

For Immediate Release

Amanda Barney (401) 946-7887 ext. 111

Nursing Students Reaffirm the Value of a Positive Clinical Learning Experience

Nurses From Across the State Learn the Importance of Providing a Welcoming Environment

Kingston, RI – Nurses from across the state heard firsthand the impact that hospital staffs have in the education of future nurses, during a professional development event at the University of Rhode Island. The event, sponsored by the Hospital Association of Rhode Island (HARI), presented nursing leaders with insight into the importance of providing a positive clinical learning experience for students and how this experience may reinforce students' decisions to enter the nursing workforce.

Hospital Association of Rhode Island members reported an 8% nursing vacancy rate in June, 2006. The Health Partnership Council, a collaborative of stakeholders working under the auspices of HARI, has increased awareness of health care careers among middle and high school students. The number of applicants to schools of nursing in Rhode Island has risen over recent years. Last year, more than 3,900 students applied to nursing programs in the state. Enrollment has doubled since 2001, with 737 student accepted to Rhode Island's five nursing programs last year.

“Rhode Island continues to face a serious shortage of nurses to meet patient demands,” said Edward J. Quinlan, president of the Hospital Association of Rhode Island. “We must strive to make the learning process positive and meaningful for our student nurses and reinforce their career choice.”

The clinical placement experience is a significant learning component within the nursing curriculum. It provides nursing students with an opportunity to use the theory and skills they have learned in the classroom and laboratory settings. It is also the place in which nursing students see the art of nursing applied. All hospitals in Rhode Island participate in clinical rotations for nursing students.

“I appreciated the fact that the staff nurses where I did my clinical rotation understood that I was a student nurse seeking to get all I could out of my experience. They really recognized the fact that positive interaction with hospital staff made all the difference,” said Anthony Santiago, nursing student at the University of Rhode Island.

“Our students were thrilled to see how many nurses showed their support to the next generation of nurses,” said Dayle Joseph, PhD, RN, dean of the University of Rhode Island College of Nursing.

Funding from the U.S. Department of Labor Community Based Job Training Program in conjunction with the Health Care Futures Grant was used to support this event.

###