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Health Occupations Training: An HRD Response to Health Occupation Shortages, 1989

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Department of Health and Services

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HEALTH OCCUPATIONS TRAINING
AN HRD RESPONSE TO HEALTH OCCUPATION SHORTAGES

Program Description
One Year Summary Review

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GOVERNOR

ROLLIN IVES, COMMISSIONER, DHS
JOHN FITZSIMMONS, COMMISSIONER, DOL

August 1, 1989
The purpose of the first year of the Health Occupations Training (HOT) project was to immediately address severe shortages in health care occupations primarily by increasing the supply of health care workers through job training.

The goal of the HOT project was to train 300 CNAs, HHAs, and LPNs, and 150 allied health care workers during the period July 1, 1988 to June 30, 1989 (PY'88).

During PY'88 the HOT project received a state appropriation of $100,000 and was supplemented with $850,000 of federal and state job training funds.

These funds were used to provide job training and support services for Certified Nurses Aides (CNAs), Home Health Aides (HHAs), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), Registered Nurses (RNs), and the allied health occupations.

The HOT project also provided for the repayment of government backed student loans for Registered Nurses working in Maine health care facilities.

The HOT project has three separate parts. This handout describes the goals and accomplishments of each of the three parts of the project as of June 30, 1989, the end of the first year of project operation.
HOT Part One
Job Training for Entry Level Health Occupations

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Entry level health care occupations, including Certified Nurses Aides (CNA), Home Health Aides (HHA), and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) are suffering a crisis shortage. The HOT project has begun to reduce these shortages, starting with a goal of training 300 CNAs, HHAs, and LPNs by June 30, 1989. The approximate cost of Part One is $450,000, drawn from existing job training funds administered by the Department of Labor and the Department of Human Services.

The State's Job Training System provided outreach, recruitment, orientation, selection, pre-occupational training, support services, and needs-based stipends to HOT trainees who were generally selected from the Job Training System's applicant pool. Occupational training is provided by the Vocational Technical Institutes and other deliverers of quality training.

Participants who complete the CNA training program receive a certificate enabling them to work at any health care facility in the State. It is the goal of the HOT project to place trainees with employers who provide competitive wages, health insurance, and day care assistance.

Another innovative aspect of this part of the HOT project is an emphasis on providing career ladders for entry level health care workers. Since occupational upgrading is such an important aspect of this part of the
HOT project, CNAs and HHAs trained in this project will be contacted within a year of job placement to determine if they want to participate in training in order to upgrade their skills.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

As of June 30, 1989, three hundred and eighty-eight (388) Certified Nurses Aides, Home Health Aides and Medication Aides had been enrolled in JTS training. By June 30, one hundred and eight (108) LPNs had been enrolled in training.

Part One of the HOT program had planned to train three hundred (300) CNAs and LPNs. By the end of the year, June 30 1989, four hundred and ninety-six (496) persons had actually been enrolled in training, surpassing the goal by 65 percent.
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

There is also a shortage of workers in the allied health care occupations which includes radiology technologists, phlebotomists, dental hygienists, dietetic technicians and respiratory therapy technicians.

The goal of Part Two was to train 150 allied health workers at a total cost of approximately $500,000 ($400,000 from existing state and federal job training funds, and $100,000 from a general fund appropriation), plus additional funding from the health care providers.

The State's Job Training System provided outreach, recruitment, orientation, selection, pre-occupational training, support services, and needs-based stipends for trainees. Vocational training is provided by the Vocational Technical Institutes and other deliverers of quality training.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

As of June 30, 1989, sixty-three (63) allied health care workers had been enrolled in training programs. Although not in the original HOT plan, ninety-two (92) Registered Nurses, twenty (20) Unlicensed Practical Nurses, and twenty-eight (28) support staff were also trained.
HOT Part Three
Loan Forgiveness Program for Registered Nurses

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Part Three of the HOT project was designed to encourage health care providers in Maine to establish a loan repayment program designed to attract and retain Registered Nurses. This program is voluntary on the part of the health care providers and is available to hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, and rural health centers. The loan repayment is applicable to government student loans for nursing education and can be repaid on the basis that for each month or partial month the Registered Nurse works, the total or pro-rated portion of the loan can be repaid by the health care facility.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

Some of the state costs of this program are Medicaid reimbursable and were promulgated through the State Administrative Procedure Act, completed in December, with costs being allowed retroactive to August 4, 1988. Notification of the loan forgiveness program was sent to all of Maine's health care providers in December, 1988 along with copies of the promulgated rules.

