

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## FHA Annual Nursing Report Reveals Reduction in Hospital Turnover Rate - Challenges Continue

Tallahassee, FL - The Florida Hospital Association (FHA) released its annual nursing survey today and the data show an improvement in efforts to reduce nurse turnover rates in some areas of the state. However, a significant challenge remains - an acute shortage of nurse faculty and specialized RNs. The turnover rate, or the percentage of nurses leaving the hospital during the year, fell to 10.8%; a 19.4% decline from the rate reported in 2003. This is a continued indication that hospital retention strategies are having an impact. "Hospitals are working hard to be the community's employer of choice and the reduction in the turnover rate is one indication that hospitals are succeeding in that goal," said Wayne NeSmith, FHA President.

Additionally, the report also revealed that one-in-eight (8.2%) of the registered nursing positions in Florida hospitals were vacant in February 2004; a 21% reduction over the previous year. While the data indicate continued improvement, more than 5,300 positions remain vacant in Florida during the survey period. All regions of the state, except the Panhandle, experienced a drop in the RN vacancy rate. The Panhandle reported a vacancy rate of 11.4 percent in 2004, up from 8.3 percent in 2003. The West region reported the most improvement with the RN vacancy rate falling from 15.8 percent in 2003 to 9.1 percent in 2004.

Hospitals continued to develop new strategies to recruit and retain nurses as well as spend more than \$147 million to fill vacant nurse positions. However, challenges in filling the positions remained in some specialties including rehabilitation, neonatal critical care, pediatric critical care and certified RN anesthetists. The report showed an increase in the percentage of hospitals requiring at least 90 days to fill a position. These specialties were certified RN anesthetist (CRNA) and pediatric critical care. "The report shows continued improvement in some areas, yet the challenge to fill an expected need of 61,000 more nurses by 2020 will be difficult to meet without significant investment in our state's community college and university nursing programs," said Martha DeCastro, RN, MS, CIC, FHA's Vice President for Nursing. "The growing demand for nurses, coupled with our aging population and a shortage of nurse faculty, creates significant challenges in meeting the nursing needs in Florida," said DeCastro. The report notes that even though enrollments in entry-level baccalaureate programs are up, thousands of qualified students were denied admittance to nursing programs due to a shortage of nursing school faculty and limited classroom space.

Since 1987, FHA has surveyed hospitals annually on nurse staffing issues, specifically looking at vacancy rates, turnover rates, and length of time to fill open positions. The survey is designed to identify issues hospitals might be experiencing regarding nurse staffing. This year, 83 health systems representing 107 hospitals responded to the survey, which was e-mailed to 215 hospitals last February.

Click here to download report <<http://www.fha.org/nursing2005.pdf>> .

