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September 28, 2005

TO: Each Supervisor

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

SUBJECT: FULL TUITION REIMBURSEMENT FOR NURSES

This is in response to your July 26, 2005 request for information regarding two issues related to recruitment and retention of registered nurses. The first issue is the provision of full tuition reimbursement to individuals who commit to provide four years of service to the Department of Health Services (DHS) and the second is full tuition reimbursement for nurses who successfully complete coursework in specialty nursing services such as critical care, operating room, or emergency care.

Currently, DHS provides tuition reimbursement to permanent employees for all or part of the tuition (which they have paid) after the successful completion of approved courses leading toward a position in the field of nursing. The maximum amount per employee per year is \$3,000 based upon available funding. Reimbursement does not cover books, supplies or other incidental costs. There is no required term of service associated with the reimbursement however, if the employee terminates employment within one year of the date of the completion of the course for which they have been reimbursed, the employee must return the amount of the reimbursement to the County.

Name of Program/Scholarship	Amount of Funding	Required Commitment
RN Loan Repayment/Scholarship Program (State of CA)	\$8,000 for ADN \$10,000 for BSN	2 yrs service in a medically underserved area of California
Michael D. Antonovich RN Service Scholarship	\$1,000 \$2,500	1 yr DHS service 3 yrs DHS service
LA County Tuition Agreement Contract (LAC School of Nursing)	Tuition reduced from \$2,400 to \$700/semester	3 yrs DHS service
LA County Nursing Tuition Reimbursement Program (DHS Policy #701.3)	\$3,000 annually	1 yr DHS service

In providing full tuition to individuals who commit to provide four years of service to DHS, it should be noted that four years exceeds the community standard for tuition forgiveness programs. In addition, tuition varies from institution to institution and from Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) to Bachelors Degree in Nursing (BDN) programs (see attachment). Therefore, tuition in exchange for three years service may be considered when the following requirements are met:

- Students must be enrolled full time in an accredited nursing program leading toward an ADN or BSN;
- Students are to maintain satisfactory performance, as determined by the nursing school;
- Funding not to exceed \$2,500 per year for ADN and \$4,000 per year for BSN programs based on available funding (program maximum placed at \$5,000 for ADN degree and at \$12,000 for a BSN degree);
- Students must successfully pass the NCLEX-RN within eight months after graduation;
- Students must begin obligated service as a full time permanent County Staff Nurse or Clinic Nurse I no later than eight weeks after graduation; and,
- The provision of three years of continuous full-time permanent service in exchange for full tuition forgiveness is required.

Currently, County Counsel is reviewing these recommendations to ensure they are legally appropriate. Upon completion of their review, I will provide you with an update and the actions being taken to implement the recommendations. Program implementation is also dependant upon availability of funding.

The second issue is regarding training for nurses who successfully complete coursework in specialty nursing services. This type of training (e.g., Intensive Care, Emergency Room, Operating Room, etc.) is customarily provided by individual hospitals for their employees and is not done as part of a degreed nursing program. Such trainings are currently offered at LAC+USC Medical Center and vary in length from three months in duration (emergency room) to nine months (operating room). Other DHS hospitals have "orientation programs" within their specialty areas but not the formalized training offered at LAC+USC Medical Center.

Most of LAC+USC Medical Center's trainings are offered twice a year, are free of cost to DHS employees, and routinely have vacancies. These trainings are used as a recruitment and retention tool by the hospital and employees once trained, become members of the LAC+USC Medical Center nursing staff. The County does not pay for the certification that an employee can obtain as the result of receiving such specialty training and these programs are open to new RN graduates, Interim Permittees, and seasoned nurses. Regarding cost, customarily specialty courses in the private sector are approximately \$325 to \$500 and the certification fees run about the same as the course.

Therefore regarding full tuition for critical care, operating room, or emergency care training for registered nurses, we recommend lessening the proposed required service commitment for these nurses from four years to two years and instituting the following:

Short Term Goals:

- Cover the trainee's salary, training course, materials, and initial certification associated with the specialty training, and
- Provide overtime for RN's to "cover" the employee in training, as well as ensure ample Relief Nurses back fill the training RN's position.

