

LA PLATA, MD - Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) spoke today at the grand opening of the College of Southern Maryland's clinical simulation lab. With the help of a \$400,000 federal appropriation secured by Rep. Hoyer last year, the College of Southern Maryland (CSM) opened a new clinical simulation lab to enhance training for nursing students and professionals in the Southern Maryland Region. The lab provides a "real life" experience where students receive both direct instruction and simulated situations to which they respond and receive instructor feedback. The new lab is part of a collaborative effort by the college and the region's hospitals and health care facilities to develop innovative strategies to address the current and future nursing workforce shortage.

"Maryland will experience an increased nursing shortage in the coming years if action is not taken to attract and train candidates in the field," **stated Rep. Hoyer.** "According to data, 43 percent of Maryland's nurses plan to retire in the next few years at a time when 33 percent of our population will be older than 50. To accommodate the 'Baby Boomers,' Maryland will require 10,000 more nurses to meet those needs."

The College of Southern Maryland's and Southern Maryland's hospitals and health care facilities have long shared a collaborative relationship in the development of the regional nursing workforce, and are committed to developing innovative strategies to address the current and future nursing workforce shortage. By building on the simulation technologies and experience that currently exist at CSM, a Southern Maryland Simulation Alliance for Health Education will work to meet the challenges of the nursing workforce shortage.

Last year, the Maryland Hospital Association launched an initiative to provide \$15.5 million over the next five years to 17 nursing schools - including the College of Southern Maryland - aimed at helping schools enroll more students and hire additional faculty, as well as provide needed medical technology and laboratories. The plan is financed through donations from individuals and participants from the health care field who are concerned that the average age of nurses is rising at the same time that demand for medical care is expected to increase.

"Today, instruction of our nursing students has moved to a new level," **said CSM President Dr. Brad Gottfried.**

High-fidelity clinical simulation at the College of Southern Maryland (CSM) is playing a critical role in preparing our students to hit the ground running when they graduate and take jobs in the healthcare industry. It is critically important that we are able to provide this realistic experience in an academic setting. We can't say thank you enough to the organizations and partners who

have supported and funded this lab, including the requests by Congressman Steny Hoyer on our behalf for support from the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services."

Below are Leader Hoyer's remarks as prepared for delivery:

"Last week, the U.S. Congress completed its work on comprehensive health care reform. By enacting reform into law, we have taken the first steps toward bringing down costs for American families and small businesses and giving all Americans the security of health insurance that can't be taken away. With legislative action on reform now complete, we are on our way to a healthier and stronger America for all of our citizens.

"Now we must work to meet the challenge of assuring we have the right clinicians, with the right skills, working where they are needed. The legislation we passed will expand and reinforce the nation's health workforce by making key investments in training doctors, nurses, dentists and other health professionals.

"Investments in scholarships, loan repayment and training grant programs will expand to increase the number of nurse faculty, enhance development of advanced practice nurses and address retention programs.

"The number of licensed registered nurses (RNs) in the United States grew to a new high of 3.1 million between 2004 and 2008 according to a recent report released by the health resources and services administration (HRSA). This increase of more than 5 percent also reflects growing diversity in the backgrounds of nurses in the United States.

"Half (50 percent) of RNs have achieved a baccalaureate or higher degree in nursing or a nursing-related field in 2008, this is compared to 27.5 percent in 1980. And the average annual earnings for RNs in 2008 were \$66,973. RNs' salaries rose almost 15.9 percent since 2004, which slightly outpaced inflation. That is the good news, but we still have a large nursing shortage here in Maryland.

“Recently medical analysts predict that in the next 10 years the nursing shortfall will jump to almost 36 percent in the state of Maryland. Both the state and our friends at the Maryland Hospital Association have been working hard to address this both in terms of having enough faculty to teach and the right medical technology and equipment for students to learn.

“The clinical simulation lab which we are opening today provides a direct learning environment for students to practice procedures, clinical skills and medical techniques in a safe setting giving them hands on experience before they enter a health care facility.

“We know we must build a strong health care workforce of well trained and committed professionals - and in order to do that we must provide the tools students need. This state of the art lab will teach the hands that will heal, and I am confident that those who learn here will benefit as they gain the skills to advance and develop their careers.

“I am pleased to be part of the partnership that has brought this opportunity to the college of Southern Maryland and know that the benefits of this investment will be multiple as these students - young and old - go out to meet the serious demand for workers needed in our region and across the state.”

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