

Mainland Nursing Shortage

Affects Puerto Rico

From an article by Matthew Hay Brown,
San Juan Bureau
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A record number of nurses from the U.S. commonwealth of Puerto Rico are moving to the mainland. Stateside hospitals are attracting nurses with higher pay and better working conditions. More than 1,100 departed last year. Because states such as Florida are making it easier for nurses to obtain a license to practice, the pace is expected to continue increasing. Puerto Rico healthcare leaders are concerned about the loss of nurses.

Professional and government officials in Puerto Rico are working to develop ways to attract and retain more nurses. The biggest challenge they face is in the salary differences that are offered on the mainland.

Given the more than 32,000 registered or practical nurses licensed in Puerto Rico, the number that left last year represents less than 4 percent of the potential work force. But it's more than twice the number that graduated from island nursing schools. Officials worry about staffing in the future.

The College of Professional Nurses has proposed a variety of measures to bolster the nursing ranks, ranging from promoting the field to high school students to establishing an annual base salary of \$30,000 with bonuses for specialties.

The health care industry is also weighing in on the potential problem. Johnson & Johnson, a major island employer, has initiated a campaign that will include scholarships for nursing students and awards and training programs for professionals.



Teen Driving Risks

From a National Institutes of Health press release
November 8, 2002

Car accidents are the leading cause of death and injury among teenagers between the ages of 16 and 19. Research shows that when parents don't limit when, where, and how frequently their teens can drive, teens' traffic violations and car accidents increase. Research also shows that although parents are in a prime position to influence their teens' driving behaviors, many parents are less involved than they could be.

Risky driving behavior includes unsupervised driving at night, having other teens as passengers, and driving on high-speed roads.

What can HOSA members do?

- Understand the connection between parent requests and your safety.
- Think about the consequences of risky driving.
- Talk about teen safety in chapter meetings.

CDC Publishes Hand Hygiene Guidelines

From <http://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/default.htm>
October 2002

The Center for Disease control has published new guidelines for hand hygiene in health care settings. The hand hygiene guidelines are part of an overall CDC strategy to reduce infections in health care settings to promote patient safety.

The biggest change is the regular use of alcohol-based handrubs before and after each patient contact. Improved adherence to hand hygiene (i.e. hand washing or use of alcohol-based hand rubs) has been shown to terminate outbreaks in health care facilities, to reduce transmission of antimicrobial resistant organisms (e.g. methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus) and reduce overall infection rates.

In addition to traditional handwashing with soap and water, the CDC is recommending the use of alcohol-based handrubs by health care personnel for patient care because they address some of the obstacles that health care professionals face when taking care of patients.

Handwashing with soap and water remains a sensible strategy for hand hygiene in non-health care settings and is recommended by CDC and other experts.

When health care personnel's hands are visibly soiled, they should wash with soap and water.

NOTE: These new guidelines will not impact HOSA competitive events for 2003, however, they may be implemented in 2003-04. HOSA members and advisors should review the new competitive events guidelines published in August.