

**Wisconsin Hospital Association, Inc.**



## **NEWS**

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### **Hospitals Generate Workforce Solutions**

***WHA Report: Hospitals' Doing Their Part to Stem Workforce Shortage***

**MADISON (April 10, 2006)** ----- Advances in technology, population demographics and a rising demand for health care from an aging Wisconsin population are combining to create a future in which Wisconsin may not have enough health care workers to care for Wisconsin residents.

It is a problem that hospitals can't wait for others to solve. That's why Wisconsin hospitals are using their own resources to ensure that students are recruited, supported and provided sufficient facilities to receive the education they need to join the health care workforce.

In its most recent report on the status of the health care workforce, the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) surveyed its member hospitals to determine what contributions they are making in their communities to create and maintain their own health care workforces. The report, "Building a Health Care Workforce for Wisconsin's Future: *Hospitals' Contributions*" is available at [www.wha.org](http://www.wha.org).

### **Hospitals Promote Health Careers**

While some health occupation classes now have more students than they can accommodate for some careers, that has not always been the case. Interest in health careers fell in the 1990s, leading to lower enrollments in health care programs. As a result, technical schools and university campuses reduced or eliminated some health care training courses.

This trend alarmed health care providers in Wisconsin. In 2001, WHA launched a statewide media campaign to attract more students to health occupations. It was successful in creating renewed interest in health careers.

"Students have so many choices when they consider what career to choose; it is critically important that hospitals emphasize the fact that they offer family-sustaining jobs in a stable industry, along with a career ladder that doesn't always exist in other industries," said WHA President Steve Brenton.

Hospitals promote health careers at all grade levels by:

- Sponsoring health career camps.
- Building career awareness through classroom presentations.
- Meeting with high school guidance counselors to build awareness.
- Creating job-shadowing opportunities in the workplace.

### **Hospitals Create Learning Environment**

Hospitals help students receive the training they need to enter the health care workforce by bringing them into the clinical setting. Many hospitals provide both clinical and laboratory space for students in training. A shortage of faculty or faculty positions often limits schools' ability to add capacity. So, hospitals pay their own qualified staff to serve as classroom instructors. By doing this, hospitals help educational facilities expand their capacity, which in turn, helps eliminate long waiting lists for key occupations, such as nursing and radiological technologists.

### **Hospitals Support Employee Advancement**

Training is an ongoing process at hospitals as they adopt new technology and apply advances in medical treatment in caring for their patients. In addition to continuing education for their own employees, hospitals "build their own workforce" within the community by offering scholarships, tuition reimbursement and loan forgiveness to prospective and new employees.

"Many hospitals have a great 'grow your own' approach to workforce. Through reimbursement policies, they encourage employees to attain the next degree or credential which increases the depth and skill of the existing workforce, and often opens up an entry level position for a new employee. Everyone wins," Brenton said.

Hospitals are doing their part to address the forthcoming workforce shortages. It will take collaboration, cooperation and participation from educational, professional, policymaking and many other groups to meet the challenge of building tomorrow's workforce today.

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