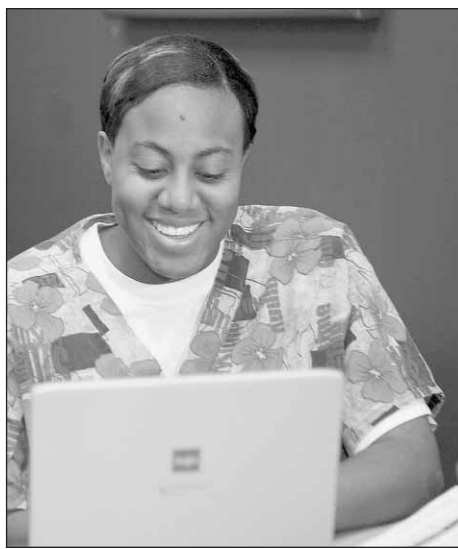


Visiting Nurse / Hospice Atlanta Launches New Online Learning Program



Rising gas prices are tough for everyone, but for home health agencies it's a crucial operating expense that cannot be ignored. This is one reason that Visiting Nurse / Hospice Atlanta (also known as Visiting Nurse Health System), has launched a web-based platform to meet the educational and training needs of its clinicians. The VNHS Online University conveniently links clinicians to available resources and allows for "just-in-time" training for the company's mobile workforce.

"Our clinicians are eager for continuing education, but they are less eager to drive to our main office in Norcross for face-to-face classes. They are spread across a 26-county area and many of them have to drive dozens of miles to get here," says Andrea Stevenson, RN, Director, Clinical Practice. "This new initiative solves that problem and our staff is very excited about it. We are already receiving requests for additional classes to help them stay up-to-date on tools and resources. Some of our more experienced clinicians are creating content for the online courses."

Visiting Nurse / Hospice Atlanta is working with a consultant to develop training content. Additionally, VNHS plans to purchase some courses from outside vendors. All the content is reviewed by experts before being added to the University library. As clinicians complete training they will be able to earn internal education credits as well as external CEU credits. Managers in VNHS's three divisions – home health, hospice and care management services – receive compliance reports verifying that their staff has completed the required courses.

"The bottom line," adds Stevenson "is an engaged workforce of well-educated clinicians which translates into higher quality care for our patients."

VNHS Online University is rolling out in three phases. Phase One comprises basic, mandatory education for clinical and non-clinical staff, including topics such as infection control, HIPAA, and Corporate Compliance. This phase enables all employees to become comfortable with the technology used to deliver

the training content.

Phase Two will be an enhancement to the company's current orientation program for its clinicians. The VNHS University gives new recruits an opportunity to learn when they are not in the classroom or with their preceptor. Nurses, physical therapists and other clinicians come from a variety of backgrounds. Each clinician, based on their job function, would complete mandatory education modules geared to specific skills or knowledge that clinician must master before completing orientation. Modules utilize simulation, are highly interactive, and include a test to validate clinician understanding.

Phase Three, scheduled to roll out in 2009, includes a more robust and diverse library of course content to meet the needs of both clinical and non-clinical employees. This phase will be the start of a library of online educational materials that employees can access at any time from their laptops or PCs.

This level of online learning gives the organization a competitive edge in the marketplace and also ties in its Patient Connections initiative. This \$3 million program supports patients through technology such as wound imaging and tele-monitoring, ensuring higher quality care.

While the VNHS Online University creates big savings in mileage costs and time spent traveling to and from educational sessions for the organization and its employees, the greater, long-term benefit is the development of a highly-qualified workforce that provides excellent patient care.

For more information about the VNHS Online University, contact Andrea Stevenson at (770) 936-3460 or andrea_stevenson@vnhs.org or visit www.vnhs.org.



PCOMMS Biomedical Sciences Class of 2008: (l-r) Tammetrius Farmer, Sonny Patel, Ja'Larna Grant, Jasmine Smith, Woo-Jong James Chang, Sicily Garvin, Edmundo Martinez, Tequilla Pryor, Linda Lazar, Rochelle Grant, Donald Dickert, Rouenne Abasolo, and LaDawn Hackett.

13 Master of Science Degrees Awarded at Campus' First Commencement

Thirteen Master of Science degree candidates became the first graduates of Georgia Campus-Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine Sunday when their degrees in biomedical science were conferred by PCOM President and Chief Executive Office Matthew Schure, PhD.

Dr. Schure, who was also the commencement speaker for this ceremony told those gathered, "It is in many ways symbolic that the first graduates of PCOM's Georgia Campus are not yet students of the health professions, but rather are individuals who have gained their expertise in biomedical sciences and correlated research. After all, medicine is an evidence-based discipline and the practice of medicine continues to change and grow as new knowledge generated by research generates more effective and efficient treatment practices.

"PCOM has graduated thousands of extraordinary physicians, and much of their success is attributable to those who have chosen research careers and who have created the empirical underpinning

for the practices which have guided osteopathic medicine throughout two centuries. That is why research agendas... are pursued at PCOM every day. Ultimately, education is the search for truth. One great way to manifest that truth is (through) research."

Preceding the commencement ceremony, academic and leadership awards were presented during a lunch honoring the graduates. C. Donald Dickert of North Augusta, SC, received the Vice Dean's Award for academic excellence for achieving the class's highest grade point average over the two years of the program. He will enroll as a member of the Class of 2012 at the Medical University of South Carolina in the fall.

Edmundo A. Martinez of Chicago was nominated by his classmates and the faculty to receive the Biomedical Science Leadership Award based on professional conduct and leadership qualities. Martinez will enroll as a medical student in the Class of 2012 at Georgia Campus-Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine.

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