



NEWS RELEASE

For more information:
Julie Minarich
The Workforce Boards of
Metropolitan Chicago
(312) 617-5768
JMinarich@aol.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Healthcare Executives Discuss Employee Retention Solutions

Oak Brook, IL (September 30, 2004) – The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago, a regional alliance of nine local-area workforce investment boards, along with the Illinois Hospital Association, the Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council, and the Grand Victoria Foundation hosted a conference for healthcare professionals interested in workforce retention.

The event was designed to address the labor shortage facing the healthcare industry in Northeast Illinois by providing practical examples of career development and retention of healthcare workers.

Retaining Your Healthcare Workforce: Creating Career Development Programs for Valued Employees conference was held at the Wyndham Drake Hotel located in Oak Brook, Illinois on Wednesday, September 28, 2004. Nearly 100 attendees from hospitals, long-term healthcare facilities, and community colleges throughout the region participated in the event.

Participation in the conference was intended to help healthcare employers understand the cost-benefit of career development models and learn about the various procedures and strategies to assist in developing and retaining quality employees. The following presenters from four different healthcare institutions led panel discussions retention and provided “best practices” data that participants could take, modify, and implement to meet the needs at their particular sites. Nancy Krier, Policy Consultant for Workforce, Illinois Hospital Association, moderated the day’s presentations and audience discussion. Panelist Sherry Makely, Administrative Project Manager from Clarian Health Partners located in Indianapolis spoke about the Career Quest® Career Development program used at Clarian to enhance job performance and retention.

Jim Novak, Vice President of Human Resources, Ruth Petersen, Coordinator of Training and Development from Sherman Health, and Claudia Voisard, Independent Consultant, shared details of Sherman’s “Career Pathways” program. This internal career development program is designed to promote career resilience for a changing environment and build a sense of career self-reliance among employees.

Steve Niems, Manager, Advocate Career and Transition Services from Advocate Health Care provided an overview of the “Career Coach” program used at Advocate. The program is designed to help employees clarify “where they are now” to “where they want to be” through formalized one-on-one career counseling. When asked for his reflection on the conference, Steve replied “It was a pleasure being able to share ideas with other healthcare organizations that see the value in offering career development opportunities for their workforce. There is very little downside, if any, in committing time and resources towards "growing" one's own. The upside, on the other hand, is most significant with pay-offs to include improved productivity, increased motivation, and lower turnover to name a few. The conference served as an important milestone in the growth and development of our own in-house initiative.”

Jennifer Abermanis, Administrator of System and Logistics, Children’s Hospital and Regional Center in Seattle, and Sandy Clark, Strategic Initiatives Manager, Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County reported on the “Seattle Career Pathways Program”, a partnership between hospitals, education, labor, and workforce leaders. The Seattle program addresses the issues of labor shortages, an aging population, and educational capacity by allowing for clinical site coordination, stronger hospital-college partnerships, and improved articulation between training programs.

Russ Jones, Partner, First Transitions, educated and entertained the group as keynote speaker with his topic “Building a Development Culture”. Russ provided participants with insight into how employees are the key to any organization’s success and by recognizing what is important to them and developing a culture of appreciation, organizations can better address the issue of retention.

A thought-provoking networking session wrapped up the day’s event.

Requests from participants that the Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago facilitate more of these types of conferences on either a quarterly or semi-annual basis were welcomed and will be explored. It was announced that a similar conference to address retention of the 55 and up workforce is being planned.

The Workforce Boards play a key role in the economic development of their local areas and the region by forging partnerships between education, economic development, labor, government and community organizations to recruit and retain a highly skilled workforce and advance the economic vitality of the region. For more information please visit their website at www.workforceboardsmetrochicago.org or call your local Workforce Board listed on the regional website.

###