

# Work Environment NEWS

GULF COAST HEALTH SERVICES STEERING COMMITTEE

SPRING 2005

GO FOR THE GOLD!

## Improving the Work Environment in Hospitals

### Second Annual Learning Exchange

The second Ideal Hospital Work Environment Learning Exchange will be held on Friday, April 29, 2005 at the Houston Community College – Southwest Campus. Based on last year's attendance, we estimate that over 200 health and human resources professionals from the hospitals participating in this year's Work Environment Survey will come together for this event.

We will be "mining for gold" as participants join the "gold rush" to share recommended practices and network with peers about innovations in their work environments. This learning exchange was created to make it easy to find out the why's, how's, and success stories that lead to improving the work environment. Participants will hear stories of real actions taken by top performers in area hospitals that led to improved work environments – actions that range from inexpensive "quickies" to major change efforts. All have been solicited by questions related to Ideal Work Environment practices on the Work Environment Survey and selected by committees of your peers to showcase the best of what is being done locally today!

#### Highlights of the 2005 Learning Exchange:

- Debora Simmons, Senior Clinical Quality Analyst at M. D. Anderson Cancer Center will speak about creating non-punitive work environments and encouraging error



reporting. She will highlight information from a national close call study in which M. D. Anderson has participated, as well as a BNE pilot alternative error-reporting project that includes not only M. D. Anderson, but also Texas Children's and St. Luke's

- Small group, interactive sessions will be offered on five key dimensions of an Ideal Work Environment: Professionalism,

See **GO FOR THE GOLD!** on page 2

#### PAGE 2

GO FOR THE GOLD  
Improving the Work Environment in Hospitals...  
Second Annual Learning Exchange continued

#### PAGE 3

School at Work Makes a Difference for Hospital Employees

#### PAGE 4

Work Environment Survey UPDATE

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## GO FOR THE GOLD!.....continued from page 1

Teamwork and Interpersonal Communication, Staff Training and Development, Environmental Factors and Economic Considerations – each session highlighting how-to's for 3 best practices

- Opportunities to exchange information with hospital staff who share your same work environment challenges or who have implemented practices that achieved improved work environment outcomes
- Learning in a fast-paced, uplifting atmosphere



COME AND  
“GO FOR THE GOLD!”  
WITH US!



## What the day will look like:

8:00-8:30	Registration, continental breakfast and live entertainment
8:30-9:00	Opening remarks, Project Overview, and Survey Highlights
9:00-10:00	Two interactive sessions – you choose which dimensions you want to attend: Professionalism Teamwork and Interpersonal Communication Staff Training and Development Environmental Factors Economic Considerations
10:00-10:30	Speed Networking – practice sharing with colleagues
10:45-11:45	Two more interactive sessions - you choose which dimensions you want to attend: Professionalism Teamwork and Interpersonal Communication Staff Training and Development Environmental Factors Economic Considerations
11:45-12:30	Debora Simmons' presentation
12:30	Informal, networking lunch

## How to Attend:

Invitations for this event will be mailed to your hospital's chief nurse executive. He or she will be given multiple invitations to share with staff members.

## Cost

The Learning Exchange is offered at no charge to employees of hospitals participating in the Project as one of many benefits of engaging in the Ideal Hospital Work Environment Project.

## School at Work Makes a Difference for Hospital Employees

In September 2003, six area hospitals began the School at Work, “Building a Career Ladder in Healthcare” project with financial support from The WorkSource. The goal of School at Work (SAW) is to provide vision and support to entry-level employees in returning to traditional education programs in order to advance their careers. School at Work (SAW) uses a distance learning delivery system to provide classes to employees in the hospital at which they work.

For the first time in our region, “Building a Career Ladder in Healthcare,” an eight-month, two-course program, was implemented in seven area hospitals. This program is designed to give entry-level healthcare industry employees the skills needed to move up the job ladder. The first course, “Introduction to Healthcare,” teaches reading, math, communications, and basic computer skills over a four-month period. Participants who complete the first course then choose either “Becoming a Healthcare Professional” or “Clerical Skills in Healthcare” as their course for the second four months.

Hospital employees engaged in the learning process through a blended learning system that included:

- Live television broadcasts
- Printed workbooks and textbooks developed for the healthcare courses
- Online learning modules complementing the broadcasts and workbooks.

Employees viewed the televised broadcasts together every two weeks during work time, and then met together during the off weeks to complete the workbook assignments and online modules. A site coach, generally an HR employee of the hospital, guided their learning throughout the program.

The initial goal was for hospitals to enroll a minimum of 60 employees combined. However, employee interest was so strong that total enrollment was 108 employees. Hospitals participating included Ben Taub General Hospital, LBJ General Hospital, CHRISTUS St. Joseph Hospital, St. Luke’s Episcopal Hospital, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, the Michael E. DeBakey V.A. Medical Center, and The University of Texas at Galveston.



Eighty-one of the 108 employees completed the first course, and 78 enrolled in the second course. Sixty-two completed the second course, including all coursework and achieving an 80+% score on the post-assessment. A total of 35 employees have enrolled in subsequent continuing education courses, including 27 who are enrolled in college level nursing and allied health programs.

The Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center and CHRISTUS St. Joseph Hospital found the program so successful that they have begun second classes of employees without the financial underwriting of the pilot project. Key elements for success identified in the final SAW performance report include support from top administration for the program, a supportive site coach, and the availability of remedial resources for those employees who are determined to be not quite ready for the SAW program (such as ESL courses, and basic math or reading courses either on site or via community programs).

Hospitals interested in learning more about the School at Work program for healthcare employees may call Lynn Fischer, President of Catalyst Learning, at (502) 580-2670.

## Work Environment Survey

### UPDATE

All hospital Work Environment Survey 2004 data has been entered and data analysis has begun. Of the 95 hospitals in the region, 49 (52%) completed the survey, up from 45 hospitals last year. Seven hospitals joined the project this year, however, four hospitals that participated last year declined to participate or were no longer in business this year. This exceeded our goal of having at least 40 hospitals participating during this second year of our federally funded grant.

Those 49 hospitals account for 68% of the total hospital beds in the region, down from 71% last year, but exceeding our goal of 65% of the total hospital beds being included in the project.

Data analysis continues through the spring, with the regional reports and individual, confidential hospital reports being distributed in early summer. A sneak preview of the survey's results will be presented at the Go for the Gold! 2005 event.



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