

# Central Region Status Report 2005-2007



Critical Skills Shortage Initiative for Health Care Careers

# INTRODUCING THE CENTRAL REGION

The Central Region's Critical Skills Shortage Initiative (CSSI) is spearheaded by three Workforce Investment Boards encompassing twelve counties in central Illinois. Counties in the Central Region include: Cass, Christian, Greene, Logan, Macon, Macoupin, Menard, Montgomery, Morgan, Sangamon, Scott and Shelby. The Workforce Boards are business-led with the majority of members from the private sector. Board membership also includes representatives from labor, economic development, education, state agencies and community based organizations. Members provide oversight and guidance and work collaboratively to develop a local workforce system that meets the needs of businesses and job seekers.

As part of the CSSI project, the Workforce Investment Boards identified shortages in the regional economy, determined the root causes for the shortages and began implementing solutions. The Health Care Industry topped the list as the industry that was experiencing the greatest shortage of workers. High demand health care career areas were identified and include:

- Registered Nurses
- Medical Coders
- Lab Technicians and
- Clinical Lab Scientists

The Central Region Status Report shows the progress that has been made to reduce the shortages that exist in the health care industry. The Critical Skills Shortage Initiative addresses skills shortages on a regional basis to meet the needs of Illinois' employers.

"Strengthening Illinois' system of workforce and economic development to build a skilled and globally competitive workforce throughout the State" is the mission declared by the Governor in creating CSSI.

This initiative begins the vision to restore jobs and economic vitality throughout Illinois. The Central Region is pleased to report the progress of CSSI that positively impacts citizens and employers in our communities.



## Targeted Health Care Careers

**Registered Nurse**

**Medical Coder**

**Clinical Laboratory Scientist**

**Medical Laboratory Technician**

# KEY STAKEHOLDERS

**Collaboration with key stakeholders in the Central Region is vital to addressing the health care shortage.**

**Acknowledgements go to:**

## **Workforce Development**

Cass County IETC  
Civil Defense Control Center  
Georgia Pacific Corporation WIA 21  
Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity  
Illinois Department of Employment Security  
Illinois Homecare Council  
Illinois Hospital Association  
Illinois National Bank, WIA 20 Board Member  
Jacksonville Regional Economic Development  
Land of Lincoln Consortium  
Sangamon County Community Resources  
Springfield Urban League  
Springfield Works  
West Central Development Council  
Workforce Investment Solutions

## **Employers**

Abraham Lincoln Memorial Hospital  
Barton Stone Christian Home  
Carlinville Area Hospital  
Cass County Health Department  
Christian Nursing Home  
Decatur Memorial Hospital  
Heritage Manor  
Hillsboro Area Hospital  
Imboden Creek Assisted Living  
Litchfield Health care Center  
Macoupin County Health Department  
Manor Care  
Memorial Medical Center  
Menard Convalescent Center  
Nursing Home Managers  
Pana Community Hospital  
Passavant Community Hospital  
Prairie Heart Institute  
St. Francis Hospital  
St. John's Hospital  
St. Mary's Hospital  
Sangamon Nursing and Rehab Center  
Scott County Nursing Center  
Shelby Memorial Hospital  
Shelbyville Manor  
SIU Physicians and Surgeons

Springfield Clinic  
Staunton Community Memorial Hospital  
Sunny Acres Home  
Southern Illinois University School of Medicine  
Taylorville Care Center  
Taylorville Memorial Hospital  
The Christian Village  
Thomas H. Boyd Memorial Hospital  
Walker Nursing Home  
White Hall Multicare Center

## **Public Health**

Cass County Health Department  
Christian County Health Department  
Greene County Health Department  
Logan County Health Department  
Macon County Health Department  
Macoupin County Health Department  
Menard County Health Department  
Morgan County Public Health  
Montgomery County Health Department  
Sangamon County Health Department  
Scott County Health Department  
Shelby County Health Department

## **Education and Training**

Capital Area School of Practical Nursing  
Decatur Area Technical Academy  
Heartland Region Education for Employment  
Illinois Community College Board  
Lawrence Adult Education Center  
Lewis and Clark Community College  
Lincoln Land Community College  
Millikin University School of Nursing  
MacMurray College School of Nursing  
Midwest Technical Institute  
New Start  
Regional Office of Career and Technical Education  
Richland Community College  
St. John's College  
Springfield School District #186  
Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville  
University of Illinois at Springfield



# LEADERSHIP AT WORK IN THE CENTRAL REGION

**Three Workforce Investment Boards encompassing twelve counties in the central region provide leadership for the CSSI. They are:**

