



RON ROBERTS
CHAIRMAN
SUPERVISOR, FOURTH DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: April 16, 2002
TO: Board of Supervisors
SUBJECT: Support Senate Bill 1493—Nursing Shortage Pilot Project (District: All)

SUMMARY:

Overview

California is on the verge of a major healthcare crisis with regard to personnel. The people who make up the backbone of any hospital or healthcare facility are the nurses. The latest figures given by the state tell us that we are in short supply and in need of new candidates for the nursing profession. Currently, California ranks 49th in the nation in the number of registered nurses (RN's) with 585 RN's per 100,000 population. In San Diego alone, we will need over 2,000 RN's over the next year.

In my State of the County address, I made increasing the number of nurses a high priority. Hopefully, with the help of others in the area we can increase the number of RN's in the region. In a true collaborative fashion, the community colleges, local school districts, the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, the San Diego Workforce Partnership, the Healthcare Association and the County of San Diego have made a commitment to develop a three-year pilot project for a Nursing Academy. With the help of Senator Alpert's bill, SB 1493, this may become a reality.

Recommendation(s)

CHAIRMAN ROBERTS:

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to instruct our Sacramento Representative to support SB 1493, *Nursing education: nursing shortage pilot project*.
2. Direct County Counsel to draft a resolution of support from this Board of Supervisors for SB 1493.
3. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to draft a letter of support for SB 1493 for the Chairman's signature to be distributed to all the members of the State Legislature and upon passage of the bill to the Governor.

Fiscal Impact

None by this action.

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BACKGROUND:

Nurses are the backbone of any hospital or healthcare facility. Whether it is explaining to a patient how to take their medications to providing comfort to a family that is going through an emotional period or assisting doctors in major surgery, nurses are essential to making our healthcare system work. Unfortunately, the number of nurses are shrinking nationwide and especially here in California.

The latest numbers for the state puts California 49th in the nation in the number of registered nurses (RN's) per 100,000 population with 585 RN's per 100,000. San Diego alone is in need of over 2,000 RN's over the next year. With state-mandated ratios, this problem can only get worse before it gets better. To some degree, the problem is not with the number of applicants but with capacity. Whether the school is San Diego State University or the University of San Diego, applicants are being turned away for lack of space in the program. Thus, a small part of the solution is to increase capacity utilizing alternative educational models.

As part of my State of the County address, I made increasing the number of RN's in the region a priority by creating a Nursing Academy. In true collaborative fashion, the community colleges, local school districts, the San Diego Chamber of Commerce, the San Diego Workforce Partnership, the Healthcare Association of San Diego and Imperial Counties and the County of San Diego are committed to start a Nursing Academy. Senate Bill 1493, *Nursing education: nursing shortage pilot project*, sponsored by Senator Dede Alpert will attempt to make this a reality with a three-year pilot project costing about \$1.6 million a year. With Governor Davis making increasing the number of nurses a state initiative, it is my hope that he will look favorably upon this type of partnership.

What this board letter will do is to instruct our Sacramento representative to support SB 1493, to draft a resolution of support for the bill and to send a letter of support from the Chairman to each member of the State Legislature and upon passage of the bill, a letter to the Governor. This project is not a panacea. However, it is hopefully the beginning of long term commitment to increasing the number of RN's in San Diego County.

I urge your support!

Respectfully submitted,

RON ROBERTS
Chairman

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AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

CONCURRENCE(S)

COUNTY COUNSEL REVIEW	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Written Disclosure per County Charter Section 1000.1 Required	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
GROUP/AGENCY FINANCE DIRECTOR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Requires Four Votes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
GROUP/AGENCY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
COUNTY TECHNOLOGY OFFICE	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Other Concurrence(s):

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: Ron Roberts

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AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: _____