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NEWS RELEASE

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(For immediate release)

FAIRFIELD MEDICAL CENTER PARTNERS WITH XAVIER UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF NURSING FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION & HOLDS OPEN HOUSE ON AUGUST 3RD FROM 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

LANCASTER, Ohio (July 29, 2009) – Fairfield Medical Center, along with Brown County Regional Hospital and Wesleyan Senior Living Center, will be partnering with Xavier University School of Nursing to provide continuing education for nursing students. Xavier Distance Learning Coordinator, Debbie Davis noted, “Additional rural partners, including skilled nursing facilities, will be recruited for the second and third years of the project.”

This three-year project will entail the use of high-definition video conferencing to provide a master's level education and on-going education credits to nurses in rural areas. According to Xavier University, the video conferencing method enables nurses at rural sites to participate in real-time courses with nursing students and faculty who are on Xavier's campus. By providing rural nurses with access to advanced degrees and continuing education, this project will strengthen the nursing workforce and improve nurse retention and quality of patient care.

An Open House is scheduled on August 3, 2009 from 11:00 am – 12:00 pm in Fairfield Medical Center Assembly Room 1 on the second floor. The following Xavier staff will be available to answer questions, offer information, and recruit nurses for classes being offered: Dr. Sue Schmidt, Director of Xavier's School of Nursing; Debbie Davis, Distance Learning Coordinator; Dr. Mark Meyers, Dean of the College of Social Sciences, Health and Education; and Vince Vlasisavich, Distance Technology. Call (740) 689-6716 for more information.

Such education is of great benefit to students in Fairfield County. Cynthia Pearsall, Chief Nursing Officer, commented, “Fairfield Medical Center puts a strong emphasis on education and is a huge supporter of continuing education and professional development. We sponsor conferences, lectures and various seminars each year to provide healthcare professionals in

our facility and surrounding facilities with information on the latest research and techniques. Our partnership with Xavier further carries out our mission. It is a great relationship and I am glad that Fairfield Medical Center can offer such credible and worthwhile education right inside our walls.”

The program will admit at least 20 students each year from partner organizations and surrounding areas, beginning in fall 2009. Nurses participating in the program will earn a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) and be trained in the new emerging healthcare role of Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL). The CNL® is a fast emerging nursing role developed by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) in 2004, in collaboration with leaders from the education and practice arenas, to improve the quality of patient care and better prepare nurses to thrive in a complex health care system. Xavier was among the first schools in Ohio to offer a CNL® program. In addition to being prepared as CNLs, nurses in Xavier’s rural outreach program will gain specialized knowledge in informatics, geriatrics and holistic nursing through coursework included in Xavier’s nursing programs and continuing education offerings.

In addition, continuing education (CE) credits will be provided through distance learning. Two CE events will be offered each year for nurses working in surrounding rural areas each year. Partner organizations will be surveyed to determine topics for the CE events.

“This is an outstanding moment for Xavier and the School of Nursing,” says Xavier President Michael J. Graham, S.J. “To be part of a new initiative that will positively affect the health of people across Ohio and also further Xavier’s mission of being men and women for others is exciting.”

A pilot project for this program was initiated in summer 2008 with Fairfield Medical Center. While six schools of nursing in Ohio have CNL programs, the Fairfield pilot project was the only one that reached out to rural RNs. Robin Sheets, Clinical Nurse Leader/Nurse Practitioner at Fairfield Medical Center, headed the pilot project, “During this pilot program I have been the “go to” person coordinating all aspects of patients’ care, along with the help of our primary nurses who provide care around the clock. I feel the CNL role is crucial to increase patient safety and promote quality in hospitals. As a CNL, I don’t have traditional patient assignments, but stay up-to-date by performing rounds on a specific patient population and work Monday through Friday during normal business hours to decrease the fragmentation of care that is a result from having so many different shifts. I interact with hospital personnel, patients, and family members on a day-to-day basis. Fairfield Medical Center is very progressive to institute this model that will provide excellent patient care and I am proud to be a part of it.”

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