Several of the state's hospitals are using this part of the HOT project as the centerpiece of their efforts to attract Registered Nurses. An example clipped from a Sunday newspaper is included on the following page.
Nurses with government loans have another reason to practice at Mercy.

If you're an RN or a new graduate with an outstanding government loan for your nursing education, Mercy Hospital can help.

Let us introduce you to the R.N. Student Government Loan Pay Back Program. It's a special reimbursement plan designed to pay back your government nursing school loan. Even part-time nurses can receive a partial reimbursement.

If you'd like to practice at a hospital that's committed to your career and you're paying back a government loan for nursing education, come talk with us.

This special program is just one of many reasons to join the Nursing Division at Mercy. For more information, call or write Sally Powers, R.N.,C., Mercy Hospital, 144 State Street, Portland, Maine 04101. (207) 879-3529.

MERCY HOSPITAL

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## TABLE ONE

Training Enrollments In Health Care Occupations

July 1, 1988 - June 30, 1989
# TRAINING IN HEALTH RELATED OCCUPATIONS RECEIVED IN JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS*

**JULY 1, 1988 - JUNE 30, 1989**

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### HEALTH RELATED OCCUPATIONS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RN</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPN</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDICATION AIDE</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNA</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOME HEALTH CARE ATTENDANT</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANION</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSONAL ATTENDANT</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNLICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MEDICAL & CLINICAL TECH.

- **A. X-RAY TECHNICIAN**  
- **B. RESPIRATORY THERAPIST**  
- **C. EMERGENCY MED. TECH.**  
- **D. MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIST**  
- **E. MED.-LAB. TECH.**  
- **F. DIALYSIS TECHNICIAN**

### MISCELLANEOUS

- **A. PHARMACIST ASSISTANT**  
- **B. PHARMACY HELPER**  
- **C. MANUAL-ARTS THERAPIST**  
- **D. DENTAL HYGIENIST**  
- **E. DENTAL ASSISTANT**  
- **F. CHIROPRACTOR ASSISTANT**  
- **G. PSYCHIATRIC AIDE**

### CLERICAL

- **A. MEDICAL SECRETARY**  
- **B. MEDICAL-RECORD CLERK**  
- **C. WARD CLERK**  
- **D. MEDICAL TRANSCRIBER**

### DIETETIC

- **A. DIET CLERK**  
- **B. FOOD SRVC. WRKR., HOSP.**  
- **C. DIETETIC TECHNICIAN**  
- **D. DIRECTOR OF NUTRITION**

### HOUSEKEEPING

- **A. CLEANER, HOSPITAL**

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**TOTAL TRAINED IN HOT** 691 **

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** THE SUM OF THE OCCUPATIONS WILL NOT ADD UP TO THE TOTAL BECAUSE 8 PARTICIPANTS WERE ENROLLED IN MORE THAN ONE HOT OCCUPATION.

(Prepared 07/27/89)
HOT project aids careers

Training program addresses health-care worker shortage

By JOANNE LANNIN
Staff Writer

For the past few years, Joan Anderson of Lincolnville has been a waitress dreaming. She always wanted to be a nurse. But three children, a subsequent divorce and bills to pay deferred the dream.

Now, through a state program to help health-care facilities deal with the current health-care worker shortage, Anderson, 31, is on her way to becoming a licensed practical nurse. "This really was like a godsend," Anderson says. "I couldn't have afforded to go to nursing school. I barely pay my bills."

Anderson is one of 450 Mainers currently in training for health occupations in more than 40 local training courses scattered around the state. Their tuition, books and transportation costs are paid in full by the Health Occupations Training project, one of Gov. John R. McKernan's legislative initiatives a year ago.

The HOT project is jointly administered by the Departments of Labor and Human Services, and funded by $850,000 in state and federal job-training funds and a legislative appropriation of $100,000. McKernan is proposing to expand the program this year with an additional $1 million over the biennium.