## **Land of Lincoln Workforce Investment Board**

Serving the counties of Cass, Christian, Logan, Menard and Sangamon

## **Macon-Dewitt Workforce Investment Board**

Serving the county of Macon

## **West Central Job Center Board**

Serving the counties of Greene, Macoupin, Montgomery, Morgan, Scott and Shelby



### **Lois Britton, Coordinator**

The Workforce Boards secured a coordinator, Lois Britton, to focus on the work of the project and move the initiative forward. Lois convened meetings, met with employers and educational partners in the twelve counties, developed marketing materials and spoke to groups about the shortage careers. She continued to expand the consortium by visiting stakeholders, hosting meetings and keeping them up-to-date. Lois's main role is to implement initiatives of the Workforce Boards and follow-up to assure goals are being accomplished. Regional communication and cooperation have increased due to Lois's enthusiasm and dedication to the project.

# BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

## **Employers • Education • Community**

Health care is the fastest growing industry in the Central Region with shortages identified in the career areas of Registered Nurses, Medical Coders, Lab Technicians and Clinical Lab Scientists. The CSSI regional partnership brings together employers, education, community and workforce development to implement solutions that affect the health care shortages. Partnerships include:

- All fourteen hospitals in the twelve county region have participated in meetings, focus groups and telephone surveys to identify strategies to meet high demand career areas.
- Health care employers provide leverage dollars in the form of tuition reimbursement, scholarships, professional development and time off work for career advancement.
- Hospitals and other health care facilities provide clinical sites for students as well as career awareness programs at area high schools and the community.
- Health care employers serve on Workforce Investment Boards and provide direction for the workforce system.
- Educational institutions implement training solutions that alleviate the shortage and other administrative components including clinical sites agreements and orientation programs.
- Community colleges, private colleges, universities and technical schools are instrumental in capacity building and career awareness.
- Workforce partners have effectively promoted the CSSI in recruitment of students throughout the region and administer the program locally.

# FOCUS ON REGISTERED NURSES

Registered nursing shows the most dramatic shortage of workers in the Central Region and constitutes the largest health care occupation. The U.S. Department of Labor projects that the need for RNs will create the second largest number of new jobs among all occupations in the next decade.

The Central Region CSSI impacted the RN shortage in many ways.

**1. To increase enrollment in nursing programs, schools need more faculty to teach.**

*Outcome:* CSSI provided six scholarships to students for Master's Degrees in Nursing to increase the pool of nurses prepared to teach. Three nurses are teaching currently.

**2. To increase the completion/graduation rate of nurses.**

*Outcome:* CSSI provided funding to schools for the tutoring of RN students so that they are successful in their education. Twenty-eight students were tutored and twenty-four successfully completed their classes.

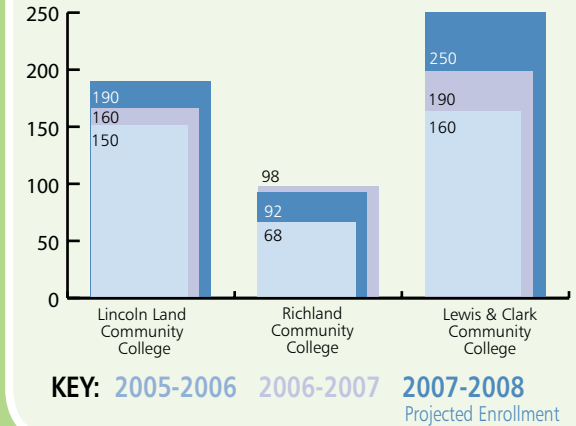
**3. To increase nursing school enrollment.**

*Outcome:* Schools are increasing the enrollment of nursing students in their programs as indicated in the chart to the right.

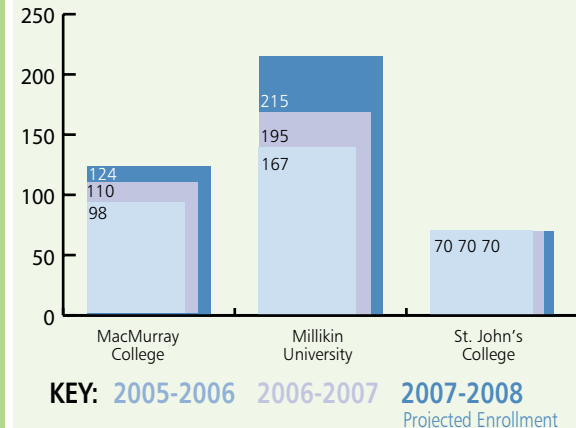
**4. Provide scholarships/financial support for nurses while in training.**

*Outcome:* 90 nursing students received CSSI support in academic year 2006-2007. Approximately half of these students are incumbent workers (already employed in a health care facility) representing 17 employers.

