

# LETTER OF SUPPORT - Small Hospital



April 20, 2021

Dr. Cynthia Spiers, President  
Rhodes State College  
4240 Campus Drive  
Lima, OH 45804

Subject: Letter of Support

Dear Dr. Spiers,

I am writing this letter in support of the Rhodes State College proposal for a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program in our region. The Grand Lake Health System feels strongly the availability of baccalaureate prepared nurses in our region is not sufficient to meet workforce demand. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, "The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health", established a goal of increasing the proportion of nurses with a bachelor's degree to 80 percent by the year of 2020. We are not meeting this goal. As a small rural facility we hire approximately 20 – 30 nurses each year, the majority from Rhodes State College. A Rhodes State nurse graduate wishing to enroll in a BSN completion program has very limited options in the region.

While the prevalence of the baccalaureate degree as a nurse's initial degree has grown, the Ohio Board of Nursing 2019 RN Workforce Data reflects only 37% of Ohio's registered nurses start with a bachelor's degree. In Northwest Ohio, this number is only 27%. Plans to enroll in a baccalaureate program is extremely high (90-96%) among Ohio nurses without a BSN who are 30 years old or younger. But in NW Ohio only 5.3 percent are currently enrolled. While a lack of access to a BSN program may not be a significant barrier at the state level, regionally the available slots for nurses pursuing their BSN are limited. Other reported barriers to a BSN include the ability to balance personal lives and work schedules (17 percent) and high tuition costs (17 percent). Having the availability of a regional, affordable community college program enables non-traditional students to advance their nursing practice.

A baccalaureate prepared nursing workforce is key to our organization's human resource planning and is a critical part of our strategy to meet the health needs of the community. The largest segment of the nursing workforce is employed in a hospital setting. Our health system hosts Rhodes State students in their clinical rotations and hires graduates from Rhodes State into our health system. The attractiveness of our employment proposition and our own competitiveness in the region relies on an available pool of qualified nursing applicants. We depend on this pipeline. The healthcare delivery model of the near future is expected to require educational preparation beyond an Associate Degree for nursing. If the state wishes to be competitive in retaining a talented labor pool in Ohio, then we must develop the kinds of educational opportunities sought by those pursuing high demand career options.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lana Hinders".

Lana Hinders, MHA, BSN, RN  
Chief Nursing Officer  
Joint Township District Memorial Hospital

200 ST. CLAIR STREET | ST. MARYS, OHIO 45885-2400  
PHONE 419-394-3335 | TOLL-FREE 877-564-6897 | WWW.GRANDLAKEHEALTH.ORG