



Workforce Update

Latest information on hospitals' attraction and retention of talent:

March 10, 2005

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1. Hospital Employment Climbs in February

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the nation's hospital employment rose 0.15 percent in February to a seasonally adjusted 4,334,800 people. That is 6,400 more than January and 74,400 more than a year ago. Without the seasonal adjustment, the numbers show hospitals employed 4,327,900 people in February, 3,600 more than in January and 74,700 more than a year ago. The nation's overall unemployment rate rose by two-tenths of a percentage point in February to 5.4 percent.

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2. Union Report

- A. OHA took issue with a report of the Service Employee International Union (SEIU) District 1199 alleging Ohio hospitals unfairly charge the uninsured. In a statement, OHA expressed concern that the union "has chosen to contribute to a lack of public understanding with a union-organizing ploy masquerading as a legitimate effort to impact health policy." OHA also noted that the report's omission of the more than half a billion dollars Ohio hospitals provide to those who could not afford to pay for health care in 2003, the most recent year for which data is available. OHA also

believes that the report does not address the fundamental issue – ensuring hospitals, government, employers, insurance companies and all citizens work toward a long-term solution to provide uninsured individuals access to basic health care coverage. OHA’s statement is available online at www.ohanet.org/media/news_release/2005/SEIU_response.doc.

- B. The California Nurses Association filed a lawsuit against Governor Schwarzenegger last November claiming that he did not have the authority to issue the emergency regulation delaying the enrichment of the ratios in hospitals medical-surgical from 1:6 to 1:5. The 1:6. The law suit was heard in Sacramento Superior Court on March 4. The judge sided with CAN and invalidated the emergency regulations.

The order formalizing the judge’s ruling is expected to be filed with the Court in the next several days. Immediately upon that happening, both California Hospital Association (CHA) and the State of California will file an appeal with the 3rd District Court of Appeals in Sacramento.

Until the order is officially filed, the 1:6 ratio remains in effect. And, if the Appellate Court grants the request for a stay, the 1:6 ratio will be the effective ratio until the case is resolved on an appeal. It is unknown what will happen if the Appellate Court denies the stay. There are not enough nurses in California to make the 1:5 ratio work. CHA estimates that the 1:5 ratio will require an additional 4,000 nurses – on top of the current 14,000 vacant nurse positions that exist today in California hospitals.

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3. AAMC Call for Increase in Medical School Enrollment

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) is concerned that the nation may experience a physician shortage in the next few decades. The association has recommended enrollment in U.S. medical schools be increased by 15 percent by 2015, or about 2,500 graduates per year. The association recommended targeting the increases to areas of the country that have seen a rapid rise in population, and removing the current Medicare restriction on the number of residency and fellowship positions. Many schools have indicated they have already begun to increase their class sizes. The association stated contributing factors to new positions on the physician workforce include U.S. population growth, the demand for more medical care by aging baby boomers, the retirement of practicing physicians, and younger doctors working fewer hours. (AHA NewsNow February 22,05)

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4. Mandatory Overtime Revisited

Legislation re-introduced in both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate would limit mandatory overtime for nurses to 12 hours in a 24-hour period and 80 hours over 14 days. The legislation is sponsored by Reps. Pete Stark (D-CA) and Steven LaTourette (R-OH) in the House and Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) in the Senate. Kennedy introduced the same legislation unsuccessfully in 2003.

Similar legislation was introduced in Ohio during the previous General Assembly, and the OHA Board of Trustees as well as the Board of the Ohio Organization for Nurses Executives

opposed the bill because of its potential to threaten the safety and well-being of patients. Hospitals rarely use mandatory overtime – it functions as a last resort for critical circumstances. For more information on this issue visit:

www.ohanet.org/advocacy/state/issues/nurseovertime.htm.)

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5. Coalition calls for Congress to Support Nursing Workforce

The American Hospital Association and the American Organization of Nurse Executives, as well as 11 other nursing and health care organizations, urged leaders of the U.S. House and Senate budget committees to make funding for nursing workforce development programs a priority in the fiscal year 2006 budget resolution. The U.S. is struggling with a growing shortage of registered nurses that affects hospitals, nursing facilities, assisted living residences, home health agencies, and public health clinics on a daily basis. The support for an increased budget authority for nursing workforce development is necessary to make the promise of the Nurse Reinvestment Act a reality. (AHA Newsnow February 9, 05))

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6 Nurse Loan Repayment Application Extended

The federal Health Resources and Services Administration has extended the fiscal year 2005 application deadline for Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program to March 18. The program helps registered nurses repay educational loans in exchange for working in facilities with a critical shortage of nurses. For more information and applications go to <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/nursing/loanrepay.htm>.