**Enrollment Increases: Associate's Degree Registered Nursing Programs**



**Enrollment Increases: Bachelor of Science Registered Nursing Programs**



## Testimonials



The year 2006 was a challenging and heartbreaking year for **Sherrie Pearson** of Decatur. She had been working as an LPN at McKinley Court and entered the RN Bridge program at Richland Community College in January. More importantly, her 15-year-old son was succumbing to cancer. She completed her Associate's Degree in December 2006, and her son passed away in January. Sherrie passed her boards and is now employed with McKinley Court in Decatur.



**Christy Smith**, a Jacksonville mother of three, drives to Memorial Medical Center in Springfield to work. She's been working as an LPN since 2003. She decided she could better support herself and her family if she continued her education and became a Registered Nurse. With the help of CSSI funding, she enrolled in the RN bridge program at Lincoln Land Community College last year. Her youngest child was born in January 2007, and she still successfully completed all of her classes! Christy is now employed with Memorial Medical Center in Springfield and will complete her education in May.



**Doni Frost, MSN, RN**, was assisted by the Critical Skills Shortage Initiative (CSSI) through a scholarship for a Master's Degree in Nursing at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. With the assistance of CSSI, Doni was able to continue her education and become an instrumental part of the nursing workforce by educating students at MacMurray College.

## Clinical Sites Committee

The Clinical Sites Committee discussed a couple of issues that were common to both education and health care facilities. Committee members reviewed a standardized clinical affiliation agreement and the student orientation program at health care facilities. The committee agreed to adopt a standardized agreement that had been piloted in the northern region and members are now in the process of implementing an agreement locally. Regarding the orientation program that students must complete prior to clinicals, educational partners will assist with keeping track of orientation modules to reduce the repetition for students.



# FOCUS ON MEDICAL LAB TECHNICIANS, CLINICAL LAB SCIENTIST, MEDICAL CODERS

## Medical Coders

Employers in the Central region indicate that certification in medical coding assists workers with potential job upgrades.

The Central Region CSSI impacted the Medical Coding field in the following ways:

**1. To increase the numbers of certified medical coders in the field.**

*Outcome:* CSSI offered a six-part review class for coders that were currently working in order to help them to become certified. Twelve coders attended the class with nine passing the certification exam. A second class is being planned for year two.

**2. To increase the number of individuals entering the medical coding career area.**

*Outcome:* CSSI provided financial support to two individuals to attend training in the coding field. Training is through the community colleges or private technical schools.

**Medical Coders - Antoinette Wood  
Decatur Memorial Hospital**

"I was in the first review class sponsored by the CSSI project last year. I went on to take and PASS my Certified Coding Specialist examination in October 2006! This class was an amazing opportunity for me. This class pushed me along on my career path. I have since received a promotion and a raise at work."

## Clinical Lab Scientists and Medical Lab Technicians

Clinical Lab Scientists play a crucial role in detecting, diagnosing and treating disease. The employment growth for Lab Scientists is faster than average as the volume of lab tests increases due to population growth and the development of new tests. Clinical Lab Scientist requires a four year, Bachelor's degree and Medical Lab Technician is a two-year Associate degree program.

The Central Region CSSI impacted the Clinical Lab Scientist and Medical Lab Technician careers in the following ways:

**1. To increase the number of enrollments in Clinical Lab Scientist programs.**

*Outcome:* The University of Illinois at Springfield and St. John's School of Clinical Laboratory Science are two programs within the region. Both schools report that program enrollments have increased in the last year with 19 students graduating in 2007. CSSI provided funding for 3 students.

**2. To develop a Medical Lab Program in the region as there is no training available for this career field.**

*Outcome:* CSSI participated in bringing two community colleges together to offer the Medical Lab Program. Richland Community College worked cooperatively with Kankakee Community College to offer the program locally beginning at Richland in the fall of 2008.

**Clinical Lab Scientist - Cora Lilley  
St. John's Hospital**

"Without the CSSI scholarship I received I would not have been able to pay for school, and, thus, would never have realized the abundance of career options I now have in front of me."



# FOCUS ON YOUTH PROGRAMS

## Expo Events

Career awareness activities for high school students were sponsored by CSSI in the spring of 2007. Events were held in Decatur, Jacksonville and Springfield with the Springfield Urban League coordinating the events. Two hundred students from 20 area schools participated. Approximately 20 exhibitors from health care agencies and schools provided interactive displays and talked to students about a typical workday. Information about colleges, financial aid, and high school prep classes were topics presented by speakers at the events. Students participated in a health care scavenger hunt with winners entering a drawing for door prizes.

