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Director and Chief Medical Officer

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Chief Operating Officer

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
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April 16, 2004

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Thomas L. Garthwaite, MD
Director and Chief Medical Officer

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES DIRECTOR OF NURSING POSITION

At the March 30, 2004, meeting of your Board, you instructed the Department of Health Services to report back on the need for and appropriateness of establishing a central Director of Nursing for the Department. This is to provide you with my initial recommendation regarding the creation of such a position.

Status of Nursing in DHS

The fact that the Department did not include a funding request for a centralized nursing office in its Fiscal Year 2004-05 is not a reflection of the potential value of such an office, but rather recognition of the significance of the Department's fiscal situation. Nursing is a critical component of the delivery and management of patient care and, as such, the Department is working to address issues related to the professional development of existing nursing personnel, assessment and continued education, recruitment of new nurses, retention of staff, compliance with the State nurse staffing ratios, as well as many other issues.

The Chief Nursing Officers from the Department's five hospitals meet with me regularly to discuss issues related to the nursing practice and work force. They also work together as a de facto nursing management team. However, given their need to focus on the day-to-day operational requirements of the hospitals, these efforts do not provide a single, consistent leadership within DHS.

The Chief Nursing Officers have been active participants on the Health Leadership Board, which I established last year to make recommendations to me regarding the priorities and policies of the Department. It also serves to move the Department's focus from an individual facility focus to that of a system of care. It was in part through the Health Leadership Board discussions that the

Department developed the attached nurse recruitment plan and determined the need to include additional staffing and funding for the nurse recruitment office in the Fiscal Year 2004-05 budget request.

Future of Nursing in DHS

Certainly there is room for additional leadership and guidance in this area. Creating and maintaining a strong, quality nursing work force is paramount to the Department's success as a health care provider. After consulting with the Department's nursing and other leadership, I believe DHS would benefit from the following functionalities at a system level:

- Development of a DHS system-wide strategic plan for nursing
- Development of system-wide solutions to nursing issues that are common across facilities
- Leadership in the development of nursing clinical best practices
- Additional clinical expertise and a nursing perspective in the development of DHS policy and strategy through participation in the Department's executive leadership
- Leadership in the management of human resources issues, such as position classification and labor negotiations
- Enhanced coordination and communication of recruitment and retention planning and activities
- Centralized data collection and reporting of nursing parameters
- A system-wide strategy for assessing and reporting the health of DHS' nursing work force
- Inclusion of nursing perspective in the development and implementation of new information technologies

Recommendation

With the concurrence of your Board, the Department will create an additional position of "Director of Nursing Affairs" that will be filled at a nurse executive level and will supervise the current and projected nurse recruitment office staff. The nature of this position, as well as the critical issues the Department faces in recruiting sufficient nursing personnel, will require an individual with not only solid clinical credentials, but strong leadership skills as well. This individual will report to the Director. To ensure the creation of this position does not impact patient care delivery, the Department has identified funding within the Health Services Administration budget to offset the cost. Once an individual has been recruited and a plan developed, additional staffing for the office will be considered.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

TLG:ak

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
NURSING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PLAN

Goals:

- To recruit and retain clinically-skilled staff to promote and maintain quality patient care delivery throughout the Department of Health Services
- To meet all regulatory standards for staffing throughout the Department of Health Services

