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### MassHire Berkshire Workforce Board announces \$500K grant for nursing assistant training programs

PITTSFIELD– MassHire Berkshire Workforce Board is pleased to announce that they have received \$500,000 to run nursing assistant training programs for the next two years. This project is funded by a Senator Kenneth J. Donnelly Workforce Success Grant.

“Donnelly Grants support regional partnerships between businesses, community-based organizations, workforce development organizations, and educational institutions to prepare Massachusetts residents for occupations in high demand fields,” said Governor Charlie Baker.

The Berkshire Nursing Assistant program proposes to directly address the needs of our healthcare industry via intensive outreach, recruitment, education and training efforts to develop 190 Nursing Assistants throughout the 2-year grant. The program is formed by a partnership between the Berkshire Workforce Board, Berkshire Health Systems, Berkshire Healthcare Systems, and MassHire Berkshire Career Center

The partnership looks to expand a modified nursing assistant program, as well as an online Certified Nursing Assistant program with weekly support services to address a growing and persistent problem of nursing assistant shortages. The trainings and services will be free-of-charge for participants, and strong support services will be provided by MassHire. The training will be geared towards un/under employed Massachusetts

Darlene Rodowicz, President & CEO of Berkshire Health Systems of Berkshire Health Systems, one of the grants educational partners who will be providing the daytime program, stressed the importance of nursing assistants and the career pathway that it opens up. "Nursing assistants play a vital role in the care of our patients. They are essential to providing high-quality care. Many NAs dedicate their entire career to this direct care role, while others enter the healthcare workforce as NAs and move into other equally rewarding healthcare occupations."

Here in the Berkshires, the healthcare industry is our largest employer, and the need for dedicated workers is growing. The Berkshire Nursing Assistant program hopes to bring more skilled workers into the workforce and provide an opportunity for growth to our community members.

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