



# FutureThink News

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## AHIC Names Work Groups to Focus On Specific Health Care IT Areas

The American Health Information Community (AHIC) announced the formation of work groups to help the commission move toward implementation of specific projects in four areas within the next year. One group will work on reporting emergency department, utilization and other essential data from existing hospitals and ambulatory care information technology systems to public health agencies. Another group will focus on creating electronic registration information and a medication history to empower consumers. A work group focused on improving chronic management will begin with developing capabilities for secure messaging between patients and their clinicians, and an electronic health record work group will start by focusing on the exchange and laboratory results and interpretations.

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## Rad Techs Enter Field to Help Others

A survey released by the American Society of Radiologic Technologist show the top reason people enter the radiologic technology field is to help others, and the most important factor influencing their career choice is the desire for an interesting profession. Nearly 80 percent of the respondents said they would recommend their profession to a friend or relative. Conducted with Pittsburgh-based Health Careers Futures, the survey probed the role various factors play in shaping career choices in the field. The average radiologic technologist became interested in his or her profession at age 21 and entered an educational program at 23. About 47 percent of the respondents received their education in a hospital-based program, while 43 percent attended a community college, and 25 percent attended a four-year college or university. About 40 percent of respondents worked in community hospitals, 10 percent in government hospitals and university medical centers, and 14 percent in freestanding clinics.

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## Nurses Unpack Bags

Columbus hospitals' efforts to grow their own nursing staffs appear to be showing cost savings and more continuity in the workplace. These efforts reflect a national trend in which hospitals are reducing their dependence on temporary staffing options. The dependence reached its peak in 2002 when the nation's health-care staffing industry had \$12.5 billion in revenue, according to research by California-based *Staffing Industry Analysts Inc.* The temporary nurse industry fell by around nine percent in both 2003 and 2004.

But central Ohio hospitals say there will continue be some need for temporary nurses to help meet the flow of hospitals patient volumes and cope with a nationwide nursing shortage that is expected to continue for several decades. OHA saw a need in December 2004 and launched OHA Solutions, a staffing agency that now has contracts with 80 staffing agencies to fill per-diem and long-term staff vacancies in OHA-member hospitals. Ohio hospitals have done a good job of managing their nurse vacancy and turnover rates in recent years, but they continue to be challenged on the staffing front. OHA statistics project Ohio will be short nearly 32,000 nurses by 2020. Agency nurses can be helpful for vacancies or an unexpected rise in patient census.

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## BWC Hosts Safety Congress & Expo

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation will host its the 76th Annual Ohio Safety Congress & Expo March 28-30 at the Columbus Convention Center. The Safety Congress is the second-largest occupational safety and health event in the nation and with more than 150 hours of educational sessions

and 200 exhibitors, professionals are exposed to cutting edge workplace safety information.

For additional information, including information on seminars, continuing education, the expo area and advance registration, please visit the BWC's Web site at [ohiobwc.com](http://ohiobwc.com) or call **1-800-OHIOBWC**. Attendees can also register onsite.

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## **Is There a Patient in the House?**

The U.S. health care crisis is about manpower as well as money. Within the next 15 years, experts predict a shortfall of 800,000 nurses and 200,000 doctors, and the American education system is inadequate to take up the slack. As caregiver supply declines, demand for it will rise. There are 80 million baby boomers who will be senior citizens by 2015, and senior citizens suffer a higher incidence of chronic disease.

Through improvements in acute care, more seniors will survive heart attacks, but those who survive will continue to suffer from chronic heart disease. Obesity and hypertension are epidemic.

The media continues to focus on the short-term problem of how we pay for health care. But large buyers and providers of health care – and a few canny start-ups – are also working on the longer-term problem of how we deliver it. For chronic disease, the best answer may be to take health care out of hospitals and doctors' offices and move it into people's homes.

Research in home health care is focused on remote patient monitoring – technologies that track physiological changes while the patients go about their daily lives. Technology from a group of engineers from Carnegie Mellon, *BodyMedia*, makes a noninvasive body-monitoring system with an armband worn by the patient that monitors heart rate, blood pressure, and glucose level. IBM has developed an electronic pillbox that sends a signal to the patient's cell phone every time a tablet is removed and alerts the patient if a dose was skipped or if the patient is taking too many pills.