STRATEGIC DIRECTION/OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY	ACTION	TARGET DATE	COST IN $
1. Attract and employ knowledgeable clinically skilled nursing staff.	A vigorous and timely marketing and advertising campaign based on departmental needs and EEOC requirements will be instituted to recruit competent staff.	1. Communicate vacancies through internal/external marketing/advertising.		
		a. Create an image enhancement program for DHS nursing.	2004	$80,000
		b. Generate collateral materials (brochure, exhibit, flyers) and other communication tools to announce vacancies and distribute information related to specific positions.	2004	$40,000
		c. Encourage word of mouth recruitment by staff.	Ongoing	
		d. Prepare nurse recruitment article for County Digest.	2004	
		e. Create and maintain master calendar of recruitment events, open houses, career days.	2004	
		f. Redesign DHS Nurse Recruitment Website.	2004	
		g. Ensure DHS "Nurse" website is updated monthly and/or when changes occur; salaries, classifications.	Ongoing	
		2. Advertise generic nursing opportunities on Monster.com and other online recruitment websites.	2/2004	
		3. Direct mail and e-mail marketing to nurses on California Board of Registered Nurses and resume banks.	2004	$5,000
		4. Work with Human Resources to	2004	$200,000

STRATEGIC DIRECTION/OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY	ACTION	TARGET DATE	COST IN $
		reestablish Referral/Incentive Programs.		
		5. Create criteria for a "Walk-a-Mile in my Shoes" program to "orient" other DHS staff to nurse's role.	2004	
		6. Review proposals and facilitate approval/payment process.	Ongoing	
		7. Explore alternative, international staffing resources.	2004	
2. Implement a professional aggressive advertising campaign.	Maintain DHS Nursing visibility and positive presence throughout Los Angeles County, the state and country. Fund a marketing budget. Create media and video spotlight highlighting DHS Nursing.	1. Develop RFP.		
		2. Work with a selected vendor to develop; A) a creative advertising plan with visually enticing and informative communication tools; B) career forecasting and planned strategic focused recruitments; and C) quarterly feedback loops to evaluate marketing efficacy and outcomes.	2004	
		3. Disburse media kit to be used for distribution to placement coordinators of key institutions, applicants, job fairs, etc.	Ongoing	$100,000
		4. Distribute marketing/ advertising materials. Place advertisements on a regular time interval to keep prospective employees aware of DHS opportunities.	Ongoing	$645,000
		5. Post job openings on various websites.	2004	
		6. Review proposals, facilitate approval/payment process, and monitor deliverables.	Ongoing	
3. Utilize objective pre-employment evaluation methods that address the applicant's clinical competency, critical thinking skills, proven past performances and compatibility with departmental visions, values, EEOC requirements and staffing	A recruitment plan that recognizes diversity and individual skill and competency is utilized to guide our hiring. Expand the "one stop shop" recruitment office concept to all DHS facilities.	1. Civil Service Rules & EEOC Standards are integrated into the framework for hiring.	Ongoing	
		2. Complete the Nursing Study for all classifications and revise classification specifications.	2004	
		3. Revise Medication Calculation Examination (MCE) and establish realistic retesting timeframes.	2004	

STRATEGIC DIRECTION/OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY	ACTION	TARGET DATE	COST IN $
needs.		4. Develop a plan for each skill classification that highlights role competency needed to meet our mission and vision.	2004	
		5. Explore the design and automate the MCE to enable on-line scoring of test.	2004	
4. Create and maintain an organizational presence with affiliate schools, appropriate vocational institutions, recruiters and general community, to generate awareness of DHS's employment needs and opportunities.	1. Support active and open communication with all affiliates and local schools.	1. Sponsor guest speakers and provide information at RN/LVN programs regarding career opportunities (ongoing and one month prior to graduation).	2004	
	2. Promote institutional recognition through sponsorship of community education programs.	3. Identify members of each School of Nursing Advisory Board. Maintain a list of seats on nursing and technical schools' Advisory Boards including RN & LVN programs. Attend annual meetings. To ensure DHS representation and decrease duplications of work.	Ongoing	
	3. Expand a Student Nurse Worker Program throughout DHS facilities.			
	4. Expand the nurse internship program to all DHS facilities and other schools of nursing.	3. Attend job fairs for affiliate schools and other appropriate vocational organizations.	Ongoing	$75,000
		4. Make available marketing materials and provide tours before or after selected courses and as requested.	Ongoing	
	5. Create, develop and expand internship programs to foster long-term relationships with students and to contribute to their professional development (program will encourage students to work.	5. Provide career counseling to potential employment candidates (i.e., minimum job requirements, sources for funding and training, etc.)	Ongoing	
		6. Recruit nursing students from affiliate schools to fill Student Nurse Worker positions. Discuss Student Worker opportunities, distribute and collect completed job applications.	Ongoing	
		7. Develop mechanism to allow adjunct faculty appointments and enable shared clinical faculty support.	2004	
		8. Collaborate with volunteers to orient and place junior volunteers in areas conducive to learning about and observing careers in nursing.	Ongoing	

