



# Workforce Alert

*Latest information on hospitals' attraction and retention of talent:*

June 28, 2005

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### 1. SAW Offers Workforce Help

Seeking innovative ways to recruit and retain needed associates, Ohio's hospitals are taking advantage of opportunities to train entry-level staff members for licensed or credentialed positions. The School at Work (SAW) Building a Career Ladder in Healthcare program helps hospitals invest in current associates while helping to fill other needed positions. SAW partners with hospitals to help hospital associates advance, address workforce shortages and reduce hospital recruitment costs. Through SAW, hospitals implement a career ladder with personalized career and learning plans and create workforce development opportunities such as job shadowing programs and advocacy of internal hiring.

Developed from 2002-04 with funding from the U.S. Department of Labor Employment & Training Administration, SAW has been used at more than 125 hospitals in 22 states including the following Ohio organizations: **Akron General Medical Center, TriHealth, Kettering Medical Center, Fayette County Memorial Hospital, Huron Hospital, Euclid Hospital, Marymount Hospital, Hillcrest Hospital, and South Pointe Hospital.**

Jenny Skinner, Director of Corporate Education at TriHealth says, "Workforce development is one of the key components in our overall HR strategic plan. Bringing SAW into the organization has been the first step at developing a structured approach to invest in our entry-level employee population. School at Work has become the right thing to do at TriHealth, for relatively little cost and a large return."

### 2. Best Practices

Helping hospitals attract and retain talented and dedicated employees and medical staff is a key objective in OHA's strategic plan. Hospitals have crafted a variety of "Best Policies" to help alleviate current and

future personnel shortages. Listed here are some great partnering between schools and hospitals to increase the capacity of nursing programs.

**Joint Township District Memorial Hospital** established a partnership with Rhodes State College for implementing a Nursing Initiative. Its purpose is to ensure an adequate supply of RNs in the area. Components include: additional clinical contact hours on non-day shifts; release time for student mentoring; one-half FTE teaching partner per quarter; non-dedicated space explain this a bit more, it sounds like a bad thing right now; equipment donation; scholarships; and release time for instructors to attend meetings at the college.

**EMH Regional Healthcare System** has worked with Lorain County Community College (LCCC), which has a very large and participative nursing program, to offer:

- 1) Preceptors for students in their nursing management clinicals
- 2) Emergency fill-in clinical instructors (i.e., When an instructor broke her foot days before a clinical was supposed to begin, they were able to offer two managers as a work-sharing replacement for the semester.)
- 3) Ongoing clinical instructor time through a program that was worked out last semester in which EMHs qualified staff takes regular assignments as instructors but remain on the hospital's payroll. LCCC reimburses the hospital what it would have paid the faculty. This opens up the pool of potential instructors as it allows staff to maintain their salaries and benefits. This in turn allows LCCC to maximize the number of students they can manage in the clinical portions of their program. It is not quite a break-even for the hospital but it is worth it to achieve the low RN vacancy rate they currently enjoy. This year EMH have had to create a clinician internship program as we do not have openings for all the new graduates expressing an interest in a position with us.

#### **Cleveland Clinic Health Services East**

For hospitals applying for the CBJTG that involves entry-level incumbent workers, SAW may play a role in your strategy. Cleveland Clinic Health Services East is using SAW as a college "prep" class for nurse aides who will enter LPN and other allied health programs. For information on how SAW can strengthen your CBJTG proposal, please visit [www.schoolatwork.com/info/news.asp](http://www.schoolatwork.com/info/news.asp) or contact Tina Ludwig at [tludwig@catalystlearning.com](mailto:tludwig@catalystlearning.com).

### **3. Hospital Employment Climbs in May**

Employment at the nation's hospitals rose 0.13 percent in May to a seasonally adjusted 4,258,400 people, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. That is 5,800 more than in April and 68,400 more than a year ago. Those numbers without seasonal adjustment show hospitals employed 4,351,000 people in May, 2,700 more than in April and 68,900 more than a year ago. The nation's overall unemployment rate declined by one-tenth of a percentage point in May to 5.1 percent.

