



San Francisco Welcome Back Center Newsletter

Issue 20

Winter 2010

From the Welcome Back Initiative Director

This has been a busy and productive year at the San Francisco Welcome Back Center. At the same time, it has been a challenging year because of the overall economic recession in the US and especially in California. Schools have been forced to cut sections of their programs as well as hours of operation, and new employment opportunities are harder to come by. Nonetheless, the health sector is one of the few areas of the economy that continues to grow, even if it is at a slower pace than just three years ago. With the passage of the Health Reform legislation, we expect to see a new wave of growth in our field in the next years. In order to provide health coverage to the additional 30 million people that will be covered by the new Affordable Care Act, the nation will need many more health professionals, especially professionals like you, who can bring to the health workforce cultural and linguistic diversity.

The SF WBC continues its operations in our new office in the John Adams Campus of City College. Now that the renovation of the campus is complete, we find ourselves in a larger office on the first floor of the building in room 102.

As of November 2010, the SF WBC has identified a total of 2,573 participants. 45% are physicians, 27% are nurses, 11 % are dentists and 17% are psychologists, speech therapists, pharmacists, among others. You come from 122 countries, primarily from Mexico. We currently serve and active caseload of 1,218 partici-

pants.

The outcomes of your efforts continue to be impressive: 379 of you have validated your credentials; 325 passed licensing exams; 98 obtained licenses in your original professions; 175 advanced in your career ladder; 270 obtained employment in the health sector for the first time; 40 physicians were accepted into residency training programs, and 110 of you chose to pursue other professional alternatives.

In 2009 we had 6 physicians match into residency training programs and one more matched in 2010. This year we have 14 physicians applying to residency training programs and we are looking forward to many successful results in the 2011 Match.

In September, the SF WBC received a grant from the Office of Minority Health that enabled us to completely renew our lending library. Thanks to this generous grant, our new 2010 editions reflect the recent changes in the USMLEs, NCLEX, NBDEs, and FPGEE. The library will be dedicated to the memory of our friend and colleague Zoe Cardoza Clayson who passed away last June. Dr. Clayson was one of the founders of the SF WBC and designed the initiative's evaluation strategy.

We continue to expand our collaboration with other agencies in the Bay Area. This summer we began to explore the feasibility of launching a new workshop for our dentists to provide them with a comprehensive

review of their professional options. We are also working with the Native American Health Center and the University of the Pacific on a project to deliver a Dental Assistant with Extended Functions program via distance education as a viable alternative for our dentists who may not pursue taking the NBDE and apply to the International Dental Programs.

This fall, we began a new partnership with Skyline Community College in San Bruno that enables us to establish a presence in the peninsula making our services more easily accessible to our participants from the South Bay. Our educational case manager, Teresa Betancourt, is now holding office hours on Mondays at Skyline's new SparkPoint Center. This is a one-stop center where students can access multiple services related to employment and career development, work support, public benefits, financial literacy, and asset building. Skyline College is now also offering our accelerated, health-focused English as a Second Language Curriculum through its English Language Institute.



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New York Welcome Back Center Opens!

The New York City Welcome Back at LaGuardia Community College has opened its doors to help internationally trained healthcare professionals get back into a healthcare profession in New York State.

New York City is one of the most diverse cities in the United States, and the demand for healthcare professionals who are culturally and linguistically diverse and competent is high. Foreign-trained health professionals, often underemployed or unemployed, can help fill that need.

Working in conjunction with the College's Workforce1 Healthcare Career Center, the New York City Welcome Back Center will guide individuals trained in a healthcare profession in their native countries in the process of becoming licensed in New York in their specialty or another healthcare area as they work towards licensure in their field.

The Center offers licensure guidance for the following professions: physicians; nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses and Vocational Registered Nurses; psychologists; social workers; lab technicians and technologists; occupational therapists; dentists, and pharmacists. The Center also

offers career counseling; referrals to support services, such as healthcare-specific ESL classes and training programs in alternative healthcare careers; volunteer opportunities, and job readiness/search and placement services through the Workforce1 Healthcare Career Center.

"The New York City Welcome Back Center fills two important needs: for healthcare facilities in the city that need not only bilingual healthcare workers, but those who understand different cultures as well, and for internationally trained healthcare professionals living in New York who are looking for work in their field," said Sandra Watson, Dean of Workforce Development in LaGuardia's Division of Adult and Continuing Education. "It makes perfect sense."

"The New York City Welcome Back Center gave me an opportunity to improve my quality of life," said Yezenia Martinez-Moreno, a psychologist from Colombia. "I am now working as a phlebotomist and working towards my professional goals."

"New York must take advantage of the skills and knowledge of internationally trained health care workers," said Dr. Peter Katopes, LaGuardia's

Interim President. "LaGuardia wants to assist trained, qualified physicians, nurses, pharmacists and others in obtaining the one-on-one help they need so they can get back to work and help their fellow New Yorkers stay healthy."

For more information email nycwbc@lagcc.cuny.edu, call (718) 609-7530 or visit www.laguardia.edu/nycwbc.

Located in Long Island City, Queens in New York City, LaGuardia Community College, part of the City University of New York, is a nationally recognized leader among community colleges. Founded in 1971, the College is recognized as an innovator in educating students who are under prepared for college work and/or are not primary English speakers. A catalyst for development in western Queens and beyond, LaGuardia serves New Yorkers and immigrants from 153 countries through over 50 majors and certificate programs, enabling career advancement and transfer to four-year colleges at twice the national average.