STRATEGIC DIRECTION/OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY	ACTION	TARGET DATE	COST IN $
		9. Attend and involve facility staff in career days at local elementary, junior and senior high schools to discuss health career opportunities.	Ongoing	
		10. Develop summer program for High School volunteers. Students can earn school credits.	2004	
		11. Develop a Speaker's bureau of content specific subject matter experts.	03/2004	
		12. Collaborate with affiliate nursing and technical schools to maintain a constant flow of applicants.	Ongoing	
		13. Ensure that affiliate/vocational organizations receive marketing materials on a timely basis.	Ongoing	
		14. Purchase items/goods to job fairs and career events.	Ongoing	$40,000
		15. Review proposals and facilitate approval/payment process.	Ongoing	
5. Maintain a constant flow of RN candidates internally to DHS	1. Support and potentiate the LAC College of Nursing & Allied Health as a resource for RN recruitment throughout the system. 2. Develop and implement distance learning.	1. Allocate funded faculty positions to the College of Nursing that are adequate to meet the education and facilitation needs of students, including IS support. 2. Develop and/or purchase a Learning Management System for on-line education, distance learning and interactive classrooms.	02/2004 In process-RFP to be sent out in Jan '04	
6. Promote timely and efficient hiring and promotion of job candidates.	1. Utilize a streamlined and flexible hiring process with standardized tools to enhance efficiency. 2. Maintain open and continuous lines of communication with all parties involved in the hiring process. 3. Maintain a constant ability to	1. Analyze existing hiring processes and redesign systems accordingly. 2. Identify best practices and dissimilar processes along applicant flow timeline to streamline process. 3. Coordinate and maintain constant follow-up of the specific activities related to the	2004 2004	

STRATEGIC DIRECTION/OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY	ACTION	TARGET DATE	COST IN $
	hire and "On-the-Spot" hiring process. 4. Establish timelines standards and overall performance measures for time standards.	hiring process: (Ongoing) a. Ensure that job applications are reviewed and processed on a timely basis b. Work closely with Human Resources and key leaders when scheduling civil service testing, placement interviews, and pre-employment physicals c. Ensure that the Certification Lists are accurate and updated. d. Work closely with selected applicant to determine appropriate start date and scheduling of nursing orientation e. Ensure that reference checks are completed on all applicants prior to hiring commitment	 Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	
7. Establish Tutoring/Mentoring Programs.	Provide personal academic support to students attending Associate degree programs in Nursing at various DHS affiliated colleges.	1. Establish a program with East Los Angeles College School of Nursing. a. Ensures contract requirements are met. b. Meets with students to discuss DHS job opportunities. 2. Establish a program with Los Angeles Valley College School of Nursing. a. Ensures contract requirements are met. b. Meets with students to discuss DHS job opportunities. 3. Establish a program with Glendale Community College School of Nursing. a. Ensures contract requirements are met. b. Meets with students to discuss DHS job opportunities.	 Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	$122,500 $96,130 $89,924

