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Press Release

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MGC AND EGC'S COLLABORATION WITH PHASE TWO OF SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP TO EASE STATE SHORTAGE OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS

(COCHRAN)— Georgia's effort to stem a growing shortage of health-care workers received a "booster shot" on Friday, July 30, with the announcement by University System of Georgia officials of the distribution of \$3.8 million in funding to continue increasing the production of allied-health professional statewide.

Phase Two of the University System's Intellectual Capital Partnership Program (ICAPP®) Health Professionals Initiative will add more than 700 allied-health workers throughout Georgia over the next two years.

The MGC and East Georgia College Phase Two collaboration will result in the addition of more than 60 registered nurse positions to the 47 Phase One MGC nursing graduates.

The initiative matches private-sector health-care providers with public colleges and universities to produce fast-track graduates in nursing, medical, technology and pharmacy. The Initiative uses ICAPP® proven model that meets the "just-in-time-needs" of the state's business community.

Phase One of the Initiative resulted in 632 new licensed health-care professionals being produced through customized University System "fast-track programs"-far exceeding to the original goal of 500 new graduates. The successful endeavor represented a \$6.7 million public/private partnership between Georgia health-care providers and the University System. Thirteen University System institutions worked with medical providers in 19 Georgia communities. Many of the colleges and universities and private sector employers involved in Phase One will continue similar programs in Phase Two.

As a part of Phase One of the Initiative, MGC began offering an LPN-RN Bridge Program in cooperation with Fairview Park Hospital in August 2002. As of July 1, 2004, there are 20

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graduates from the program, with a total of 47 graduates projected by the end of Fall 2004. The annual state income taxes to be generated by these graduates are more than \$85,000.

Dr. Jo Anne Jackson, MGC health sciences division chair said MGC is fortunate that the University System of Georgia recognizes the important contribution the ICAPP® Health Professionals Initiative Programs are making throughout the state. “The nursing shortage continues to impact the provision of quality, accessible health care,” Jackson said. “Continued funding of the Middle Georgia/East Georgia College LPN-RN Bridge Program ensures that qualified licensed practical nurses are able to enter the work force as registered nurses at an expedited pace. The ICAPP® Health Professionals Initiative is an example of a collaborative win-win situation for all partners involved.”

Emanuel Medical Center, Fairview Park Hospital, and the Medical Center of Central Georgia are the private-sector partners for Phase Two. The annual state income taxes to be generated by these additional 60 graduates are approximately \$135,000. The following counties will be served: Bibb, Dodge, Emanuel, Jones, Johnson, Houston, Baldwin, Laurens, Peach, Monroe, Treutlen, Wheeler and Bleckley.

“Nationally there is an alarming downward trend in the numbers of nurses, this initiative is a positive step statewide and locally to reverse this trend,” commented Dr. Tim Goodman, vice president for academic affairs and student services at East Georgia College.

The Georgia Hospital Association, the Georgia Student Finance Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Health also have joined with the USG and participating employers in support of the Health Professionals Initiative.

“The ICAPP® Health Professionals Initiative is proof positive of what can be achieved when we mobilize strong public-private partnerships to tackle a problem,” said University System Chancellor Thomas C. Meredith. “We responded efficiently and quickly and the result will mean better healthcare for Georgians.”

“One of the biggest threats to the future of our health care delivery system is the growing shortage of qualified health care professionals including nurses, medical technologists and pharmacists,” said Georgia Hospital Association President Joseph Parker. “As Georgia's baby boomers near retirement age and require more medical care, it is imperative that health care providers continue to partner with state government to address this serious public health problem. Georgia hospitals are grateful that this partnership will continue for the next two years.”

This and other news releases detailing the ICAPP® Health Professionals Initiative may be found on the ICAPPR website at: www.icapp.org/employees/hpi.phtml