

## Meeting the Challenge: Addressing the Shortage of Health Care Professionals in Atlanta

### Leveraging the Power of Partnerships--Honorable Mention Project Synopsis

**Issue:** Projections from the Georgia Department of Labor indicated that the state would need more than 140,000 new and replacement health care workers by 2010. Other data indicated a serious current and future gap between supply and demand. In metropolitan Atlanta, where 50 percent of the State's population resides, the situation was even more acute. The intent of the Georgia Perimeter College project is to increase the number of healthcare professionals in metropolitan Atlanta through capacity building and by increasing the supply of trained health care professionals.

**Innovation:** The project, housed at Georgia Perimeter College, has several components and many collaborators working together to ameliorate the area's health care shortage. The program components are: (1) faculty mentoring program; (2) student career counseling; (3) facilities expansion; (4) tutorial staff expansion; (5) acquisition of clinical patient simulators; (6) career ladder expansion; and (7) K-12 outreach activities to help interest students in the health care field. The collaborators include: local and county workforce boards, education, business and industry. The capacity building activities all work in concert to support the project's training components.

**Success:** The results for this on-going project are mixed, but admirable. Examples of performance outcomes for participants are: Entered employment – 81.4 percent vs. 90 percent planned; Employment Retention – 83.3 percent vs. 90 percent planned; Attainment of a degree or credential – 88.9 vs. 70 percent. The capacity building outcome measures are very impressive, e.g. there has been a 40 percent increase in clinical practice placements as well as an increase in nursing training slots.

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