STRATEGIC DIRECTION/OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY	ACTION	TARGET DATE	COST IN $
8. Michael D. Antonovich RN Service Scholarship Program	Provide scholarships to nursing students attending a college or university. In return, scholarship recipients are obligated to fulfill a service commitment.	Award scholarships to qualified students.	05/2004	$70,000
9. Relocation Incentive	Provide a relocation allowance to RNs hired by the Department providing they meet the program requirements.	Award payment to employees meeting program requirements.	Ongoing	$10,000
1. Automate recruitment and hiring process.	Increase productivity through automation of processes to enhance workflow.	Hiring Process: 1. Implement online application filing through the DHR website. 2. With automation, redesign the application process to: a. Review of application for completion, accuracy, and candidate acceptability b. Match applicant to job requirements c. Complete civil service testing (CST) and reference checks 3. Design and automate the schedule for placement interviews. a. Coordinate the schedules of key nursing department leaders and identify a date/time for candidate interview b. Expedite pre-employment physicals by collaborating efforts with Employee Health 4. Utilize standardized "selection" interview questions to reflect: a. Patient Centered Care	02/27/04 Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	

STRATEGIC DIRECTION/OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY	ACTION	TARGET DATE	COST IN $
		b. Customer Service c. Professional Practice d. Critical Thinking e. Teamwork, Leadership		
		5. Identify Start Date:		
		a. Coordinate the needs of selected candidate with the needs of the service	Ongoing	
		6. Hospital/Nursing Service Orientation:		
		a. Coordinate nursing, hospital and Human Resources orientation	Ongoing	
		b. Develop an orientation calendar individualized to the selected applicant	2004	
		c. Expand preceptorship availability to all nurses entering DHS system, individualized to their special needs	2004	
		7. Remove inefficiencies and barriers to hiring:		
		a. Decentralize autonomy to hire to facilities	2004 (completed)	
		b. Explore eliminating the two-person interview process	2004 (completed)	
		c. Streamline exam and interview process for hiring and promotions	2004	
		d. Decentralize Advance Step Placement resides for certain levels of personnel with the CNOs.	2004	
2. Promote role differentiation and utilization of "the right person doing the right job" to facilitate best utilization of limited number of RNs.	All nursing role categories are approved for hiring.	1. Create per diem LVN/NA positions for hiring (Flexible Staffing).	2004	
		2. Redesign the budget and item control process to control to dollars and not "item name."	2004 (completed)	

STRATEGIC DIRECTION/OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY	ACTION	TARGET DATE	COST IN $
3. Create a work environment where nurses can function as professionals and where they flourish.	Streamline processes to allow for timely hiring of non RN positions.	1. Create a "new" classification of patient care associate to allow combined nursing attendant and clerical job duties. 2. Create a "new" classification that would provide for escort and other miscellaneous duties. 3. Approve the 36-hour workweek.	2004 2004 2004	
4. An immediate staffing profile of vacancies and budgeted positions is readily available across the system.	Develop a sound comprehensive nursing staff database by facility and department.	Each organization develops the current staff item control as to what is – and that is adopted and serves as a baseline for the data profile.	Completed	
5. Financial crisis does not impair the integrity of the data system or management of the data.	Actively manage recruitment and operations with current position and salary data.	Automated Financial Systems is actively used for data and system management. Implement and maintain new Item Management System.	2004 2004	
1. Incentivize the workforce. Allow nurses in other areas; Sheriffs, Mental Health to work in DHS facilities.	1. Expand the opportunity to have existing staff work secondary county jobs and/or maximize retiree and others to streamline re-entry process. 2. Develop incentive plans to reward excellent preceptors and staff. 3. Maximize retiree time. Utilize the item management program.	1. Explore streamlined methods to "share" jobs across county departments. 2. Develop a program to engage current retirees and other part-time work. 3. Expand RN program at the LAC College of Nursing & Allied Health to non-traditional hours (evenings/weekends). 4. Develop an RN/LVN re-entry program.	2004 2004 2004 2004	
2. Invest in retention activities that support professional development and involve autonomy, team building and participatory management.	Provide opportunities for staff's professional development.	1. Reestablish Nursing Leadership Academy. 2. Allocate funding for attendance at professional seminars and specialty organization conferences. 3. Reestablish an Employee Referral Program similar to the 1000 Thanks Referral Programs.	06/2004 06/2004 2004	