Technology can do much, but patients at home still need human help. Some experts feel that this help should be friends and family when possible. Care Product Institute (CPI), a nonprofit group, is pioneering ways to combine technology with social support. In a CPI model, a diabetic's glucose reading might be transmitted to a designated relative who is trained to know what that number means and what to do about it. The family member then can prod the patient to take the appropriate actions.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services attributes 75 percent of the country's \$1.4 trillion in medical care costs to chronic disease. With so much money on the line, companies of all sizes are entering the market. *Harvard Business Review*

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## **Language Standard for Foreign Educated Nurses Questioned**

The National Council of State Boards of Nursing, which represents the 60 state and territorial boards that regulate nurses in the U.S., recently recommended state and federal policymakers update the minimum score foreign-educated nurses must achieve on two federally recognized English language proficiency tests before they can work in the U.S. The Council recommended requiring overall scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language of 560 or higher for the written version of the test, 220 for the computer-based test, and 83 for the new Internet-based version. For the alternative International English Language Testing System test, the Council recommended a minimum score of at least 6.0 on all modules and 6.5 overall. The recommendations exceed the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) current standards for the TOEFL written test (540) and computer based test (207). HHS currently does not designate a minimum score for each IELTS module. However, HHS requires minimum scores for spoken English that are not part of the NCSBN proposal.

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## Employment in Hospitals Climbs in December

Employment at the nation's hospitals rose 0.17 percent in December to a seasonally adjusted 4,415,700 people, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported. That's 7,700 more than in November and 92,200 more than a year ago. Without the seasonal adjustment, those numbers show hospitals employed 4,416,900 people in December, 5,700 more than in November and 91,500 more than a year ago. The nation's overall unemployment rate declined by one-tenth of a percentage point in December to 4.9 percent.

*AHA NewNow*

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## Hospitals Make Fortune List as Best Places to Work

Nine hospitals and health systems are among the "100 best companies to work for" identified by *Fortune magazine*. GRIIN Hospital in Derby, CT, placed fourth on the list, followed by Baptist Health Care in Pensacola, FL (18); Northwest Community Hospital in Arlington Heights, IL (50); Baptist Health South Florida in Coral Gables in Kalamazoo, MI (68); Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (76); Methodist Hospital System in Houston (78); and Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN (89). *AHA News Now*

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## Nursing Schools Turn Away More than 32,000 Applicants

Enrollment in entry-level baccalaureate nursing programs increased 13 percent in 2005, but nursing colleges and universities were forced to turn away 32,617 qualified applicants due to capacity constraints, according to preliminary data released by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. Despite the successful efforts of schools nationwide to expand student capacity, our nation's nursing schools are falling far short of meeting the current and projected demand for RNs. The federal government projects a shortfall of 800,000 registered nurses by the year 2020. The numbers of students graduating from baccalaureate programs needs to increase, but the constraints on schools to accomplish this also seem to be increasing. The shortage of faculty and limits on capacity could cripple schools' ability to graduate enough nurses to meet future needs.

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## Johnson & Johnson Campaign for Nursing Future Receives Award

In a ceremony held at the White House, Johnson & Johnson received the Ron Brown Award for Corporate Leadership honoring its Campaign for Nursing's Future. The campaign was developed to help alleviate the nursing shortage by increasing awareness for the nursing profession and providing access to nursing programs. The Ron Brown Award for Corporate Leadership, presented by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez, is the only presidential award to honor companies for the exemplary quality of their relationships with employees and communities. Johnson & Johnson was one of three companies this year to receive this prestigious award established in honor of the late U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown. Additional recipients include Bayer Corporation and SC Johnson & Son, Inc. For more information on the Ron Brown Award, go to [www.ron-brown-award.org](http://www.ron-brown-award.org).

*The American Organization of Nurse Executives E News Update*

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**The FutureThink Institute** is an initiative of the Ohio Hospital Association, working toward creating long-term solutions for Ohio's health care system. The FutureThink Institute takes a multidimensional approach to designing better ways to deliver care and changing the demand for health care professionals in order to achieve better results for our communities. Learn more about the FutureThink Institute, and view the FutureThink News archives at [www.futurethink.org](http://www.futurethink.org).

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