Nursing education opportunities are provided for those interested in a nursing career.

SE5: Provide one example, with supporting evidence, of a career development opportunity provided by the organization for non-nurse employees or members of the community interested in becoming a RN. This example may include community partnership activities.

**Nursing Career Fair for High School Students and Non-Nurse Employees 2015**

As a leading healthcare organization in the community, Capital Health has a longstanding commitment to advancing the profession of nursing. We achieve this goal by providing access and opportunities to those non-nursing employees and community residents interested in pursuing a nursing career. Organizational structures like tuition reimbursement and scholarship programs are benefits designed to assist our non-nurse employees enrolled in nursing school to meet their career goals. Our popular Junior Volunteer Program exposes students to the healthcare field and encourages them to consider nursing as a career. On several occasions, in response to requests from our community partners, clinical nurses and nurse leaders have participated in local career fairs. Capital Health partners with many local nursing universities and colleges to provide year-round clinical rotations for nursing students.

For the past 11 out of 12 years, nursing is voted the most ethical and honest profession on the Gallup polls. Yet, among high school students, especially the exceptional students, nursing is still viewed negatively. High school students and those who influence their career choices are unfortunately unaware of what nurses actually do. An exposure to contemporary nursing professionals focuses students’ attention on the level of critical thinking, leadership, and decision-making ability that is required to be a nurse.

In 2015, Katrina Sweeney, MSN, RN, Director of the Department of Clinical Education decided to host a Nursing Career Fair for our local high school students at our state of the art Hopewell campus. The overall theme was an emphasis on “Nursing, One Career, a Thousand Choices”. We wanted to highlight how far nursing has progressed as a profession and the multiple options available to today’s nurse.

Affiliate nursing colleges and universities were invited to showcase the various nursing programs available at their institutions (*Attachment 1*). Upon hearing that other hospital employees were interested in the career fair, Ms. Sweeney decided to expand the event to meet the needs of non-nurse employees too. A representative from Human Resources was invited to participate in the event. Invitations and flyers about the Career Fair were mailed to local school counselors (*Attachment 2*). Flyers inviting non-nurse employees of Capital Health were posted on the hospital intranet and emailed to all managers (*Attachment 3*).

Posters highlighting the theme, “Nursing One Career, A Thousand Choices” decked the halls of the second floor of the Hopewell building. Representatives from the College of New Jersey, Thomas Edison State College, Drexel University, Jefferson University, and Rutgers University set up information booths, providing information on the nursing programs offered at their institutions. Pamela Dunn, from Human Resources was
available to answer questions from non-nurse employees about tuition reimbursement and flexible staffing options. And in keeping with the theme, on hand were clinical nurses from the various service areas in the hospital, nurse leaders, directors, educators, researchers, and informaticists.

Students and visitors were offered light refreshments as they entered the venue. Students welcomed information from the various college and university recruiters about their nursing programs, educational costs, and available scholarships. Many were surprised at “what all it takes to become a nurse”. Besides information, students also received small promotional gifts like pens and water bottles.

The poster depicting the benefits of a career in nursing and nursing opportunities drew a number of students and visitors. As there are some misconceptions regarding salary, students were surprised at the current national average RN earnings per year. Nurses from the hospital mingled freely and students were able to talk with them about the myriad nursing roles and gain insight into the different areas of expertise required to be a nurse. A common refrain heard was “I didn’t know nurses did that!”

“But what is nursing informatics and exactly what does a nurse informaticist do?” asked a student; and Vera Kunte, DNP, APN C, explained, “this role combines two of the things I love most, nursing and technology. These are the nurses that work behind the scenes analyzing data and fine-tuning applications to make the nurse’s work day go smoother”. Cheryl Lang, MSN, APN C, Clinical Nurse Specialist and a Certified Emergency Nurse fielded questions about life in the Emergency Department. “Is it just like the ED in Grey’s Anatomy or is it quieter” one student wanted to know. “Well, just like TV… but only better and less dramatic” Cheryl noted.

Everyone who participated in the event that day enjoyed the experience. Nursing Career Day 2015 was so successful that plans are underway to repeat the experience in 2016 (Attachment 4). We are considering adding simulations; mock OR and ED experiences to create a fun filled hands-on experience for the students. We look forward to sharing our love for nursing and offering school students the opportunity to see how challenging and rewarding a nursing career can be.
Hello to All,

Capital Health is in the planning stages of holding a nursing career day with a primary focus to our non-nursing employees and local high school students to become a nurse. As an academic partner, would you/designee be interested in participating in the fair to share information about your nursing undergraduate program? I realize that we also have nurses who are interested in pursuing their education so it is also good if you want to bring information regarding your higher level degree programs. We have planned April 29th from 2p – 5p at Capital Health Hopewell Campus. We would like to showcase different levels of RN programs to encourage the growth of our nursing profession.

Please let me know your interest and if April 29th will work for you by April 10. I recognize that this is a relatively short notice but I want to conduct this fair prior to college closings and your availability. I appreciate your input.

Regards,

Katrina

Katrina Sweeney MSN, RN-BC
Director, Clinical Education and Research/
Magnet Program Director
Capital Health
One Capital Way
Pennington, NJ 08534
609-537-6920

CLICK HERE TO RETURN TO NARRATIVE
Interested in becoming a Nurse?

- Learn about entry level nursing programs
- Speak to recruiters from area colleges
- Meet nursing professionals
- Learn about nursing opportunities

For more information contact:
The Dept. of Clinical Education at: 609-815-7722
Interested in becoming a Nurse?

- Learn about entry level nursing programs
- Speak to recruiters from area colleges
- Meet nursing professionals
- Learn about nursing opportunities
- Meet Human Resources representatives

For more information contact: The Dept. of Clinical Education at: **609-815-7722**
Hello to All,

I’d like to thank you for your time and commitment in making our Nursing Career Day a success last week. I am truly appreciative of our partnership and look forward to planning a Nursing Career Day for next year to promote the profession of Nursing. I welcome your feedback regarding this program and any recommendations for improvement for future programs.

Regards,

Katrina

Katrina Sweeney MSN, RN-BC
Director, Clinical Education and Research/
Magnet Program Director
Capital Health
One Capital Way
Pennington, NJ 08534
609-537-6920