### **4. AMA Survey Examines Resident, Medical Student Work Hours**

The American Medical Association released responses to a survey that asked member residents and medical students about recent experiences with work hours related to 2003 medical education accreditation guidelines that limit resident work hours to 80 hours per week. During their most recent rotation, medical residents on average reported working 68 hours per week while residents in a surgical specialty averaged 76 hours. Approximately four in 10 residents and medical students reported "periods of prolonged sleep deprivation" at least once a week, and half said they believe fatigue may have had a negative effect on the quality of care they delivered. More than 69 percent of residents said they know how to report excessive hours, but only half felt comfortable doing so.

### **5. OHA Web Site Gets Face Lift**

The OHA Web site has a fresh face, focused even more on member hospitals and restructured with a new, easy-to-use navigation format. The new look is at the same, familiar address –

[www.ohanet.org](http://www.ohanet.org) – and now features photos of OHA member hospitals that refresh upon each visit; prominent buttons outlining top issues of the day, week or even minute; and a complete site directory from the home page – enabling access to nearly everything on the site in just one click. If your hospital's photo is not yet featured on the OHA home page, please contact Tim Sisson at [tims@ohanet.org](mailto:tims@ohanet.org) for specifications on sending a photo. Questions and comments about the site can be referred to Tim Sisson, [tims@ohanet.org](mailto:tims@ohanet.org); Tiffany Himmelreich, [tiffanyh@ohanet.org](mailto:tiffanyh@ohanet.org); or Mary Sterenberg, [marys@ohanet.org](mailto:marys@ohanet.org).

## **6. State Department to Release 50,000 Visas for Nurses and Physical Therapists**

Congress authorized The State Department to release 50,000 unused visas from the past four years for nurses and physical therapists to use in this and future years. The action will allow U.S. hospitals struggling with a critical shortage of nurse to resume requirement of nurses from the Philippines, India, China and other countries that have exceeded their visa quotas. Hospitals had faced a three-year wait for visas before the American Hospital Association backed legislation was enacted.

## **7. House Committee Passes Labor-HHS Spending Bill**

The House Appropriations Committee approved a fiscal year 2006 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education spending bill that would cut \$84.58 million from rural health programs, including \$28.5 million less for outreach grants, and leave funding for nursing programs roughly unchanged at nearly \$150 million. Other HHS appropriation in the bill include \$500 million for hospital bioterrorism, and \$125 million for the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, including \$50 million for grants to support the health information technology initiative.

## **8. Baby Boomers Interested in Health Care Jobs**

A new survey shows that Americans in their 50s and 60s want work now and in retirement that helps others. This could be a potential win-win opportunity for health care employers facing critical labor shortages. Interest in taking jobs to improve the quality of life in their communities was shown by half the adults aged 50-70. Fifty-six percent of Americans who may work during their retirement have an interest in working dealing with health issues, including working in hospitals. The survey was sponsored by Civic Venture and the MetLife Foundation, and a guide was also published for baby boomers interested in learning more about jobs that "make a difference."  
[http://www.civicventures.org/fileadmin/cv\\_files/Projects/ync/guide/boomers\\_guide.pdf](http://www.civicventures.org/fileadmin/cv_files/Projects/ync/guide/boomers_guide.pdf).

## **9. Job of the Month**

The medical assistant assists doctors in the examination and treatment of patients and performs routing tasks to ensure offices are run efficiently.

The typical duties include taking and recording vital signs and medical histories of patients, explaining the treatment procedures and preparing patients for exams. The medical assistant may assist during examination, perform basic laboratory test and sterilize medical instruments. They will also answer telephones, greet patients, maintain the medical records and handle insurance forms, correspondence and the scheduling of appointments.

A medical assistant is required to be a high school graduate or the equivalent thereof and complete a one or two year program at a vocational school or college. Certification may be attained through completion of exam sponsored by the American Medical Technologists and the American Association of Medical Assistants.

| The average starting salary is \$19,460 - \$27,460 per year with the growth is expected to be 50 percent due to the increased medical needs of an aging population, more diagnostic tests being available and

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increased complexity of paperwork. 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](http://www.ohanet.org/workforce/toolkit.htm).

## OHA Workforce Update

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