



JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

**NEWS RELEASE
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**THREE-YEAR GRANT HELPS AREA HOSPITALS SUPPORT
FRONTLINE WORKERS**

AUSTIN, TX (March 11, 2010) — At a time when healthcare worker shortages challenge the state of Texas, Austin-area health care workers are receiving career development support from their employers and Austin Community College District (ACCD) that will result in career-advancing credentials and retention in their healthcare careers.

These low-wage frontline workers are receiving this training through the EXCEED program, launched at Seton Family Hospitals and St. David's HealthCare to advance frontline workers' careers. It is managed by Workforce Solutions–Capital Area, and was launched with a \$428,000 grant from *Jobs to Careers*, a national initiative that helps frontline health care workers access the skills and credential opportunities they need to advance their careers.

“My goal is to become a nurse and I knew this was step one to entering into that kind of career,” says Margarita Barrientes, a Patient Care Technician and EXCEED participant. “Since starting this program, I’ve learned so many terms that the doctors and nurses use and I feel a lot more competent.”

Margarita is one of 48 clinical assistants, patient care technicians, and patient access representatives who train on the clock and pay no tuition to join the EXCEED program.

Twenty participants have earned their Basic Clinical Technician certificate, which qualifies them for expanded roles as Clinical Assistants or Patient Care Technicians in the acute care setting. Eight others have earned their advanced certificate while 16 completed ACC's medical terminology course as a significant step towards entering a college credit healthcare program.

“The EXCEED project represents both an opportunity and challenge to the college's typical way of providing healthcare education,” said Kirk White, interim executive dean of Continuing Education at ACC. “What we learn through this project will not only have a positive impact on the EXCEED participants, but will help the college better meet workforce training needs in other disciplines.”

“There are 5 million frontline workers in the U.S., many of whom earn less than \$40,000 a year,” says Maria Flynn, director of *Jobs to Careers* and a vice president at Jobs for the Future, a Boston-based nonprofit that manages the initiative. “When we invest in their training, they can provide much needed care for our aging generations and even help their employers retain talent and save money that would be otherwise spent finding new workers to train.”

“Patient care is our top priority,” says Sally Gilliam, Chief Nursing Officer at St. David’s South Austin Medical Center. “We believe that training and retaining qualified frontline workers and health care professionals is the key to providing exceptional patient care.”

While Austin’s *Jobs to Careers* grant expired this past fall, the industry partners are continuing to incorporate the EXCEED program into their hospital systems.

Margarita is proof that success is both possible and well worth the challenge.

“I was scared because I hadn’t been in school in 20 years,” Margarita remembers. “Not only did I get through [EXCEED’s medical terminology] class, but I passed with flying colors. It was a stepping stone to where I want to be.”

About Jobs to Careers

Jobs to Careers helps frontline health care workers access the skills and credentials they need to advance their careers through work-based learning—at little to no cost to the workers. This \$15.8 million initiative operates in 17 communities nationwide. It is sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, in collaboration with The Hitachi Foundation and the U.S. Department of Labor. The initiative is managed by Jobs for the Future, a national nonprofit seeking to strengthen America’s workforce through postsecondary education.

www.jobs2careers.org

www.jff.org

About Workforce Solutions–Capital Area

Workforce Solutions–Capital Area Workforce Board is the leadership and governing body for the regional workforce system. They are responsible for the planning, oversight, and evaluation of workforce development activities in the Austin/Travis County area. Workforce Solutions helps to connect and align the efforts of the regional workforce system. Together we are enabling people and businesses to be competitive in a global market.

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