

## **RHODE ISLAND TO JOIN NATIONWIDE EFFORT TO MEET FUTURE NEED FOR NURSES**

*99,000 qualified applicants turned away from nursing schools in 2008, despite looming shortage*

The Center for Health Professions is one of 12 state teams selected to receive technical assistance for its efforts to improve health care through increased investments in nursing. Teams will identify and develop approaches to increase the number of students educated in our nation's nursing programs – with the ultimate goal of reversing the looming nursing shortage that could leave Americans without enough nurses.

The nation is facing an unprecedented nursing shortage that will increase costs and threaten the health care of all Americans, including 78 million aging baby boomers. In Rhode Island, a shortage of 6500 nurses is projected by 2020, all at a time when thousands of qualified students are being turned away from nursing schools every year because of financial and other challenges, including a lack of funds to hire enough faculty to teach the number of students applying.

Rhode Island is among 12 others, all part of the Center to Champion Nursing in America's (CCNA) 2009 cohort of state teams. CCNA is a joint initiative of AARP, the AARP Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). Other states recently selected to receive technical assistance include: Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Washington and West Virginia. Rhode Island is the only state in New England to be selected.

These new state teams will join 18 others already working to implement solutions to the nursing shortage. From coast to coast, those states are advocating for policy changes and fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships that increase nursing school enrollment and bring more nurses into the workforce. Assistance from CCNA will include grant writing support, monthly conference calls and access to a repository of available data, innovations and best practices, other relevant information, and funding sources

Rhode Island was selected because of The Center for Health Professions' diverse membership. The Center houses the Health Partnership Council, a consortium of providers, educators, decision makers and labor. "Collaboration is the key to success," said Ruth Ricciarelli, executive director. "We are excited to be supported by national organizations who share our vision of a strong, professional nursing workforce ready to meet the needs of patients."

*Founded over a half century ago, the Hospital Association of Rhode Island is a statewide trade organization that assists member hospitals in effectively meeting the health care needs of Rhode Island, through advocacy, representation, education and services. HARI members work collaboratively to improve the quality of care delivered and address issues threatening access to health care including increasing health costs, workforce shortages and decreasing reimbursement. HARI members work together to ensure that all Rhode Islanders will receive comprehensive, high quality health care.*

*Established in 1998, the Health Partnership Council (HPC), which operates under the auspices of the Hospital Association of Rhode Island, is a coalition of healthcare providers, labor, healthcare professional organizations, postsecondary institutions, policy makers and other stakeholders. The Center for Health Professions was launched in 2007 by the Health Partnership Council to promote quality healthcare for individuals who live, work and seek care in Rhode Island by advancing workforce development initiatives designed to grow and enhance the state's professional healthcare workforce.*

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