

Nursing Career Ladders

The Nursing Career Ladders initiative creates a 11-month Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) program and a four-year Registered Nurse (RN) program for low-income students and Health and Hospitals Corporation employees.¹

<i>Agencies</i>	<i>Start Date</i>	<i>Number Served per year²</i>	<i>CEO Budget (City FY 08)</i>	<i>Total Budget (City FY 08)</i>
The Health and Hospitals Corporation/The Department of Education	September 2007	LPN Program: 40 RN Program: 60 ³	\$1,007,000	\$5,400,000

Problem Statement

Limited seats available in nursing programs fail to produce enough qualified nurses to meet the demand for nurses. Compounding the problem, there are not enough seats for academically qualified students. Current nursing programs are academically competitive and income is not a major factor for admissions.

Research and Evidence

Beginning in 2003, the Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) created a nursing career ladder program for its employees, using a New York State Department of Health and Labor Workforce Retraining Initiative grant. The program allowed HHC employees to enroll in either LPN or RN programs. Upon successful completion of training, graduates are promoted to new titles. Thus far, 109 employees have completed the LPN program, and 113 have graduated from the RN program. Currently, 67 employees are attending LPN training programs, and 172 are enrolled in the RN program. HHC facilities have also supported employees in LPN and RN programs using other funding sources, such as TANF and Community Health Partnership.

In a similar effort in Texas, the Harris County Hospital District (HCHD) in Houston used a nursing career lattice model to address significant shortages in nursing staff. Since the program launched in April 2004, 88 HCHD employees have completed Certified Nursing Assistant coursework with a 100% pass rate and 98% retention rate. Sixty percent of program graduates have indicated that they plan to continue advancing in their nursing careers. As a result of these efforts, which helped to staff community health clinics, waiting times for patients in HCHD clinics decreased from four hours to 70 minutes.

By hiring the nurses who graduate from the Nursing Career Ladders program, HHC will be able to reduce its nursing overtime hours. This not only improves the quality of care provided, but saves money over the cost of paying higher overtime wages.

Program Description

The purpose of the Nursing Career Ladder initiative is to develop career prospects for low-wage health workers and other low-income individuals. The program prepares students who are currently living at or below 130% of the Federal poverty level for sustainable careers in nursing. Nurses trained through these programs will be offered well paying positions at the Health and Hospitals Corporation. Salaries within HHC start at \$37,633 for LPNs and \$61,528 for RNs.

Licensed Practical Nurse Program

The central components of the initiative include an expansion of the Department of Education's 11-month accelerated LPN training program. The new expansion site is located at Goldwater Hospital on Roosevelt Island. Participants are required to pass the Department of Education entrance exams, which consist of the Pre-Nursing Assessment test (C-NET),⁴ and the Test of Adult Basic Education. Enrollees receive full tuition and support services as needed.

Registered Nurse Program

The RN program recruits income-eligible participants who demonstrate strong academic skills. For the first two years of the program, participants take coursework required for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. Coursework may be completed at any accredited college. As with the LPN program, enrollees receive full tuition and counseling services as needed. Participants who maintain a 2.75 GPA are then eligible to transfer to the HHC/Long Island University Nursing School to complete the two-year clinical program required for the BSN degree.⁵

Target Population

The program serves New York City residents whose income is less than or equal to 130% of the Federal poverty level. Thirty percent of the seats will also be available to HHC staff without regard to income eligibility.

Expected Outcomes

Short-Term (by the end of 2008):

- 40 graduates of LPN program
- Second LPN cohort of 40 in program
- 60 individuals in RN training

Long-Term:

- Help individuals living at or below the poverty level into LPN and RN jobs in NYC
- Reduce use of overtime and agency staff at HHC hospitals
- Address the significant nursing shortage in the City and at HHC hospitals
- Create a career ladder within the health industry

¹ Students may enter the RN program having completed some of the pre-clinical coursework. As such, it may take less than 4 years to finish.

² The LPN program serves 30 low-income individuals and 10 HHC employees. The RN program serves 40 low-income individuals and 20 HHC employees.

³ Students are currently being recruited for the RN program and are taking pre-clinical college courses.

⁴ The Pre-Nursing Assessment test is administered by the Center for Nursing, Education, and Testing (C-NET). It is generally referred to as the C-NET test.

⁵ The facilities for the clinical portion of the RN program are currently being renovated, and will not be open until 2009.