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## The WorkSource- Gulf Coast Workforce Board Helps Bellville Hospital Grow Its Nursing Staff

BELLVILLE - The Bellville Hospital District has five employees who have earned nursing educations, passed their licensure exams and are currently working in their chosen fields thanks to some federal grants and assistance from The WorkSource – Gulf Coast Workforce Board.

District CEO Michael Morris recently met with board member, Austin County Judge Carolyn Bilski, and Karen Love, The WorkSource Health Care Industry Liaison, to personally thank the board for providing Bellville General Hospital with the opportunity to participate in its Work School program. The program grants from the Texas Workforce Commission and the U.S. Department of Labor, and administered by the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) in Galveston on behalf of The WorkSource, enables current hospital employees working at an institution to go back to school and become nurses or pursue careers in other critical health care shortage areas.

Bellville General Hospital was one of the first hospitals that chose to take advantage of this special education initiative when UTMB partnered with The WorkSource in an initial \$1 million grant in 2001 to expand UTMB's successful Work School program to other institutions. Bellville continued in the program as it was extended annually with additional grants. Currently,

four more of the district's employees are enrolled in nursing education and it is anticipated they will be as successful as their predecessors.

The program has had a remarkable positive impact on Bellville General Hospital's nursing staff according to CEO Morris. "It has allowed Bellville General Hospital to upgrade the quality of care for our patients and has added greatly to the professionalism of our staff in general. It has also made a life-long positive impact on the persons in the programs, as they and their families' socioeconomic status have improved.

"The success of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's efforts in this regard is unrivaled in my 20-plus years in healthcare administration and dealings with numerous workforce education efforts," he added. "I feel these particular programs' success can be attributed to both the design and execution of the plan. It is a comprehensive approach to address the myriad obstacles faced by working adults. Many of them are single-parents (who are) living in a rural area of the state, re-entering the educational system to tackle a challenging curriculum. The program is flexible enough, and its administrators creative enough, to afford each individual ample resources to ensure success.

"Bellville General Hospital is a small facility, located in a rural area of our region with limited access to post-secondary educational opportunities. Like most hospitals, Bellville General's need for professional healthcare staff often outstrips the supply of qualified people in the area, particularly registered and licensed vocational nurses," he added.

For more information on The WorkSource and all of its health care initiatives, go to [www.theworksource.org](http://www.theworksource.org) and to [www.gchssc.com](http://www.gchssc.com).

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