

**COMMUNITY FOUNDATION INITIATIVE
ADDRESSES SHORE NURSING SHORTAGE**



Members of the Partners in Nursing Steering Committee welcome new Program Director, Stacy Cottingham. Pictured from left are: Cottingham; Patti Serkes, Director of Education at Peninsula Regional Medical Center; Karin Johnson, Director of Graduate Nursing Programs at Salisbury University; Colleen Wareing, Vice President of Patient Care Services at Atlantic General Hospital, and Denise Marshall, Wor-Wic Nursing Department Head. Not pictured are Steering Committee members Jane Ruark, Salisbury Rehabilitation and Nursing Center and Myrna Bozman, McCready Memorial Hospital.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local program seeks answers to help fill future nursing needs

(February 21, 2007) - As the number and percentage of the Eastern Shore's population join the ranks of senior citizens, there are naturally more demands on the region's capacity to provide for the growing health-care needs of an aging population. This need is all the more acute as our area copes with a growing nationwide demand for nurses.

Fortunately, someone is trying to address this problem right here in our backyard. Recently, the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore (CFES), which serves the counties of Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester, was selected as one of only 10 foundations nationwide to be responsible for developing strategies to combat nursing shortages in their respective areas.

This nationwide initiative entitled, Partners Investing in Nursing's Future (PIN), is a five-year, \$10 million effort that includes Maryland's Lower Eastern Shore. A two-year, \$250,000 grant was provided to the Community Foundation by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Northwest Health Foundation, and then enhanced by \$125,000 in matching contributions from the Community Foundation, Peninsula Regional Medical Center (PRMC), Atlantic General Hospital (AGH), and McCready Memorial Hospital.

The Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore earned the distinction as the only foundation in Maryland, Virginia, or Delaware awarded the opportunity to develop solutions to this problem. As one of 10 pioneers in the program, CFES will be responsible for sharing information with other organizations nationwide in an attempt to find the most effective solutions to the nursing shortage.

"Not having enough nurses threatens the quality of care that patients receive here on the Eastern Shore of Maryland," said Spicer Bell, president of Community Foundation. "We are honored to be selected to help identify solutions to the nursing shortage and find new opportunities to support local nurses throughout their careers."

"This national program provides the Foundation with the capacity to expand our long-term partnership with the three hospitals, two local nursing schools and other health care partners that serve this region," Bell added. "We look forward to helping the people of the Eastern Shore through our work with this program, and are eager to share the lessons we learn with other communities across Maryland and the nation."

The Community Foundation's local program is called Partners in Nursing (PIN). The program will focus on three primary objectives: retention of new nurses, development of a nurse leadership network, and a career path for future nurse educators in the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

A large percentage of new nurses do not make it past their first year, creating high turnover and associated increases in costs in many hospitals. The current system in hospitals provides incoming nurses with a preceptor who is responsible for the supervision of clinical work. The target of PIN is to complement the role of the preceptor by pairing incoming nurses with a mentor to provide additional support and guidance.

"The role of mentor will be to focus on the psycho-social aspects that take place when first time nurses transition from the world of academia to the professional environment," said PIN program director Stacy Cottingham.

The targets for this program are recent graduates just entering the field, and nurses who are returning to the field after a sabbatical. Many prospective participants will be graduates of nursing programs at Salisbury University and Wor-Wic Community College.

The program will consist of 20 initial pairings, each for one year. Seminars will also be available to mentors, protégés, and faculty members to share their experiences.

“Monthly professional development meetings will be led by nurse faculty, and in conjunction with Salisbury University and Wor-Wic Community College and leaders from the community that will help shape the leadership network,” added Cottingham.

One key issue facing local nursing programs is the lack of qualified and willing teachers. Many nursing applicants are placed on a waiting list or denied each year in due to the lack of staff. PIN will work with faculty members at Salisbury University and Wor-Wic Community College to identify strategies to encourage the transition from nursing staff to nursing professors to address the problem.

The pilot phase of PIN will take place this March and April, and will include the process of pairing mentors and protégés while continually adapting strategies to any challenges that may arise.

For more information about the Community Foundation and the Partners in Nursing (PIN), please see the [PIN section of this website](#) or phone 410-742-9911. Information about Partners Investing in Nursing’s Future is available at www.PartnersInNursing.org.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
Gee Williams 410-742-9911**