“Grow Your Own” Grants Help Hospitals Grow Local Health Care Workforce Opportunities and Skills

In September 2013, the Missouri Hospital Association’s Center for Education announced a new competitive grant program — “Grow Your Own” — to help hospitals develop and expand the health care workforce according to locally-defined needs. The program provided nearly $2 million to 39 hospitals to fund their initiatives. Since then, hospitals have used the funds to implement tailored recruitment, retention and leadership development programs to meet their own current and future workforce needs.

As indicated in the 2014 MHA Workforce Report, hospitals are in a period of significant transition. These shifts are demanding new skills within the workforce and innovative programs to recruit and retain hospital workers and future health care workforce entrants.

This one-year GYO grant update spotlights three programs that reflect the diversity of grant recipients and the novel approaches they used to increase the supply and quality of health care professionals.

Ozarks Medical Center Works to REACH the Next Generation

Attracting new workers into the health profession — and building skills of the present workforce — was the goal of Ozarks Medical Center’s Rural Education and Careers in Health, or REACH, program. Located in West Plains, Mo., the hospital offered new opportunities for area youth to explore careers in health care and provided information about health careers to adults seeking new opportunities. The four components of the REACH effort include the following areas — health fairs, school tours, scholarships and “MASH” camp.

The REACH program’s career fair was attended by 52 community members. Fair attendees received information on health care degree and certificate programs, financial aid opportunities and job opportunities available through local partners, including Ozarks Medical Center, Missouri State University-West Plains, Drury-Cabool, Texas County Technical College, South Howell County Ambulance and other local health care organizations.

REACH provided tours to more than 300 science students which exposed them to health careers and awarded 17 scholarships to help students pursue a health care career. The REACH Medical and Science Hospital, or MASH, camp provided 26 high school students the opportunity to speak with physicians, job shadow and tour the hospital with hands-on classes on dissecting, suturing and casting.
Ste. Genevieve County Memorial Hospital Invests in Laboratory Skills

Ste. Genevieve County Memorial Hospital received a Grow Your Own grant to help move staff phlebotomists up the educational ladder to qualify as medical laboratory technicians. The grant helps lab workers offset the academic costs of supplies and tuition, and teams the workers with clinical instructor-preceptors to help with on-the-job training.

MHA’s 2014 Workforce Report found that medical laboratory technician was one of the health professions with the highest rate of vacancy and turnover at 12.7 percent and 6.5 percent, respectively. The Ste. Genevieve County Memorial grant will help expand the available medical laboratory workforce from within and support retention of existing staff.

“Our Grow Your Own MLT program will allow us to create opportunities for people in our community to enter the health care field. Through this program, we will be able to hire entry level positions that will receive advanced education and training in the laboratory science field in a way no other formal program does,” stated Thomas Keim, CEO of Ste. Genevieve County Memorial Hospital.

St. Luke’s Hospital Grows Leadership From Within

St. Luke’s Hospital in Chesterfield used a Grow Your Own grant to establish the Future of Health Care and FACES of Leadership programs. Nearly one-third of the St. Luke’s staff has more than 25 years of service and 17 percent are expected to retire by the end of the decade. The Future of Health Care and FACES of Leadership programs were designed to cultivate emerging leaders in the organization and create new opportunity through education. Through the program, participants — many of whom are frontline caregivers, capable of influencing and supporting quality care delivery and patient satisfaction — build leadership skills while pursuing the advanced education needed to succeed.

“The Future FACES of Health Care scholarship is just another way St. Luke’s shows how much they believe in their employees and their potential. Now I am able to achieve my MSN Adult Nurse Practitioner degree!” Anita Detchemendy, Associate Head Nurse, Same Day Surgery

“The Future FACES of Leadership program was an invaluable experience that I felt really helped me to look critically at the role a leader plays within an organization, and to how to be an effective leader. With the insight gained during this experience, I feel better equipped to take on a more active leadership role here at St. Luke’s.” Mark Bledsoe, Nuclear Medicine Technologist

“Future FACES of Leadership opened my eyes to the complexity of this enterprise and introduced me to many talented future leaders who I will be networking with moving forward to help us all reach our goals” Michael Youmans, I.S. Applications Analyst