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The Atlanta Region
Discretionary Grants
Training Forum

U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL)
Employment and Training Administration (ETA)
Region 3 – Atlanta

Wednesday, April 15, 2009

Healthcare Panel

Midlands Technical College

Dr. Robert Knight

Introduction

Midlands Technical College (MTC) is a comprehensive community college located in Columbia, South Carolina serving a region composed of Richland, Lexington, and Fairfield counties. In tandem with regional healthcare delivery systems, economic development organizations, the Midlands Education and Business Alliance, and the regional Work Force Development Board, MTC is addressing the critical healthcare worker shortage facing the region. This work is being accomplished via the **Creating Capacity in Health Services** community-based job training grant awarded in November, 2005. The grant project has been branded **MTC Health Tracks**. Please visit www.mtchealthtracks.com.

Health Services continues to be the fastest growing Industry cluster in the Midlands region, with current employment at **39,619**; projected to increase **19%** to an expected **46,949** jobs in 2014. Industry employment for the state is now 189,385; projected to increase at 16% to an expected 219,033 jobs in the next five years. Regional Industry wages averaging **\$43,427** per employee exceeded the state average salary in health services at **\$41,586** but remained below the national average of \$45,034. These data are juxtaposed with the state's ranking as the nation's second highest in unemployment (11%), and with the regional average high school dropout rate of more than 45 percent.

Highest Ranked Industries Report – MTC Region (Top 5) 2009

Government
Retail Trade
Health Care and Social Assistance
Finance and Insurance

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Accommodation and Food Services
Fastest Growing Industries – MTC Region – (Top 5) 2009

Health Care and Social Assistance
Government
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
Retail Trade
Professional and Technical Services

Highest Ranked Healthcare Practitioner Occupations – MTC Region – 2009

Registered Nurses
Licensed LPN's
Pharmacy Technicians
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians
Radiologic Technologists
Emergency Medical Technician and Paramedics
Dental Hygienists
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians
Surgical Technologists
Respiratory Therapists
ECG Technicians
Healthcare Technologists and Technicians, all other

Highest Ranked Healthcare Support Occupations – MTC Region – 2009

Certified Nurse Assistants
Home Health Aides
Medical Assistants
Dental Assistants
Physical Therapy Assistants
Medical Transcriptionists
Medical Equipment Preparers
Occupational Therapist Assistants

Top Industries for Healthcare Occupations – MTC Region – 2009

General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
State Government
Home Health Care Services
Offices of Physicians
Local Government
Federal Government, Civilian
Offices of Dentists

Training and Employment Trends in Healthcare (Examples)

- Importance of updating technologies related to specific fields
- Importance of Simulation Labs, MIS, Robotics, Bio-Technology
- Importance of Telemedicine, Teleradiography, Telepharmacy
- Importance of the Electronic Medical Record (EMR)
- Importance of Cross-Training and Multi-tasking
- Importance of Distance Learning technology
- Importance of teaching technical writing skills
- Importance of teaching/learning medical finances and office management
- Importance of teaching good communication skills; proper medical terminology
- Importance of teaching Employment Laws and Liability safeguards
- Importance of teaching/acquiring important **“soft skills”**
 1. “Emotional Intelligence,” – relating to employers, customers (Patients), peers
 2. Strong work ethic
 3. Positive attitude
 4. Time-Management skills
 5. Acting as a team-player
 6. Self-confidence
 7. Ability to accept and learn from criticism
 8. Flexibility
 9. Adaptability
 10. Working well under pressure

Creating Capacity in Health Sciences

MTC was one of 70 collegiate programs in our country to receive full approval and funding in 2005. The program of work of our grant enables the college to address unmet employer demand with functional, long-term responses. Under the grant, MTC expanded its capacity to produce employment-ready graduates for the healthcare industry by: 1) Providing clinical awareness experiences, assessment, intensive counseling, tutoring if needed, and participant tracking to incoming and self-identified pre-health science students; 2) Providing a progressive career track to entry-level health science students that requires increasing skill levels corresponding with incremental credential upgrading; and 3) Preparing students to successfully earn professional certification and pass credentialing exams.