Long Term Goals:

- Consider the use of tuition funding to fortify the in-house Education Department at other DHS hospitals to offer specialty trainings on site, or
- Centralize one facility to provide all specialty trainings (i.e., a Center of Excellence), make classes smaller, and offer more frequently. Once trained, the employee will return to his/her home DHS hospital.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

TLG:mf  
508:004

Attachment

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

## NURSING SCHOOLS

	TUITION FOR COMPLETING NURSING PROGRAM	AT WHAT POINT DO YOU CONSIDER STUDENTS ENROLLED IN YOUR NURSING PROGRAM? (ARE THERE PRE-REQS?)	WHAT MONTH(S) CAN STUDENTS START YOUR PROGRAM?	HOW MANY NURSING STUDENTS GRADUATE PER YEAR?	TIME OF YEAR NURSING STUDENTS GRADUATE
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### BSN

<b>Azusa Pacific University</b>	\$88,000	After completion of 2 semesters (1 yr) of pre-requisites	Fall only	Approximately 60	Spring
<b>Biola University</b>	\$110,000 – 5 year program	Must complete 2 yrs of pre-reqs then 3 yrs of nrsg prog.	Fall only	Approximately 30	Spring
<b>California State University, Long Beach</b>	<u>Basic</u> \$9,600  <u>Post Bach to BSN</u> \$8,000	Must have 45 units of gen. ed. & pre-reqs completed before starting prog	Fall & Spring	<u>Basic</u> 144 total – 72/semester & 72 in trimester.  <u>Post Bach to BSN</u> 36 (16 mo. prog)	Fall, Spring, & Summer
<b>California State University, Los Angeles</b>	\$11,140	After completion of 16 mandated units.	Fall only.	55 – 60 per year	Spring
<b>Mount Saint Mary's College</b> Two programs: <u>Traditional BSN</u> and <u>Accelerated BSN</u> (any Bachelors Degree to BSN)	<u>Traditional:</u> \$69,000  <u>Accelerated:</u> \$39,000	<u>Traditional and Accelerated:</u> From day one (includes pre-reqs)	<u>Traditional:</u> Fall  <u>Accelerated:</u> Summer	<u>Traditional:</u> Unknown  <u>Accelerated:</u> Unknown	<u>Traditional:</u> May  <u>Accelerated:</u> May

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### ADN

Antelope Valley College	\$2100	After pre-reqs.	Aug & Jan	95 – 100	Dec & May
Cerritos College	\$1820	After pre-reqs and waiting list.	Aug & Jan	50 - 60	Dec & May
College of the Canyons	\$1872	After pre-reqs.	Aug & Jan	Varies, 72 -96 the collaborative adds 30 additional each year.	May & Dec
Compton Community College	\$2016	Must meet all pre-reqs requirements before they can apply to the program.	Aug	25-35	May
Glendale Community College	\$2214	After pre-reqs.	Jan & Aug	55/yr	June & Dec
LA College of Nursing and Allied Health	LVN to RN = \$2400 RN = \$9600	After science pre-reqs.	Aug & Jan	125 – 140 (both includes programs)	Dec & May
Los Angeles Harbor College	\$1872	Must meet admission requirements (includes completion of some pre-reqs) at time of application. Applications reviewed and students selected for entry into Nursing Program.	Sept & Feb	58 for Fall & Spring 2004	Dec & mid Jun
Los Angeles Valley College	\$1872	They must complete their pre-reqs prior to applying.	Feb & late Aug	42 – 48	May & Dec
Mount Saint Mary's College	\$29,000 (Basic) - \$45,000 (Advanced)	You are in the program from the start (pre-reqs included).	Fall & Spring	Unknown	Dec & May

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Mount San Antonio College	\$1118	Must meet all pre-req requirements before they can apply to the program.	Fall & Spring	Not sure what # is per/yr. However, there were 60 students in the last class (Spring.)	Fall & Spring
Pasadena College	\$1917	After completing pre-requisites.	Spring & Fall	35-50	Spring & Fall
Rio Hondo College	\$2000	After completing pre-requisites.	Fall	80	Spring
Santa Ana College	\$2000	After completing pre-requisites. Then students go on a list. They accept 36 students/sem: ½ are chosen on 1 <sup>st</sup> -come-1 <sup>st</sup> serve basis, the other ½ are chosen based on point system.	Spring & Fall	36 – 60	Spring & Fall
Santa Monica College	\$1846	After pre-reqs are completed. Then student applies to the program. There is a waiting list.	Fall & Spring	Average of 25	Summer, Spring, Fall
Ventura College	\$1118	Must finish pre-reqs then apply to get on waiting list (there is 1 ½ yr wait period before they begin the program.)	Aug & Jan	In the last 4 yrs, 67, 67, 67, & 79.	Dec & May
West Coast University	\$4900	From beginning.	June, Sept, & Nov	The program is new. They have a class of 50 students who will graduate in 18 months.	18 months from start. They haven't had a graduating class yet.