



**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION APPROVES FOUR BACCALAUREATE PROGRAMS
AIMED AT MEETING WORKFORCE DEMANDS**

~ Area hospitals echo ongoing need for more nurses ~

TALLAHASSEE, Fla., July 17, 2017 – Today, the State Board of Education approved four Florida College System institutions to begin offering Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees by 2018.

Every month, more than 3,000 nursing jobs are posted in Florida, but less than a quarter of them are filled. To address the critical shortfalls and produce a future talent pipeline in Central Florida, a consortium of colleges, with the support of the University of Central Florida, requested approval for Bachelor of Science in Nursing programs:

- Eastern Florida State College
- Lake-Sumter State College
- Seminole State College of Florida
- Valencia College

Through these programs, nurses with Associate in Science degrees currently in the local workforce can remain on the job while pursuing advanced skills in the healthcare field.

Madeline Pumariega, Chancellor of the Florida College System, said, "Our colleges produce more than 4,500 registered nurses each year that stay right here in Florida to work. Many of our graduates take advantage of our RN-BSN programs that help nurses advance their education while they work as RN's in our local hospitals."

Dr. James Richey, president of Eastern Florida State College President, said, "The college's Associate in Science degree in nursing is highly popular and this will allow qualified graduates to seamlessly transition in the bachelor's program, providing them an important educational and career opportunity that did not previously exist. The program will play a critical role in providing a new generation of nurses to hospitals and other health care providers along the Space Coast, where demand for them is rapidly growing because of an aging population and many nurses who are retiring."

Dr. Stanley Sidor, president of Lake-Sumter State College, said, "In The Villages, healthcare providers are continuing to expand to meet the needs of the retiree population. At the southern end of our district, growth in young professionals and families are placing additional demands for healthcare. There is already significant unmet demand for nursing positions in our communities, and these jobs are expected to grow by 25% through 2022. Coupled with the need for nurses and the BSN becoming the preferred credential, the BSN program at Lake-Sumter State College and our peer colleges in Central Florida allow for increased access to this

degree. Lake-Sumter State College is dedicated to our community and has a history of adapting to meet and support the workforce education demands of our communities.

Dr. E. Ann McGee, president of Seminole State College of Florida, said, “Our nursing graduates consistently score almost 100 percent on their national licensure exams and on graduation have a job placement rate of more than 98 percent. Seminole State has been working closely with the University of Central Florida, and our sister colleges to address the shortage of registered nurses, particularly those with bachelor’s degrees, and provide our graduates with high-growth, high-paying jobs. Seminole State’s Bachelor’s in Nursing will complement our Associate in Nursing degree and enable us to help provide the estimated 1,000 new nurses needed each year in Central Florida over the next decade. Our role in the local community is to help our industries meet their hiring goals.”

Dr. Sandy Shugart, president of Valencia College, said, “Valencia College is already expanding its Associate in Science in Nursing from 350 to more than 700 graduates over the next few years. This represents both a huge cost to our healthcare system – perhaps more than \$40 million per year in overtime costs alone – and a huge opportunity to prepare many more of our students for rewarding careers. Together we have pledged to more than double our collective production of nursing graduates at both the associates and bachelor’s levels.”

Jayne Willis, Chief Nursing Officer for Orlando Health, said “One size does not fit all. Students need options if they are interested in becoming a nurse. Some students cannot leave home to attend a four year university. They need the option to attend close to home in their communities and continue working.”

Sheryl Dodds, Senior Executive Officer and Chief People Officer of Florida Hospital, said, “To fill open nursing positions at Florida Hospital, we must recruit nationally, but the shortage is critical everywhere which means we can’t meet the growing demands of our area, so it is important that we work with our local colleges and universities to produce more Bachelor’s of Science in Nursing graduates to meet current and future needs.”

###

For more information about the Florida Department of Education, visit www.fldoe.org.