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HealthForce Minnesota Awards Grants to Schools and Institutions for Fiscal Year 2009

Rochester, Minn, June 2, 2008 - HealthForce Minnesota, a Center of Excellence focused on healthcare innovation, announces its fiscal year 2009 funded projects.

HealthForce Minnesota annually provides between \$500,000 and \$850,000 of funding that improves healthcare practice, education and research. Grants range from \$50,000 to \$100,000.

Evaluation of the grant projects was based on ways to improve healthcare practice, education, and research. Executive director Jane Foote said, “The process of funding innovations by HealthForce Minnesota has a larger goal of bringing to scale new ways of connecting education with the healthcare industry. It is our hope that these ten projects for 2008-2009 will not only have a lasting affect on those that participate, but also will teach valuable lessons about doing business differently.”

This year’s grants are awarded in four categories. The first category focuses on creating and expanding the vision of youth for health careers. Three projects in this group were selected. Bloomington Public Schools, partnering with Normandale Community College and Fairview Health Systems, will integrate all aspects of the Health Sciences/Biomedical program by including rigorous coursework for their diverse learners in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math as well as applied healthcare career pathways.

Minneapolis Public Schools Broadway Teen program, partnering with Minneapolis Community and Technical College, uses an urban Health Pathways project to educate culturally diverse youth about career opportunities in healthcare and prepares them for success in post-secondary training programs.



Southeast Service Cooperative, partnering with Mayo Clinic, will bring mobile science labs into the community by providing science teachers with training at Mayo hospitals and clinics and then connecting teachers from the Educator Academy to the mobile science lab for their local high schools.

The second category focuses on increasing recruitment and retention of a diverse healthcare workforce. Four proposals met the desired criterion and will be funded.

The first grant includes Northland Community and Technical College, White Earth Tribal Community College, Mahnomon Health Center and Pioneer Memorial Care Center as partners. This northern Minnesota project engages Native American students in health careers by providing nursing assistant training and supporting 20 LPN students with program costs and job placement in the local community.

The second grant is a partnership with Project for Pride in Living, Minneapolis Community and Technical College, Hennepin County Medical Center, Park Nicollet, North Memorial Medical Center, Allina, Regions Hospital, and Children's Hospitals and Clinics. Together these partners will continue building the PIC pilot program that was first funded in 2007 and is being funded again this year to focus on diverse, urban incumbent workers as current healthcare employees.

The third grant in diversity is awarded to Mankato Area Adult Basic Education collaborating with South Central College, South Central Workforce Council, and Healthcare Education Industry Partnership. This project engages 50 Spanish-speaking students in a bilingual offering of the Minnesota Health Care Core Curriculum. Secondly, this project seeks to build stronger working partnerships among the Mankato adult basic education, workforce centers and technical college.

Minneapolis Community and Technical College is the fourth grant recipient with their partners, Minneapolis Public Schools, Catholic Eldercare, and HealthPartners. The Jump Start Initiative will focus on preparing diverse, urban 11th and 12th grade students to master basic skills needed for college readiness upon graduation and to pursue health-related career pathways.

The third category of grants concentrated on developing and implementing programs and projects to provide advancement opportunities for the incumbent healthcare workforce.

One grant in this category will be funded and is awarded to Minnesota Health and Housing Alliance in partnership with Minneapolis Community and Technical College, Healthcare Education Industry Partnership, Presbyterian Homes and Services and North Central Kansas Technical College. A new



program, first piloted in Kansas, the Health Support Specialist Registered Apprenticeship Program, introduces a new category of worker, a Registered Health Support Specialist. This program increases skill levels, beyond that of a traditional nursing assistant, for frontline long-term care staff who serve older adults.

The fourth category involves developing new curricula or programs to meet current and future healthcare workforce needs. Two grants were awarded. Central Lakes College in partnership with Lakewood Health System, Riverwood Healthcare Center, St. Joseph's Medical Center, and Brainerd Medical Center received the first grant. Central Lakes College will develop a new Medical Assisting program. Eventually the intention is for the college to offer five new healthcare programs for area residents in Brainerd and Staples, Minnesota.

The second grant was presented to Winona State University-Rochester (WSU), College of Nursing and Health Sciences; and Rochester Community and Technical College, Department of Nursing. The grant will assist in the expansion and revision of the WSU undergraduate and graduate nursing programs curricula to include simulation. The initial simulations will prioritize high-risk emergency and common pediatric disorders.

HealthForce Minnesota is one of four "Centers of Excellence" designated by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees. Each center is housed and fiscally managed by a state university who partners with two-year colleges. Winona State University (WSU) acts in this capacity and houses HealthForce Minnesota which operates in Rochester and Minneapolis. The other centers are Metropolitan State University, information technology; Bemidji State University, manufacturing and applied technology; and Minnesota State University, Mankato, engineering and manufacturing.

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, of which Winona State University is a member, is comprised of 32 state universities and community and technical colleges that serve the higher education needs of Minnesota. The system serves about 242,000 students per year in credit-based courses and an additional 140,000 students in non-credit courses.

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