



Press Release: WGU Launches First BS Leading to RN

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News Brief - 4/9/09

Western Governors University to Launch Nation's First Competency-Based B.S. in Nursing Leading to RN Licensure

Pilot Set to Begin in Southern California

Salt Lake City, Utah — Last year, more than 50,000 applicants to nursing schools were turned away, despite a nationwide shortage of registered nurses. To address this crisis in U.S. healthcare, Western Governors University, www.wgu.edu, has joined with state workforce agencies as well as healthcare institutions to develop the first national, accredited, online competency-based bachelor's degree program aimed at preparing students for initial licensure as registered nurses.

The program, which is called the Multi-State Approach to the Preparation of Registered Nurses, or MAP-RN, received unanimous approval by the California Board of Registered Nursing earlier this month, and the pilot program is slated to begin in July at three Southern California hospitals. This innovative program combines WGU's online, competency-based academic approach with intensive clinical simulations and clinical practice at partner hospitals supervised by onsite clinical coaches serving as WGU adjunct faculty.

This innovative new approach to nursing education is a partnership among WGU, the Governor's Task Force for the California Nurse Education Initiative Workforce and Labor Development Agency, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the U.S. Department of Labor, the Texas Workforce and Labor Development Agency, Cedars Sinai Medical Center, Catholic Healthcare West, Hospital Corporation of America, Kaiser Permanente, Tenet Healthcare, and Universal Health Services. For more information regarding this program, go to www.wgu.edu/rn.

"This partnership is a great example of our healthcare providers, educators, and the state working together to alleviate our nursing shortage and get more Californians to work," said California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. "This new competency-based 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." (To read the release issued by the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, go to http://www.labor.ca.gov/pdf/nwsrel09-08.pdf.)

"Prospective nurses will now have access to a high quality degree program that will enable them to earn a B.S. and prepare for their RN license flexibly and affordably," said WGU President Robert Mendenhall. "The B.S. in Nursing leading to initial licensure program complements WGU's other bachelor's and master's degree nursing programs for already-licensed RNs and supports our mission to provide educational opportunities and degree programs to meet the needs of underserved populations and employers with critical workforce needs."