



Weather for Marysville
 Sunny
 Time: 11:00 am
 Temp: 46 F
 RealFeel Temp:
 Humidity: 85 %
 Winds: NNW at

APPEAL-DEMOCRAT.com

Marysville-Yuba City, California

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Sunday, February 01, 2004

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Job center retraining nurses who left the profession

By [Scott Bransford](#)/Appeal-Democrat

A Yuba City job training center is taking aim at the shortage of nurses in the area by retraining registered nurses who have left the profession.

A free 12-week RN refresher course is being offered by the Career Training and Education Center (CTEC) starting in late March.

"It's just like riding a bike," said Pam Mahmoudi, CTEC's health careers coordinator. "If you haven't done it in a while, it just takes you some time to get back on the bike and go."

The course will accommodate 10 people with valid RN certification. Students will hone their skills and catch up on new medical developments through classroom instruction and hands-on training.

CTEC launched the \$70,000 program in conjunction with the Sutter County OneStop Career Center. Funding came from a federal Workforce Reinvestment Act grant administered by the governor's office, said Sutter County OneStop Director Bob Ginther.

Ginther said the program serves two purposes: Helping students return to a lucrative profession and helping local medical facilities cope with a shortage of skilled labor.

Registered nurses have grown scarce nationwide, partly due to factors such as the increasing number of elderly patients in the health-care system. Nurses are leaving the profession and retiring at a faster rate than they are replaced, Ginther said.

In California, medical providers also are struggling to hire more nurses to comply with a law enacted by former Gov. Gray Davis that tightened staff-to-patient ratios.

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Among other provisions, the law requires emergency rooms to have one nurse for every four patients, while surgical units must have one nurse for every six patients.

California is expected to have a severe shortfall of RNs over the next decade. The Employment Development Department expects 97,500 RN jobs to be opening in 2010, according to a department Web site.

Local medical providers say they're already feeling the crunch. The Fremont-Rideout Health Group, for example, currently needs to fill about 35 full- and part-time RN positions at its two hospitals, according to Denise Thomas, the group's director of employee recruitment and retention.

In addition to local recruitment, Thomas said Fremont-Rideout plans to hire nurses from abroad and provide training opportunities to employees who lack nursing certification.

"The crisis is nationwide and we're not alone in the pain we're experiencing," Thomas said.

Mahmoudi said there are many inactive RNs in the area who can help fill staffing needs. About 15 percent of the RNs in Yuba and Sutter counties are not active in their profession, she estimated.

With RNs in short supply, entry level jobs in the health industry can pay as high as \$50 an hour, Mahmoudi said. Still, many nurses are hesitant return to the field because they don't feel prepared for the advances that have occurred in medical knowledge and technology, said CTEC's health careers coordinator.

"I'd like to reach out to those (who are hesitant) and bring them back to nursing," Mahmoudi said.

Thomas called CTEC's program a good approach to filling local nursing needs.

"The more that the different bodies in the community look for a solution, the more a win-win for everybody is evident," she said.

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