



West Virginia University

ROBERT C. BYRD HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Jeff Driggs, Communications & Marketing
West Virginia University Charleston
Robert C. Byrd Health Sciences Center
3110 MacCorkle Avenue, SE Charleston, WV 25304
Phone: (304) 347-1283 jdriggs@hsc.wvu.edu

West Virginia Nursing Leadership Institute Receives \$184,200 Federal Grant to Expand Services

A landmark program to address West Virginia's impending nursing shortage has received a boost from a \$184,200.00 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to continue its current programming and expand enrollment to include surrounding Mid-Atlantic states in 2006.

The funding will be used to support the efforts of the West Virginia Nursing Leadership Institute, a collaboration of the West Virginia University School of Nursing - Charleston Division and the Charleston Area Medical Center Health Education and Research Institute (CAMC Institute). The highly interactive Institute includes opportunities for participants to remain in their current positions while building leadership skills through workshops and classes, including four intensive, 2 ½ day seminars in Charleston. Nationally and internationally respected faculty will partner with local experts to provide these onsite sessions. In addition, state-of-the-art internet programs will enable participants to work on assignments and leadership projects from their homes or workplaces. Participants also receive ongoing mentorship from a recognized leader in the health care field. Additionally, each participant will mentor one 9th – 12th grade minority or disadvantaged student from their community interested in nursing.

Foundations and programs provided the initial funding for the Leadership Institute, and twenty participants from throughout the state met in Charleston in January for the inaugural session. In June, the group was honored with a visit from United States Surgeon General Richard Carmona, who spoke of the challenges facing nursing leaders and applauded the Institute for its work to lead in the recruitment and retention of nursing professionals. Participants in this inaugural class will attend two more sessions as part of the pilot program. Additional funding was sought to establish a permanent program to develop leaders for the future of nursing in West Virginia and rural Appalachia, where many counties are already experiencing a nurse shortage.

By 2008 there will not be adequate numbers of nurses to meet the needs of West Virginia and surrounding states, adversely affecting the fiscal health of health care institutions, patient safety and access to care. There are currently about 23,000 nurses in the state. The West Virginia

Nursing Shortage Study Commission Report estimates our state will be unable to meet the predicted demand for as many as 2,500 additional nurses by 2008. The impending nursing workforce crisis requires solutions implemented now.

Project Director Cynthia Persily, PhD, RN, welcomes the grant to expand the important efforts of the Institute. “The West Virginia Nursing Leadership Institute is a powerful solution to the challenge of leadership development in Nursing,” Persily said. “It promises to be one of the most effective and comprehensive leadership development programs available today in the state for nurses. The need for leadership in addressing the nursing shortage is obvious.” Persily is a devoted advocate for nursing in West Virginia, serving on a number of committees and boards to address nursing issues. Chairperson of the WVU School of Nursing, Charleston Division and Associate Dean, Academic Affairs, Southern Region Programs, Persily also serves as a member of the West Virginia Board of Nurse Examiners for Registered Professional Nurses, and in 2005 was appointed by the Governor to the Board of Directors of the newly formed West Virginia Center for Nursing.

By participating in a leadership course designed to focus on nurses' strengths, graduates of this career-ladder program will possess administrative skills needed to lead, mentor, and retain other nurses. Those completing the Institute are expected to demonstrate an increase in leadership skills in their existing positions, or qualify for advancement into leadership roles.

In addition to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, The West Virginia Nursing Leadership Institute has benefited from the support of many area foundation and charitable groups, including The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, The CAMC Foundation, Sisters of St. Joseph Charitable Fund, Robert Wood Johnson Executive Nurse Fellows Program, The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation, CAMC Medical Center, and the BB&T West Virginia Foundation. These organizations will provide 15% of the 216,670.00 budget for the Institute, with HHS funds providing the additional 85% funding.

If you would like more information about the West Virginia Nursing Leadership Institute, call (304) 347-1207 or toll-free 1-866-882-6270, e-mail wvnli@hsc.wvu.edu or visit the Institute's website at www.wvnli.org.