STRATEGIC DIRECTION/OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY	ACTION	TARGET DATE	COST IN $
		4. Expand the LAC+USC Future Nurses' Club program to other DHS facilities.	2004	
		5. Allocate funding to "backfill" positions for employees attending classes and professional development opportunities.	2004	
		6. Allocate funding resources to develop and maintain program to improve DHS Image as an employer of choice and minimize image branding. (RFP)	2004	
		7. Develop Public Service announcements for TV and/or radio. (RFP)	2004	
		8. Pilot a Limitless Opportunity Program for DHS nurses considering positions outside of the system.	2004	
		9. Establish "Professional Sharing" across our system – ex., seminars, grand rounds, etc.	2004	
		10. Provide Tuition Reimbursement to RN employees pursing advanced degrees in nursing or related fields.	Ongoing	$350,000
		11. Review proposals and facilitate approval/payment process.	Ongoing	
3. Provide retention incentives for staff to recruit new employees.	1. Develop incentive plans to reward excellent preceptors and staff.	1. Identify retention incentives and develop plan of action.	2004	$20,000
	2. Develop a plan to implement the 36 hour work schedule.		2004	
	3. Explore other flexible work weeks while maintaining coverage.		2004	
	4. Identify, expand, and reward best practices in DHS that support nursing.			
4. Establish an "innovation" fund	Enhance staff's participation in	Create infrastructures to explore and expand	03/2004	$20,000

STRATEGIC DIRECTION/OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY	ACTION	TARGET DATE	COST IN $
to enhance creativity and innovation in the workforce.	creative endeavors to increase retention and productivity. Provide "sabbaticals" for staff to explore and learn new topics that can be applied to their role.	opportunities for staff development and create criteria for selection and funding. Pilot this program across facilities. Review proposals and facilitate approval/payment process.	 Ongoing	
5. Annual and/or biannual county-wide Nurse Recognition activities.	Identify Nurse Recognition activities for DHS and potential budget needed to implement plan.	1. Allocate funding to support Nurse Recognition Activities. 2. Establish educational focused Nurse Recognition programs and activities (i.e. Countywide CE event, promotionals, educational materials, etc.) including visiting DHS Expert Series. 3. Revisit the Nurse of the Year recognition. Expand our activities showcase the contributions of these individuals and/or group efforts at our facilities. 4. Review proposals and facilitate approval/payment process.	2004 2004 2004 Ongoing	$40,000
6. Promote quality of work life for staff.	Utilize technology to increase productivity and "free up" time for patient care. Employ participatory management – involve all levels of staff in decision making processes. Ensure staff has the tools (supplies and equipment) to perform their roles.	Invest in technology to save nursing time – wireless phones, handheld technologies, etc. Collaborate with other disciplines at the facilities to ensure success.	2004 2004	
Develop criteria based automated tracking mechanisms and monthly reports.			2004	
To develop and implement the DHS and Facility Nurse Recruitment and Retention Plan.	To ensure timely communication and feedback to applicants, coordinate Master Calendar and	Provide two new staff positions for highly responsible administrative support: Staff Analyst, Health and Health Facilities Consultant,	2004	$263,061

STRATEGIC DIRECTION/OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY	ACTION	TARGET DATE	COST IN $
	sequence of events, maintain and maximize the Nurse Recruitment website, assist with Advertisement development, conduct an assessment of each facility's technology equipment needs, and develop reporting mechanisms.	Nursing. Provide two new positions for specialized clerical support: Intermediate Typist Clerk and Senior Typist Clerk Provide one new position for Information Technology support: Information Systems Analyst II		

TOTAL COST IN DOLLARS	$2,266,615