March 30 Deadline for Incumbent Worker Training Grant**
2. **Hospitals in Front Seat of 2004 Presidential Campaign Focus on Jobs**
3. **Nurses Return to School—to Teach Students**
4. **Web Makes Hunting Down Physicians Easier at Fairfield Medical Center**
5. **Technology Dollars**
6. **Support Nursing Workforce Development FY 2005 Budget Urged**
7. **Introduce Kids To Health Care Careers**
8. **Nurse Staffing**
9. **Study: U.S. May Get Pediatrician Surplus**
10. **Immigration Policy Affects Hospital**
11. **Job of the Month**

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Deadline for Incumbent Worker Training and Education Grant Approaching

Hospitals interested in obtaining funds to train and educate currently employed health care workers have until **March 30** to apply for available grant money. OHA's Research and Education Foundation (REF) received a \$1.2 million grant from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to help Ohio hospitals work to overcome health care personnel shortages by training current employees in key shortage areas.

Interested hospitals can view information and application material at www.ohanet.org/workforce/. Applications are due March 30 and recipients will be announced by April 30.

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Hospitals in Front Seat of 2004 Presidential Campaign Focus on Jobs

As the presidential campaigns gather steam in the race for the White House, their biggest source of fuel is the issue of American jobs. With the number of jobs decreasing in many markets, the candidates will focus on ways to protect and increase employment – the type of stable, quality employment provided by hospitals.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), U.S. Department of Labor, released projections on the nation’s job growth over the next 10 years. Seven of the 10 fastest growing occupations stem from health care.

While other employers may export jobs or reduce their workforce during economic downturns, hospital jobs remain local and vital – the economy does not drive the number of people who need health care as it does in other industries, and services are provided in the community, not long-distance. Ohio hospital jobs increased from 208,513 in 1992 to 227,791 in 2002 and the projections outline an even sharper upturn over the next 10 years.

As the election approaches and federal and state legislators kick job discussions into high gear, Ohioans should look to hospitals as models of growing and stable sources of quality jobs. For more information, read OHA’s February edition of *Healthbeat* at www.ohanet.org/healthbeat/.

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Nurses Return to School–to Teach Students

A Raleigh, North Carolina hospital is sending seven of their RNs back to school to teach in the nursing education program at Wake Technical Community College. The move allows 56 more students to enter the program. Otherwise, these students would have been turned away from the jam-packed nursing school classes.

The RNs will remain on the hospital payroll, and more RNs will be hired to assume some of the patient-care duties. This program is similar to a program partnership currently in place for radiology technicians. This trend in North Carolina is expected to grow, as similar partnerships crop up across the state of North Carolina. *News Observer*, February 9, 2004

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Web Makes Hunting Down Physicians Easier at Fairfield Medical Center

Fairfield Medical Center dropped the time it takes for a nurse to contact a physician by 90 percent since implementing One-2-One, a Web- and telephone-based communication system from PerfectServe. Fairfield began introducing the

service to blocks of 30-50 physicians every week after the pilot program was completed in December 2003.

The physician contact information is hosted at PerfectServe's data center in Knoxville, Tennessee. Nurse's access and update physician contact information and preferences with a Web-based interface, which is stored on a Microsoft Exchange server. The Web access allows a physician to edit his or her personal settings. Nurses will use a speed-dial-button to contact physicians during emergencies. This function provides nurses with the most current information, and thus an efficient way to contact physicians.

PerfectServe's One-2-One service is licensed on a per-physician basis, with the price ranging between \$600 and \$800 per year. For more, visit <http://www.perfectserve.com/ps/default.html>.

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Technology Dollars

Secretary of Health Tommy Thomson told an audience of health care leaders that the U.S. must start focusing on other items on the national health agenda now that Medicare reform has been passed. Thompson indicated that if hospitals and health care fields invested in improving information technology, they could save more than \$100 billion annually; such an investment also would improve quality of care and reduce the paperwork burden for hospitals. President Bush has said that his budget for the coming year proposes doubling to \$100 million the money spent on projects that use promising health information technology.