## Results

Evaluations showed that :

- 80% said they learned important information about the education options available to prepare for a career in health care
- 95% stated they learned important information about several health care careers
- 86% are more excited about health care careers now than they were before attending
- 100% said they would like to see this event take place again next year.

## Youth Scholarships

The CSSI awarded approximately \$18,000 in scholarships to four students who are enrolled in registered nursing programs for academic year 2007-2008.



**"The speakers were very on-point and it was interesting to hear how they had to go through so many things to pursue their goals."**



**"The presenters were not dull. They made it interesting and understandable."**



**"I enjoyed that you could see multiple health care professions, even some very specialized ones."**

# HOW CSSI GRANT DOLLARS WERE SPENT

The CSSI Grant Budget: \$350,000

Project	Expended
<b>Focus on Health Careers</b>	<b>\$78,186.28</b>
Regional Coordinator	\$67,355.89
Marketing	\$5,184.71
Consortium Meetings	\$3,645.68
<b>Increased Capacity for Registered Nurses</b>	<b>\$170,095.50</b>
Master's degree RN program	\$32,145.40
Tuition fees & books for RNs	\$127,184.22
Post-secondary tutoring	\$10,065.88
Preceptor training	\$700.00
<b>Increased Capacity for Medical Technicians/ Clinical Lab Scientists/Medical Coders</b>	<b>\$19,198.52</b>
Develop training program	\$4,000.00
Tuition, fees & books	\$15,198.52
<b>Increased Awareness for Youth</b>	<b>\$84,519.70</b>
Urban League	\$67,019.70
Youth Scholarships	\$17,500.00



# WHAT PARTNERS ARE SAYING ABOUT CSSI



**JoEllen Brannan, Ph.D., R.N. • Director and Professor of Nursing • MacMurray College**

"I cannot say enough about how helpful CSSI funds were in helping two of our new faculty members through their graduate education. Masters-prepared nurses are in short supply in our area and the support of CSSI was essential to the health and vitality of our nursing program."



**Todd Ray, FACHE, SPHR • Director of Operations • Taylorville Memorial Hospital**

"CSSI has made a difference at Taylorville Memorial Hospital, in that it has created a new awareness of health care careers as well as opened opportunities for our employees to further their careers within health care. One specific example is Shannon Davis, MSN, RN, who returned to school and received her Master's under a CSSI scholarship. Now, she is not only still employed with us, but also teaching RN students part-time in Decatur. CSSI has really created a buzz within the health care field and I am excited to be a part of the effort!"



**Stephani Hickman • Coding Manager • Memorial Medical Center**

"The Certified Coding Specialist Certification displays the coder's ability to code with accuracy to ensure the hospital will get optimal reimbursement for the services provided and to provide accurate data for health care outcomes. Obtaining the CCS credentials validates that the coder has reached the level of mastery in the coding profession. After gaining this level of competency the coder's career path opens up to all levels of opportunities from senior level coding positions, to auditing and management. Through the CSSI funding three of my staff members have been successful in passing the CCS certification exam, which entitled them to a promotion to the Senior Health care Specialist level and an automatic increase of salary of 5%."



**Tracie Sayre RN, BSN, MBA • Employment Manager • St. John's Hospital**

"We believe partnering with CSSI has allowed us to help more employees than we would have alone. With limited resources, we welcome opportunities to leverage dollars against ours. We contribute in-kind to the project: staff members serve on the Consortium and all the committees; we provide speakers to career awareness events; coders on our staff are participating in the CSSI coding review class on paid time; we subsidize LPN salaries while they attend the Bridge Program at Lincoln Land Community College to pursue their RN diploma. St. John's is a committed partner in the CSSI project. We will continue to match dollars and give time and energy to the project."



**Teresa H. Larson MSN, MBA, RN • Dean of Health Professions • Richland Community College**

"Critical Skills Shortage Initiative funding serves as an important financial resource for Nursing students at Richland Community College. These funds facilitate students in advancing their education to become Registered Nurses. In doing so, these monies enable students to forward their own economic standing and likewise, help to address the health care workforce needs of our community."



For more information, contact the Local Workforce Board in your area:

**Land of Lincoln Workforce Investment Board  
Cass, Christian, Logan, Menard, Sangamon Counties**

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**Macon-Dewitt Workforce Investment Board  
Macon County**

Robyn McCoy, Executive Director  
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**West Central Development Council  
Greene, Macoupin, Montgomery, Morgan, Scott and Shelby Counties**

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**CSSI Project Coordinator**

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