

## The Nursing Shortage: How Today's Nursing Students Are Trained to Help Aging Population

by (ARA)

As the United States' population grows and ages, nursing homes and assisted living facilities will become a reality for many. And, with the baby-boomer generation - one of the largest segments of our population - next in line to receive senior citizenship, the healthcare industry must prepare to provide medical and nursing assistance in the face of a major obstacle: a shortage of well-trained practical nurses.

"Practical Nurses are important individuals in our country's healthcare system, but we have recently seen that hospitals and nursing homes are in dire need for well-qualified healthcare providers," says Debra Fey, RN, BSN, Practical Nursing program administrator at Brown Mackie College - Northern Kentucky, in Fort Mitchell, Ky.

Fey is referring to a recent statewide professional survey that indicates that nursing vacancies exist in Kentucky hospitals. The shortage of well-trained, practical nurses is evident, especially in large urban areas throughout the Commonwealth.

Hospitals are not the only institutions in need of Practical Nurses. "As the baby-boomer population ages and more people are entering assisted living homes, the need for nurses is increasing, not only in Kentucky, but also across the nation," says Fey.

Schools such as Brown Mackie College - Northern Kentucky balance classroom instruction with clinical experience. Students receive a solid foundation in the areas of medical-surgical nursing, pediatrics, obstetrics, geriatrics and pharmacology, as well as mix of technical and professional skills to prepare them to succeed in the healthcare field and make a positive difference in people's lives.

"All of these skills are important for our future Practical Nurses to possess, because healthcare is more complex than being able to bandage a broken wrist or to monitor one's diet," says Fey. "Our school trains students in many different areas of health and medicine, so when they graduate and enter the nursing field, they will be able to make a meaningful contribution to a wide cross-section of our community." As well, the students at Brown Mackie College - Northern Kentucky are prepared for statewide industry tests, strengthening their qualifications even more.

As a result, today's Practical Nursing students will be able to help fill the void in many hospitals and assisted-living facilities. Caring for the aging and the sick is a promise which Practical Nursing students pledge to keep as they enter the healthcare industry. And with a serious need for healthcare institutions to staff more nurses to serve an aging population, nursing students are the caregivers of all of us, today and tomorrow.

For more information about Brown Mackie College - Northern Kentucky's Practical Nursing program, visit <http://www.brownmackie.edu>.

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