

December 20, 2007

Update from OHA Workforce Committee

Mark Schaff from Ohio's bureau of labor market information gave a presentation on labor data and health care's impact on Ohio's economy to the OHA Workforce Committee Dec. 6. Key points of the presentation:

- Hospitals, especially large hospital systems, provide economic drivers for regions by bringing outside capital into a community.
- Labor research indicates RN salaries are two times the CPI, which indicates a shortage in supply of RNs.
- 27.1% of the labor inputs in a hospital are RNs.
- Drivers of demand for RNS are what we already know
 - Demographic demands of aging population
 - Replacement needs
 - DRG issues

Schaff also discussed the skills bank initiative being put on hold as a new workforce strategy. This aligned with the committee's request to develop regional solutions that would also meet local hospitals needs for workforce development.

Center Launched to Address Nurse Shortage

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and AARP Foundation launched a Center to Champion Nursing in America Dec. 6. The center will work to avert a projected national shortage of more than one million nurses by 2020. The center, using a \$10 million grant from RWJF and funding from AARP, will advocate for increased state and federal funding for nurse leaders on the governing boards of hospitals and other health care organizations. The center also will work to educate the public and policy makers about nurse workforce issues and their link to health care quality. (AHA News Now, Dec. 2007)

Nursing Schools Continue to Turn Away Qualified Applicants

Enrollment in baccalaureate nursing programs grew 5% in 2007, but 30,709 qualified applicants were turned away due to a shortage of faculty and other resources, according to early data from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. Enrollment has grown annually since 2001, but increases are down from 17% in 2003 due to a shortage of faculty, lack of clinical sites and classroom space. The Health Resources and Service Administration projects more than 1 million new registered nurses will be needed by 2020 to meet the demand for nursing care. (AHA News Now, Dec. 2007)

Facility a Boon to Region's Health and Economy

The PACCAR Medical Education Center broke ground last month in southern Ohio. Adena Health System, Ohio University, Wright State University, as well as many businesses contributed to the \$5 million goal and will join together to address health care needs such as:

- Projected nursing shortage
- Continuing education for doctors and other medical professionals in southern Ohio
- Backlogs for courses for nursing students at major schools

The project's backers say the first class of 30 new bachelor of science degree nurses will graduate and bring with them about \$50,000 each in salaries and benefits. This translates into about \$1.5 million into the local economy.

The center will use state-of-the-art technology, allowing students to be trained with the best possible education and resources. (ChillicotheGazette.com, November 2007)

OSU Study: PDAs Help Cancer Patients

A pilot study launched by researchers at the Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center has breast cancer patients using PDAs to record their levels of pain, fatigue and depression. The PDA also provides short videos for the patients to watch in order to properly discuss their symptoms with their physician. This study is the first of its kind in the country and is designed to teach breast cancer patients to communicate more effectively with their doctors during chemotherapy treatment. This project should take approximately two years to complete and is funded by a \$240,000 grant from the National Cancer Institute.

There are 50 participants in the study. Twenty-five patients will receive a PDA before beginning their chemotherapy. They will be trained on how to use the device to complete weekly assessments on pain, fatigue and depression during their treatment. There are 8-12 minute videos on the hand-held device patients are encouraged to watch before each scheduled office visit with a physician. The videos watched by the patient prior to physician meetings are tailored to a patient's race and symptoms. Based on how the patients rate themselves each week, a video will come up on the PDA that will teach the patient how to explain their symptoms to their doctor during the next visit. If the patient is not having problems, they won't watch a video. The other 25 patients serve as a control group and will receive usual care for chemotherapy treatment. (OSU Medical Center, November 2007)

Hospitals Hope Technology Saves Money and Lives

Hospitals all over the country are spending hundreds of millions of dollars on the latest technology, attempting to differentiate themselves from competitors and keep up with patient demands.

Mercy Hospital in Fairfield uses technology and computers to improve efficiency. Nurses can touch a screen on the new BedBoard system to show that a room is clean and ready for its next patient. BedBoard is part of a \$3 million pilot program from Mercy's parent company Catholic Healthcare Partners (CHP). This program uses flat screens in the hallways and also indicates how long a patient has been in surgery, whether they are susceptible to falls or whether they are allowed to eat.

There are “smart pumps” in rooms that hospital administrators hope will eliminate human error in dispensing intravenous fluids. Possibly coming next year are electronic kiosks in the lobby to help patients check in using credit cards, much like the ones we see in the airport.

Mercy Hospital also provides an example of how investments in technology can affect patients. CHP spent tens of millions of dollars on new IV pumps, which allow a nurse to enter information about the patient directly into the pump’s computer. The pump will reject any medications that don’t fit that patient’s profile. Another program puts bar codes on patient bracelets and medications to avoid patients taking the wrong medicine.

Digitizing as much as possible to minimize paper records is one of CHP’s primary goals. This greatly reduces human error and loss of paperwork. It also saves money and improves patient care. (Cincinnati Enquirer Online, October 2007)

\$100 Million Grant will Launch Nursing School

The University of California has received a \$100 million grant from a private foundation to launch a nursing school that focuses on graduating nurse leaders, educators and researchers. The UC Davis Health System and University of California will be sharing facilities in Sacramento. The Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing, pending state and other approvals, is expecting to admit its first master’s and doctorate students in fall 2008 and bachelor’s students in 2010 or 2011. (AHA News Now, August 2007)

***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.*

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