



College of Nursing awarded grant for nursing leadership in rural and underserved areas

AURORA, Colo. (August 6, 2010) –The University of Colorado College of Nursing has been awarded a \$753,817 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), to prepare advanced practice nurses with the expertise to provide leadership for high quality healthcare in rural and medically underserved urban areas.

Funding was provided in a competitively awarded grant to i-LEAD, Innovation in Leadership and Administration in Nursing and Healthcare Systems. Amy Barton, PhD, RN, professor and associate dean for Clinical and Community Affairs at the College of Nursing, and the college's newly appointed Mordecai Endowed Chair in Rural Health Nursing, is the project director.

”We are delighted to provide education in nursing leadership and healthcare systems in an innovative manner, reaching nurses across Colorado and the US, targeting both underserved and rural communities,” said Barton. “This funding allows us to develop the program with our nationally and internationally renowned faculty and establish a strong infrastructure of student support that will help to financially sustain the program into the future.”

This new, innovative, flexible master's program aligns with the College of Nursing's multiple entry, multiple exit philosophy. The program provides a 30 credit core master's degree in nursing leadership and healthcare systems, with numerous exit options, including: 1) Graduation with a MS degree in Nursing Leadership and Healthcare Systems 2) Completion of an additional 12 credits for specialization in Executive Leadership, 3) Completion of an additional 12 credits for specialization in Healthcare Informatics, and 4) Seamless progression into the PhD degree program with a health systems research focus. A second goal of the i-LEAD program is to facilitate students to complete a Post-Master's certificate in Executive Leadership.

In keeping with Healthy People 2010, i-LEAD will prepare culturally competent advanced practice nurses capable of providing high quality healthcare in medically underserved urban and rural areas, increasing health promotion and disease prevention in this population, and increasing access to quality healthcare. The target is to enroll at least 20 percent of all students from rural or medically underserved designated areas and enroll at least 10 percent underrepresented minority students.

The program will create and refine 10 new courses that incorporate distance learning methodologies to reduce barriers for nurses who live in the targeted populations of rural Colorado and other states that are part of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher

Education (WICHE). The i-LEAD program features two innovative tools to support distance learners. Building on a well-established model, i-LEAD will use social networking tools to create a learner-centered environment to support, socialize, mentor and connect students who are engaged in computer-mediated learning.

Secondly, i-LEAD learners will be able to interact in the College of Nursing's "Virtual Clinic," where learners interact with each other to simulate decision making. To strengthen the i-LEAD program's collaborative teaching, research, and practice environment, the program will establish at least 18 new partnerships with key professional organizations and health or public health providers/agencies, with particular attention to those who serve rural and medically underserved populations. These partnerships will provide opportunities for students to practice with underserved populations, and positively impact professional organizations and healthcare providers/agencies.

"The i-LEAD graduate program will fill important gaps in the education of future nurse leaders who will manage health care and provide leadership in health care in the rural and urban areas of Colorado," said Patricia Moritz, PhD, FAAN, dean of the College of Nursing. "An important aspect of this new graduate program area is that future nurse leaders, managers and expert clinicians will be educated in management and leadership of the health care system, with opportunities for specialization in health care informatics. These areas are a crucial part of the goals of health care reform and health informatics technology."

Graduates will be eligible to take the Advanced Nursing Administration Certification examination offered by the American Nurses Credentialing Center or the Advanced Nursing Administration Certification offered by the American Organization of Nurse Executives.

About the University of Colorado College of Nursing

Located at the Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora, Colo., the University of Colorado College of Nursing offers some of the highest ranked programs in the country -- from bachelor's through doctoral degrees and post-graduate certificate programs. The college offers several specialties through its master's program and the only PhD program in clinical research in Colorado. It also is the birthplace of nurse practitioner education and the caring movement, and was one of the first schools in the country to offer a Doctor of Nursing Practice program. For more information, visit the [UC Denver Newsroom](#).