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7 Request for Grant Proposals

A. The purpose of the Nursing Education Grant Program (NEGP) is to provide funding to nurse education programs partnering with other educational programs or health care facilities to increase their nursing student enrollment capacity. According to the current legislation, accumulation of funding began January 2004 and will continue through December 2013. During this period, \$10 of each nurse license renewal fee will be deposited in the NEGP Fund for the purpose of awarding grants and administering the program. Grants may be used to hire clinical faculty, preceptors, and to purchase educational equipment. Each grant cycle will be for two years. The awards for the first grant cycle will be distributed September 2005. The maximum grant award is \$200,000 per grant, per cycle. There is no guarantee of grant renewal for future award cycles. The Request for Proposal will be on the Ohio Board of Nursing April 3, 2005. <http://www.nursing.ohio.gov/index.htm>.

B. The Ohio Department of Aging is pleased to offer a Request of Grant Proposals (RGP) for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) for program year 2005 (July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006). You are invited to submit a proposal in accordance with the instructions included in RGP L#204 – 03205. To obtain a copy of the RGP, please go to www.goldenbuckeye.com/scsep_rgp.html.

The deadline to submit proposals is noon on March 25, 2005. Late applications will not be accepted.

Direct questions to Brenda Luke at 614.644-8431 or bluke@age.state.oh.us.

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8. West Virginia Collaborative Success Addressing Nursing Shortage

In southeastern West Virginia health care providers appear to have averted a future shortage of nurses by collaborating with educators and the region's workforce investment board to increase the educational pipeline for nurses. A report by Region 1 Workforce Investment Board has shown excellent innovation and dynamic communication and collaboration in effectively reversing the nursing shortage that is threatening southeastern West Virginia.

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9. Nurses' Opportunities Expand

Many of the 2 million nurses in the U.S. are taking on jobs that were once the purview of physicians, like administering chemotherapy and running primary-care practices. New niches are being carved out by RNs in such fields as genetics and computerized patient records, where nurses were once hard to find, and bringing philosophies oriented toward health promotion and problem prevention to geriatric care and case management. U.S. *News and World Report* published an article featuring the expanded role of nurses in its Jan. 31, 2005 issue. The article is also available online at www.usnews.com/usnews/issue/050131/health/31nurses.htm.

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10. AHA Lauds Bill Targeting Shortages of Allied Health Professionals

The American Hospital Association expressed its support for the Allied Health Reinvestment Act (S. 473), which would address the growing national shortage of allied health professionals, such as clinical laboratory technologist, imaging technicians, occupational and physical therapists, pharmacy technicians and radiologist technologists. Young people entering and completing allied health care training would be provided incentives through the bill, including recruitment grants, provisions to strengthen recruitment, retention and practice, and incentives to promote racial and ethnic diversity in allied health professions.

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11. IFD Accepting Applications for Summer Internship Program

The Institute of Diversity in Health Management (IFD) is accepting online applications from students for its 11th annual Summer Enrichment Program. SEP aims to increase diversity in health care management by offering minority students full-time work experience in some of the nation's top health care facilities. In 2005, nearly 100 paid summer internships will be offered to qualified college seniors and students entering their first or second year of graduate health care management program. The students will work side-by-side with a senior health care executive, tour and study various health care facilities and receive focused classroom instruction during the 12 – week program. Health care facilities interested in participating in the 2005 program as an intern site should visit www.diversityconnection.org/asp/sep/preceptor/default.asp?pid=2.

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12. Best and Worst Portrayals of Nursing for 2004

The Center for Nursing Advocacy has issued its list of the best and worst media portrayals of the nursing profession for 2004. Research shows that the news and entertainment media greatly affect public views and actions. The center believes that improving nursing's media image is a critical step in resolving the nursing shortage. To view the list, go to www.nursingadvocacy.org/press/release/2004_awards.html#golden.

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13. Job of the Month

The Medical Laboratory Technician completes accurate testing on blood, tissue and other body fluids in areas such as chemistry, hematology, blood bank, microbiology, immunology and urinalysis.

The typical duties of a medical laboratory technician include performing routine testing under the supervision of a technologist, using sophisticated medical laboratory equipment having knowledge of specific techniques and instruments, recognizing factors that directly affect procedures and results, monitoring continuously results for quality assurance, and hunting for clues as to the absence, presence, extent, and/or causes of diseases. Medical laboratory technicians discriminate between closely similar items and corrects errors through the use of pre-set strategies, and are responsible for calibrating and operating all instruments and equipment.

The medical laboratory technician must have an associate's degree that includes clinical training, and successfully complete a national exam sponsored by the American Society of Clinical Pathologists (ASCP).

The average starting salary is \$33,467 per year with an expected growth of 33 percent, due to the increased volume of testing needed as a result of advances in biotechnology, growth of the aging population and increased research. This information is provided by a publication offered by the Akron Regional Hospital Association that offers an overview and examples of the many types of jobs available in the field of health care. It describes careers for those interested in working closely with patients and others, and also for those drawn to technology or advanced support services. To see the publication visit the *OHA Workforce Forum* at www.ohanet.org/workforce/toolkit.htm.

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OHA Workforce Update

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