

Who Will Care?

Investing in a Comprehensive Solution to the Nurse Shortage

News Release

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Leaders Announce Progress on Doubling the Number of Nurse Graduates in Maryland

Today, health care leaders said they are making a down payment on a bold strategy for solving Maryland's long-term nursing crisis when they announced:

- donors have pledged \$15.5 million over five years; and
- 17 Maryland schools of nursing will receive grants from these funds to educate more nurses.

Maryland hospitals and nursing education leaders first announced the strategy to double the number of nurses educated in Maryland in November 2007. The first grants will increase the number of nurses graduating by 300 students and add 20 faculty positions.

“Less than two years ago we predicted that unless we increased the number of nurses being educated in Maryland we would be short 10,000 nurses by 2016,” said Maryland Hospital Association President and CEO Carmela Coyle. “Today we are thrilled to announce real progress and are committed to maintaining the momentum we need to reach our goal of adding 1,500 students.”

The announcements came today at the Maryland Hospital Association during a public celebration of the initial phase of fundraising and the awarding of grants to 17 nursing schools to enable them to expand enrollment.

“With major efforts underway to expand health care access, it is likely there will be an even greater need for nurses,” said Campaign Co-Chair, and CareFirst BlueCross President and CEO Chet Burrell. “We have pledged significant support for the program, and the progress of the campaign brings us a step closer to addressing the question of who will care for the next generation of Marylanders.”

The fundraising campaign, which is known as *Who Will Care?*, has attracted a broad-based group of concerned hospitals, insurance, business, and academic leaders; as well as nurses, long-term care providers, and concerned private citizens. In all \$60 million from the public and private sector is sought to fully fund the initiative.

“In recent years Maryland nursing schools have had to turn away qualified applicants because there are simply not enough faculty available to handle additional numbers of students,” said Campaign Co-Chair, and Hopkins Health System President Ronald R. Peterson. “Yet the number of nurses graduating in Maryland is not keeping pace with the nurses we will need in the next 10 years. These grants will begin to increase the number of nurses so we won’t face a huge chasm when almost half of the nursing workforce retires just as the baby boomer generation’s health needs reach their peak,” he explained.

The leaders acknowledged that the recession makes the nursing shortage appear smaller, but warned against a false sense of security. “The recession only masks the problem,” Coyle pointed out.

“When the economic downturn ends we will face an exodus of nurses who postponed retirement and expanded their hours. We cannot take our eye off of the long-term goal of meeting our future nursing demands,” Peterson added.

Individuals interested in contributing to the campaign can go to www.mdhospitals.org or contact Ellen Stanley at estanley@mhaonline.org for more information.

The 17 schools that will receive these initial grants include community college nursing programs and four-year baccalaureate programs from across Maryland. The grants will be used to provide additional operating dollars to schools to add faculty, students, and clinical technology. “Today’s progress benefits all Marylanders. This helps assure our future public health,” Judith Feustle, ScD, RN, Associate Dean, Nursing Education, Stevenson University, said in accepting a grant.

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