AHA News

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Support Nursing Workforce Development In FY 2005 Budget Urged

Organization of Nurse Executives urged the chairmen and ranking members of the House and Senate budget committees to make sure nursing workforce development programs are a priority in the fiscal year 2005 budget resolution, and increase in funding for nurse education programs. A letter sent by the ONE noted that the nation is struggling with a burgeoning shortage of nurses. The Nurse Reinvestment Act works to attract new nurses and improve the work environment for experienced nurses. A significant investment for the programs authorized by the act is needed to ensure an adequate, well-educated supply of nurses to meet the nation's growing health care needs. For more information see www.aha.org under "What's New." AHA News

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Introduce Kids To Health Care Careers

The New Jersey Hospital Association (NJHA) launched a new Web site to introduce children to the array of career possibilities in health care through games, puzzles and other entertaining activities. The Kids Career Corner describes career options and a practice setting for children in elementary school and up and also describes various health care terms. Career information for older students can be found at the Center for Nursing and Health Careers Web site www.njharecruitment.com. NJHA hopes an early introduction to health care careers may plant ideas in young minds. Additional information for teachers and guidance counselors is also offered to help incorporate the site into a curriculum. For more information go to www.njharecruitment.com. Information on health careers in Ohio can be found on OHA's Web site at www.ohanet.org/workforce/careerdev.asp. AHA News

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Nurse Staffing

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services are proposing skilled nursing facilities and Nursing facilities use a specific form at the end of each shift, on a daily basis, posting full-time equivalents of registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, licensed vocational nurses, and certified nurse aides who are directly involved in resident care on a daily basis.

Comments will be considered until 5 p.m. on April 27, 2004. Congress, CMS and the public have been debating the issue of minimum nurse staffing for nursing homes since the passage of OBRA 87.

Advocates for nursing home residents believe poor care is directly related to inadequate staffing. Provider associations more likely view staffing issues as a series of complicated interactions involving the short supply of nursing home workers and facility differences in resident activity and functional limitation.

Nursing homes are currently required to have enough staff to give adequate care to all residents. Currently there are no plans to develop a federal standard for optimal nursing staffing levels. At this time there is not enough evidence to warrant minimum staffing ratio requirements. According to the *Federal Register*, nurse-staffing levels may increase due to a market demand created when reliable information is given and if the public remains informed. (Federal Register/ Vol.69 No 39/ Friday, Feb. 27, 2004/Proposed Rules)

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Study: U.S. May Get Pediatrician Surplus

A shifting demographic may produce a surplus of pediatric doctors in many areas of the country through the next decade, according to a study published in the March issue of *Journal Pediatrics*.

By 2020, the population of children is expected to increase only by about nine percent nationally while the number of pediatricians will jump 58 percent, according to the study. (The New York Times, nytimes.com and Pediatrics Pedialink.org)

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Immigration Policy Affects Hospitals

A report issued by the Immigration Policy Center finds that policies on hiring foreign-born employees are restricting the ability of health care providers to recruit needed nurses, physicians and other health professions. The report noted that foreign-born professionals are crucial in filling shortages. Recent changes in immigration policy have made it tougher to meet the need. Carla Luggiero, AHA senior associate director for federal relations, stated, "The study illustrates the adverse effect of U.S. immigration policy on hospitals ability to hire qualified health care professionals." The full report can be found at www.aifl.org/ipc/ipf0204.pdf. (AHA News Now)

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Job of the Month:

Medical Records/Health Information Management

Performs record-keeping activities under the supervision of a registered health information administrator. Registered Health Information Technicians include subspecialties such as coding technician.

Typical duties include coding diseases, operation and treatments according to recognized classification system, enters the codes on the medical record and in the computer systems, maintains census figures, births, deaths, etc., ensures proper completion of the medical record in order to be able to complete a bill for services.

An associate degree is available through a college or university accredited by Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation (CAHEA) or American Health Information Management Association offers an independent study program in Medical Record Technology Programs (ISP/MRT). A national crediting exam qualifies individuals to become Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT). The average salary is \$18,700 to \$25,188 per year.

The current number of unfilled coding jobs nationally is at 40 percent. Growth is expected to be faster than average through the next 10 years resulting in

excellent job prospects for graduates of accredited programs of medical record technology.

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