

Delaware Health Care Commission  
Project Updates  
June 2005

## **Health Professional Workforce Development**

### Delaware State Loan Repayment Committee

The Committee at its May 19 meeting reviewed four new applications: 1 from a dentist employed by the Delaware Psychiatric Center who would like to establish a private practice in Smyrna; 1 from a Family Nurse Practitioner working for the Division of Public Health at the Northeast State Service Center; 1 from an OB-GYN working at OB-GYN Associates in Dover who would like to extend her three year contract to four years; 1 from a dentist working in a private practice in Smyrna would like to extend his three year contract to four years. The Committee will request an interview with the dentist interested in establishing a private practice to better understand her plans. The Committee was in favor of the balance of the recommendations. However, prior to forwarding the recommendations to DIMER, Commission staff will gather additional information on the past performance of the candidates requesting contract extensions, as well as general information about licensure requirements for Nurse Practitioners.

The Committee began activities to implement the structural changes to the program approved by the Commission at its April meeting, including a discussion on marketing and outreach and the development and prioritization of application scoring criteria. Staff will draft a plan for strategic implementation for additional review and discussion.

### Nursing Implementation Committee

The Committee May 16 meeting included two presentations:

- The Boy Scouts Explorers program is for male and female young adults ages 14-20 to participate in career orientation workshops. It enables students to gain practical knowledge of careers in health (and other industries). There are Explorer programs at Beebe Medical Center, Bayhealth Medical Center and Christiana Care Health System. Students spend time in the hospitals on a bi-weekly or monthly basis and speak with professions in different departments (heart surgeons, nursing, etc.) about the daily schedule, education requirements, and career tracks. Nursing is the predominant career of interest among respondents to a student survey administered by 17 high-schools to approximately 15,000 students to gauge interest areas for the Explores program.
- The Delaware Business, Industry, Education Alliance (BIE) Career Internship Program enables students who are identified by school counselors as having interest in a particular career, including health careers, to participate in internships. Upon graduation from the program, students receive a certificate from the Department of Education. The program enables students to learn about various careers by actively participating in the workplace and shadowing health professionals. Most students participate in internship program for each of three years.

The Board of Nursing plans to include in the next nursing re-licensure mailing a survey that is being used nationally to collect a “Minimum Data Set” of information about nurses in Delaware. Approximately 6,000 nurses will receive the survey, or about half of Delaware licensed RNs. A second re-licensure mailing will occur in February.

Taking the Long View Conference: A Gathering of Nursing Workforce Centers: The Committee’s chair, Commissioner Lois M. Studte RN, and Commission staff, Judy Chaconas, in April attended the third annual conference of nursing centers, held this year in Portland, Oregon.

The number of state nursing centers has grown from 13 in 2003 to 24 today.

The structures and funding for the centers vary by state, largely as a result of a state’s culture and genesis for center creation. Structures tend to range from independent nonprofit organizations, to being association or university-based, to being part of state government. Funding sources include: federal grants, private foundations, cash contributions, general fund/legislation, congressional earmark, and re-licensure fees.

Their most common Function is data collection and analysis: demand, supply, and demographics, for use in planning/decision-making. Other functions common among centers include:

- Recruitment - marketing nursing careers via media, web based guidebooks, etc
- Research, Policy & Planning – sharing research on retention strategies, and think tanks and consortiums for out-of-the box thinking in order to plan for the long-term
- Education – considering education capacity and redesigns to assure and adequate supply of nurses with core key competencies/skills for the modern workplace

A national virtual membership network is being developed, called the Forum for State Nursing Centers, to provide a collective force for developing and disseminating state nursing workforce policies. The Forum is expected to become a valuable resource for existing and evolving state nursing centers, facilitating communication, research and advocacy activities.

#### Delaware Institute of Dental Education and Research

The DIDER Board discussed pursuing an agreement with a dental school similar to that of DIMER with Jefferson Medical College and Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. Meetings will be scheduled with three dental schools: 1) Temple University School of Dentistry, 2) University of Maryland School of Dentistry, and 3) University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. DIDER anticipates asking the Commission to include a request for funding to enter an agreement with a dental school as part of its next budget request.

The Division of Public Health is hosting a Head Start Oral Health Forum on June 3 at the Delaware Tech Terry Campus in Dover. The purpose of the forum is to help shape

Delaware's action plan to improve dental care for children enrolled in Head Start programs.

Delaware's Area Health Education Center (AHEC) has asked for help identifying dental issues that it might address. It has also asked for suggestions on how it can promote careers in dentistry. DIDER plans to provide the AHEC with CDs on dental careers to disseminate through schools.

The May 2005 Infant Mortality Task Force Report includes a recommendation that pregnant women receive comprehensive oral health care. Research has revealed a correlation of low birth weight babies with women who lack dental care.