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N E W S R E L E A S E

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\$11 million Public-Private Partnership with the Governor's Nurse Education Initiative receives approval for first-in-the-nation, on-line Pre-licensure nursing education program

SACRAMENTO – The nation's first accredited, on-line baccalaureate degree nursing program has been approved by the Education/Licensing Committee of the Board of Registered Nurses to open in California, with classes scheduled to begin in July, 2009.

"This partnership is a great example of our health care providers, educators and the state working together to alleviate our nursing shortage and get more Californians to work," said Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. "This new on-line program is a win-win for California by making nursing programs more accessible to people interested in pursuing this career path and helping to fill critically needed jobs throughout the state."

The Governor's Task Force for the California Nurse Education Initiative, Cedars Sinai Medical Center, Hospital Corporation of America, Tenet Health Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and Western Governors University partnered to develop an innovative program to complement the traditional nursing programs offered in California. In this innovative online program, RN students enroll at Western Governors University and take most classes via their home computers, and then do clinical practice training at partner hospitals. The clinical education portion of the program will be offered at hospital partner sites.

The Governor's initiative is anchored by a \$90 million, five-year public-private partnership that focuses on expansion of nurse education capacity, faculty development, student support services, including loan forgiveness, and additional funding for nursing schools. In just 24 months, enrollment in California nursing programs has increased by 24%, with over 22,000 students currently enrolled. In addition, the Board of Registered Nurses projections indicate that with over 10,000 RNs graduating this year, we will have expanded RN graduates by more than 50% in the past four years. In 2007-08 alone, over \$47 million was provided to the 3 public school systems in CA for nursing education which shows the Governor's ongoing commitment to nursing education.

For more information on the Governor's Nurse Education Initiative, go to <http://www.labor.ca.gov/nurseinitindex.htm> and for Western Governors University, go to www.wgu.edu/rn.

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