

Orbis Education Launches New Nursing Education Collaboration

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Hospitals and Universities Use New and Traditional Learning Resources to Help Alleviate Nursing Shortage

FISHERS, Ind., Aug. 28 /PRNewswire/ -- Orbis Education announced today that it has implemented its first collaborative educational services solution in San Diego, California, in conjunction with the University of Oklahoma, Southwestern College, San Diego State University and Sharp HealthCare. This collaboration allows students in San Diego to earn an Accelerated Second Degree BSN from the University of Oklahoma College of Nursing beginning in August 2007.

"California has one of the most serious nursing shortages in the United States," said Daniel Briggs, CEO of Orbis Education. "We recognized an opportunity to bring nationally award-winning nursing programs and a nationally-recognized health care facility together to address the needs of San Diego."

This innovative collaboration blends tradition and technology, offering leading-edge online education and traditional on-site clinical education. Orbis works transparently to manage logistics from the beginning to the end of this process, including developing relationships with potential college affiliates, scouting clinical locations, conducting all marketing and public relations student recruitment efforts and managing the day-to-day operations. In establishing the new program, Orbis works diligently to meet the highest standards in education and health care set forth by all affiliates and regulatory bodies.

In San Diego, students without previous healthcare experience and a degree in another field can become a nurse in just 14 months. The theory portion of the program is taught completely online by the faculty of OU, and the clinical education component is taught exclusively at Sharp HealthCare facilities by adjunct appointed faculty.

"We are also pleased that hospitals outside San Diego are recognizing the value of this innovative approach and are currently looking at implementing the program with exclusivity in their region," Briggs said. "We are encouraged that more hospitals today are looking for proactive solutions instead of treating the shortage as a cost-of-doing business."

According to a recently released PricewaterhouseCoopers' report(1), the "use of temporary nurses is no longer a stop-gap measure but has become a way of life for many hospitals." Also noted in the report, hospital executives are challenged by the overhead associated with attracting and retaining quality nurses. Current efforts to control the nursing shortage are taking away resources better spent on patient care. With the new collaboration in San Diego, dramatic cost reductions are expected to be realized in approximately 15 to 20 months, with cost savings increasing each year.

"The program implementation model Orbis Education used made the work on our end easy and straightforward," adds Sharp Chief Nursing Officer, Jennifer Jacoby. "Orbis Education set up the entire program, so we could concentrate on patient care with no upfront capital cost on our part."

Graduates of the program will earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree through a 14-month curriculum, provided they already hold a baccalaureate degree in another field. The curriculum is comprehensive, encompassing more than 600 hours of online course work and almost 900 hours of hands-on clinical preparation. Theory courses will be taught by University of Oklahoma nursing faculty via interactive online classes that include threaded discussions, real-time web casts, projects, assignments and proctored examinations. Students have the flexibility of completing the online courses during day or evening hours. Hands-on clinical preparation is taught by appointed adjunct University of Oklahoma faculty assigned to work directly with students at several Sharp HealthCare facilities.

About Orbis Education

Founded in 2003, Orbis Education leverages opportunities in nursing education by affiliating existing nursing education programs with major hospitals. Orbis works to help solve the nursing shortage problem across the country, improve patient care and improve the cash flow and bottom line for affiliate hospitals. For more information visit <http://www.orbiseducation.com>.

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(1) "What works: Healing the healthcare staffing shortage" by PricewaterhouseCoopers' Health Research Institute; 2007.