

**COMMUNITY FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES \$50,000 INITIATIVE
TO ADDRESS REGIONAL SHORTAGE OF NURSES**

The Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore has awarded \$50,000 to assist Wor-Wic Community College in training more nurses.

The \$50,000 grant is the largest discretionary grant in the Foundation's 18-year history and is a result of the Foundation's new Community Initiative grant program, which is designed to generate solutions and the resources needed to address top community issues. This year's subject -- the regional nursing shortage -- emerged after the Foundation convened community leaders, citizens and subject experts.

Susanne Morris, who chaired the Foundation's Community Initiatives project, said: "This represents a new role for our Community Foundation. We plan to play a much greater, proactive role in identifying major problems in the tri-county area, and in bringing significant financial and intellectual resources to address them."

Regional hospitals, nursing homes and other medical facilities report vacancy rates of as much as 25% in nursing positions. The current national average is 13%. Both the regional and national rates are increasing annually -- eclipsing the number of graduates from nursing schools. The results have included the need to divert ambulances to other hospitals; staffs operating beyond capacity; diminished patient satisfaction; and a potential decline in health care quality.

"I know of no grant that the Foundation has made to this point that has the potential impact of this grant," said Martin Neat, Chairman of the Foundation's Board. "Clearly, the shortage of nurses has reached a critical stage, and expansion of Wor-Wic's nurse training program is one key to addressing that problem."

Wor-Wic Community College will expand its nurse training program by 16 students in 2002 and another 16 in 2003. The Foundation grant will pay for additional laboratory equipment and nursing supplies. Local hospitals and other health related organizations are also assisting Wor-Wic in its expansion plans.

David N. Michaud, President of the Foundation noted: "This initiative has broad, positive implications not only for improving medical care in the region, but also strengthening the economic well-being of the area. Good medical care is essential for current and future residents of this region which is being perceived, increasingly, as a haven for retirees. And such care is dependent in large part upon an ample workforce of trained nurses."

In addition to the \$50,000 grant, the Community Foundation is drawing up plans to sponsor a public information campaign aimed at attracting more local people into the nursing profession.

The Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, established in 1984, works to strengthen the community in many ways. Through the Foundation's management of charitable trusts and bequests, its role as convener and facilitator for important community initiatives, and through its grants for community projects, the Foundation helps area nonprofit agencies meet basic human needs, celebrate cultural diversity, encourage cooperation among groups, develop community leadership, improve the quality of life and increase access to opportunity for the residents of the tri-county area. For more information, call the Foundation office at (410) 742-9911.

A [copy of the Foundation's report](#) on the regional nursing shortage is available in PDF format on this site.