ix. Project Abstract

Project Title: RN Critical Care Residency for Urban and Rural Hospitals
Applicant Organization Name: Adventist Health System Sunbelt Healthcare Corp DBA Florida Hospital
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The RN Critical Care Residency for Urban and Rural Hospitals project—a competing continuation of a highly successful FY2007 HRSA grant—meets Purpose E-2 of the Nurse Education, Practice and Retention Program. The purpose of the project is to expand and enhance an established, in-time, electronic distance learning residency program to encourage mentoring and the development of specialty practice in adult critical care to decrease the nurse workforce shortage in Florida. The applicant is Florida Hospital, a 2,188-bed tertiary acute care medical center with seven campuses in the tri-county Orlando area. It serves more than one million inpatients each year—more than any other hospital in the nation.

In November 2009, Florida lost more jobs than any state in the US, pushing unemployment to 11.5 percent—it’s highest point in 34 years and 1.5 points higher than the national average. When coupled with a reduction of primary care alternatives in Central Florida, the influx of newly unemployed and uninsured will place unprecedented strain on the area’s hospitals, which serve over 2 million people. Those lacking insurance or facing other access barriers often delay seeking medical care until they are very ill, placing themselves at risk for needing acute care services. Add to that Florida’s rapidly changing demographics, and the urgent need for critical care nurses who are competent to care for the state’s increasingly diverse, multicultural population is clear. As Florida Hospital’s Family Medicine Residency Program director observed, “We need people who understand our population.”

The proposed project will build upon the current grant—which has already served 404 nursing residents and 390 preceptors and mentors in its first 30 months—by adding two new components: 1) A formalized, electronic distance learning module in cultural competency to provide the 840 new project participants (500 nursing residents, 250 preceptors, and 90 mentors) with specific knowledge and skills to increase their ability to provide culturally competent critical care to diverse individuals, groups, and communities served by the 17 participating hospital sites across Florida; AND 2) An electronic evaluation system, which will replace the current manual process using paper forms. The second component will resolve one of the current grant project’s principal barriers and set the stage for future expansion of the residency program to 22 AHS hospitals outside of Florida. It will also allow others to more easily replicate project activities, further enhancing the project’s geographical reach and potential long-term benefits on expanding, strengthening, and accelerating the nursing workforce pipeline.

Objectives will 1) Expand the current curriculum to improve theoretical knowledge and cultural competence of nursing residents in the adult critical care specialty; 2) Prepare experienced nurses as culturally competent preceptors and mentors; 3) Institute an electronic evaluation tool to measure increased skill and clinical competence of residents, promoting improvements in job performance and quality of care; and 4) Strengthen guided mentor coaching to increase the confidence and job satisfaction of residents and promote increased retention.