

David M. Carlisle, M.D., Ph.D., Director
1600 9th Street, Room 433
Sacramento, California 95814
(916) 654-1606
Fax (916) 653-1448
www.oshpd.ca.gov

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Contact: Konder Chung
(916) 654-2884

Governor Schwarzenegger Announces \$2.75 Million in Grants to Expand Nursing School Capacity

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger today announced that through the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development's (OSHPD) Song-Brown Family Physician Training Program he has made \$2.75 million available to increase student capacity at registered California nursing schools.

"California is facing a significant nurse shortage and I am committed to continuing to work with the education community and healthcare providers to address this shortage and bring more qualified people into the nursing profession," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "One important way we can ensure more nurses are educated to meet the healthcare needs of Californians is to provide more opportunities for students with the desire and the ability to pursue a degree in nursing. These grants will be used to do just that by expanding capacity to admit more students into nursing programs across California."

The program is funded through the Governor's \$90 million California Nursing Education Initiative, a public-private partnership directly addressing California's nursing shortage by improving nurse recruitment, training and retention. All accredited registered nursing education programs in California are eligible to apply for funding on a competitive basis. "These awards put resources behind the Governor's commitment to expand nursing education programs throughout the state and increase the annual number of nursing graduates in our state," said OSHPD Director Dr. David Carlisle. "An increased nursing workforce will help to address the critical needs for nursing services for urban and rural Californians."

OSHPD's Healthcare Workforce and Community Development Division (HWCDD) will administer the application process for the new funds. The Song-Brown Act calls for the appointment of a 10-member Healthcare Workforce Policy Commission to serve as the applications review panel and makes recommendations to OSHPD for the award of contracts at public meetings held twice a year. HWCDD works with federal, state and local governments, advocacy groups and local service providers to support health care infrastructure, promote workforce diversity and cultural competency and facilitate community capacity-building via partnerships that address local and statewide health care shortages and service delivery issues.

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Since 2000, the Song-Brown Program has awarded more than \$23 million in education training funds to family practice physicians, physician assistants and family nurse practitioner training programs.

Applications are available online at www.oshpd.ca.gov and must be received by March 1, 2006, at 5 p.m. For more information, contact the Song-Brown Program at (916) 653-0733.