Program effectiveness is assessed according to measurable outcomes relevant to the number of students placed in grant-related health service programs, progress tracking, and the U.S. Department of Labor’s Common Measures concerning completion of training and employment rate and earnings data.

MTC students are vital to sustaining the labor pool; however, demand for its Health Science graduates exceeds supply. Without doubt, MTC is recognized and respected

for the quality of its graduates. It continues to be wanting, however, in the capacity to meet the demand of health service providers.

In our model, critical workforce shortages would be addressed, students and WIA clients could develop a career ladder in health services to build upward mobility in positions and salaries, client wages in all related jobs would be greater than the regional and state averages, and a sustained and responsive partnership between the college and health services would be strengthened.

Our ***Creating Capacity*** partnership group identified certain career areas as pivotal issues. In addition, local demand for health services professionals included unmet needs for Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT-Basic), Paramedics (EMT-Paramedic), Medical Records and Health Information Technicians, Patient Care Technicians, and Certified Nurse Assistants. The need for these workers in our tri-county region exceeded the national occupational projections by the Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Summary of General Grant Activities

- Since the inception of our grant project on November 1, 2005, the program has served **451** total participants. Since the second quarter of 2006, **205** students completed education/job training activities and **194** have received a Certificate.
- To date, **145** participants entered training-related employment. It should be noted that many participants are currently awaiting certification/licensing credentials before entering employment related to their specific training. Others are working part-time in other areas while attending school.
- To date, our grant has financially supported a total of **390** participants. Total money reimbursed or spent to date for their tuition, textbooks, software programs, certification testing, plus in many cases background/drug testing is **\$301,820**.
- Our Plan of Work was designed to serve four cohorts taught through MTC's Continuing Education Division: Certified Nurse Assistant; EMT-Basic; Patient Care Technician (CNA, ECG Tech. and Phlebotomy Tech.); and Medical Billing and Coding Technician. These programs are often referred to as "Quick Jobs," denoting programs which are not lengthy. These curricula, lasting several weeks to several months, can lead to rather swift or sometimes immediate employment.
- The one cohort group associated with the college's Academic Curriculum, EMT-Paramedic is a Certificate program which requires a minimum of twelve months training. Individuals entering this cohort already possessed an EMT-Basic credential and all participants were working full-time during the conduct of the program.

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- As a result of our Capacity Building efforts related to this project, the MTC Health Sciences Department now offers the Associate Degree with a Major in Emergency Medical Service-Paramedic. Currently, nine students are enrolled in this program.
- Thus far, 3,675 potential MTC Health Services students have received “career awareness” information through our Pipeline Visits in secondary schools, health fairs, and other community-wide meetings.
- To date, total number of instructors/preceptors who participated in this grant: **262**

Lessons Learned

- Recruitment of grant participants is greatly enhanced by the availability of financial assistance, e.g. tuition assistance, textbooks, cost of certification, etc.
- If possible, try to keep your grant priorities in line with your sponsoring institution, e.g. college, state department, etc.
- Be familiar with your Grant/Agreement; Grant Notification of Award/Obligation, i.e., uniform Administration Requirements, Cost Principles, and Other Requirements.
- Become familiar with DOLETA terminology and definitions.
- Have access to a creditable data collection and processing system.
- Become familiar with accrual accounting procedures.
- Get to know your CFO, Finance Department personnel, or other entity responsible for budgetary issues.
- Prepare Quarterly Reports in a timely manner and submit on time.
- Communicate with your FPO on a regular basis, e.g. telephone, Email, Face-to-face meetings.
- Know and observe the Chain of Command
- Communicate with your grant Partners on a regular basis and attend local board meetings when appropriate.
- Attend state, regional, and if possible, national meetings and webinars.
- Join a Peer-Networking-Group.