Six months into the program, state officials say the HOT project has helped train twice as many people for health-care positions as were trained through traditional state and federal programs the previous year. By working with health-care facilities, job-training officials say specific areas of need are being addressed — more quickly than they otherwise would be.

"It's allowed us to brainstorm with health-care facilities," says Rolanda Klapatch of Coastal Economic Development, a job-training office in Bath.

"It has furthered coordination with medical facilities," agrees Jane Schurz of the Cumberland County Training Resource Center in Portland. "They're looking to us to help address their needs."

The HOT concept may catch on outside Maine, as well. Last December, the six New England governors signed an agreement called the New England Health Occupations Training Coalition, to explore regional solutions to the health-care worker shortage.

Maine's two task force members, Commissioner of Labor John Fitzsimmons and Ron Baril of Maine Medical Center, met with other state representatives for the first time last Friday in Portland. They discussed forming partnerships to deal with the worker shortage.

"With a labor force that moves easily across state borders, we can be much more effective in helping this industry, our No. 1 job creator, if we work together to find solutions," says Fitzsimmons.

See HEALTH
Back page this section

Portland Press Herald, March 6, 1989
A growing need

The current need for health-care workers has been well-documented. But as Maine’s population ages, the need continues to grow. The state Department of Labor has projected that Maine hospitals, nursing homes and other health-care facilities will need 600 registered nurses, 200 LPNs and 700 certified nurse assistants each year for the next six years.

Health-care facilities, particularly in rural areas, have found it difficult to recruit people for these positions. And many women and men interested in becoming nurses, nurses aides, X-ray or laboratory technicians lacked the time and money to enroll in training courses until HOT came along.

George Waterman, 39, of Portland, credits the HOT project for his career change. A year ago, Waterman was selling insurance, as he had for 15 years.

Waterman says he wanted to switch to the health-care field. But with a wife, young family, a mortgage and two car payments, he knew he couldn’t afford to.

With help from the HOT program, Waterman is working at Mercy Hospital as a CNA while enrolled in SMVTI’s 11-month LPN training course. From there, he hopes to become a registered nurse.

"I’m making $6.44 an hour now. But when I get licensed (as an LPN) it will go up to $9," Waterman says. "Without this opportunity, I never would have made a complete career change. It’s a long process but it’s well worth it. I feel great about myself."

Job-training programs, funded with state and federal money through the Job Training and Partnership Act, already exist for entry-level health-care positions such as CNAs. But training officials say the added HOT project funds have enabled them to expand the entry-level courses and add refresher courses for RNs.

The HOT project also has helped expand training opportunities and explore different avenues for developing workers in more technical occupations. Rick Jerome, 36, of Scarborough is an example of that.

Jerome was a landscaper until he injured his shoulder and neck in a tree accident. Now he is training at the Osteopathic Hospital of Maine in Portland to be a central sterile technician. The work involves sterilizing all the instruments to be used in operations that day, wrapping them and assembling them into packets.

The HOT project pays for his books, his licensing exam, and gives him a $10 allowance for transportation each week.

After years of working outside, Jerome says he was skeptical of working in a hospital. But he looks forward to having a job somewhere in six months.

"I like the fact that we’re sort of the heart of the operation," says Jerome. "It makes you feel good that you’re helping people."

Hospital cooperation

Another example of hospital-state cooperation is occurring in the Lewiston-Auburn area, where 10 second-year students enrolled in radiology technology are sponsored by HOT funds at two hospitals in the area.

"We’re hunting for occupations within the health-care field where it’s always been accepted that they went to school to learn," says Klapatch in Bath. She names lab technologists as an example. "Now they usually go to school like LPNs, but we’ve found that we can apprentice them."

Job-training officials say additional funds, if appropriated, would go toward more long-term training through the VTI system for workers in more technical health-care occupations such as phlebotomy (drawing blood) and radiology.

They would also help the state target needs and aggressively market the HOT program to people such as Waterman, Anderson and Jerome, who have the skills and desire to change careers.

"Everyone I tell about the program says they wish they’d heard about it," says Anderson. "It really is a good opportunity."