Visit www.laguardia.edu to learn more.

INTRODUCTION TO THE US HEALTH CARE

The Welcome Back Program is pleased to announce its Spring 2011 series of noncredit courses, specifically designed to assist internationally-trained health care professionals. The location for these courses will be the CCSF Main Campus, 50 Phelan Avenue, Cloud Hall Room 312. Call 415-561-1833 to enroll.

Organization of Health Services by L. Finocchio: January 22nd and January 29th

This course will offer an overview of the financing and organization of health services in the U.S. and will address the major functional components of health systems, with special emphasis on health insurance, the uninsured, and the organization of hospitals and the "safety-net."

Public Health & Society by M. Ogbu: Pending

This course will provide an overview of the nature of health and wellness in the U.S. and will compare and contrast elements of a health and biomedical approach to health and in the context of American's core beliefs and values. The history and evolution of biomedicine will be addressed.

Health Professions & Practice by M. Ogbu: Pending

This course was developed to give participants an overview of health care practices and professional culture and will describe the major health professions and occupations, educational pathways, the organization and culture of their practice, licensure, and other regulations affecting professional practices and delivery of health services.

From the Welcome Back Initiative Director

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The SF WBC is also the lead site of the Welcome Back Initiative (WBI). Our center's staff trains the staff of new centers, conducts the overall evaluation activities, leads the advocacy efforts of the group, and promotes and represents our work at different venues. In this role, the SF WBC planned and coordinated a two-day planning retreat for the staff of the then eight Welcome Back Centers in San Antonio, TX last January. This was the first time we all gathered together and we were able to develop an initial draft to guide our work as we aim to strengthen our collaboration, plan our advocacy efforts on behalf of foreign trained health professionals, and position ourselves to pursue funding as a group.

In August, we trained the staff that will start the newest Welcome Back Center in Denver, Colorado next year. The ninth Welcome Back Center will be hosted by The Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning and is initially supported by the Colorado Refugee Resettlement Program.

The overall outcomes from the entire WBI are also impressive. Together, we have served 10,627 persons from 150 countries.

Because of your accomplishments, the work of the WBI was invited to present our work at an international conference in The Hague, Netherlands focusing on successful strategies to support immigrant integration. The WBI was one of 12 programs from all over the world presented as the most promising practices in this area. In addition, our program has been presented at numerous conferences in the country. Your achievements are the essence of our presentations, and these in turn, become the tools with which we continue to make the point that immigrant professional integration is and should remain a priority in the US.

Next year will mark the 10th anniversary of the SF WBC and we are planning on having a reunion for all the "alumni". We will keep you informed about our plans as they develop. Many of you have been able to re-enter the health workforce and we applaud your success. As you look back on where you were a few years ago, I invite you to consider supporting the work we continue to do with the hundreds of individuals who come to our center every year. We have added a new link to our redesigned website where you can make a donation to the SF WBC. Any

contribution will make a difference to someone who, like you, is working to find her or his way back to employment in the health sector. Your contributions are fully tax deductible.

In closing, I want to invite you to share with us your comments, ideas, and suggestions to make our services better. Please come by the office, or email us.

Wishing you and your families a happy, healthy, and prosperous holiday season,

Jose Ramón Fernández-Peña, PhD



Kris Mason and Jose Ramón Fernández-Peña, presenting at The Hague

NEW LIBRARY

Thanks to a generous grant from the Office of Minority Health, the San Francisco Welcome Back Center was able to fully update the participant lending library with 2010 edition books and test preparation materials for our participants to borrow.

The new books include: Kaplan USMLE Step 1 series and many First Aid USMLE books (Step 1, 2 - CK and CS - and Match), Saunders and Mosby's NCLEX-PN and RN books (different series), NBDE (Part 1 and 2) Dental Decks, FPGEE books and flash-cards, and many others.

A total of 135 books, flashcards and decks to help you succeed when taking your licensure and certification exams.

Check our website for a full list.

We are asking for a \$20 or \$50 fully refundable cash deposit per book. For more information please call Douglas Vasquez @ 415-561-1833.

OTHER COURSES

Workplace English for Speakers of Other Languages

Skyline College, San Bruno—Tuesday & Thursday 9:35 am - 10:50 am. Info @ (650) 738-7089

Health Care Communication and Culture—English Language Skills for Health Professionals

English Center, Oakland—Tuesday 7:30pm - 9:30pm, Saturday 9:00 am - 1:30 pm. Info @ (510) 836-6700

NCLEX Review 120 hours/16 weeks (Two 8-week sessions)

English Center, Oakland—Tuesday & Thursday 1:00 pm - 4:45 pm. Info @ (510) 836-6700

Staff

José Ramón Fernández-Peña
Initiative Director

Teresa Betancourt
Educational Case Manager

Adolfo L. Echevery
Research Associate

Douglas Vasquez
Management Assistant

Office Hours

**Monday, Tuesday and
Thursday**

8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday

8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Friday

8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

To make an appointment with the Educational Case Manager or to confirm class or workshop registration, please call:
(415) 561-1833

San Francisco

Welcome Back Center

City College of San Francisco
John Adams Campus
1860 Hayes Street, Room 102
San Francisco, CA 94117

Welcome Back Initiative

1600 Holloway Ave HSS-301
San Francisco, CA 94132



Mission Statement

"To build a bridge between the pool of internationally trained health workers living in the United States and the need for linguistically and culturally competent health services in underserved communities."

Other Welcome Back Centers

San Diego

Grossmont College
3955 Bonita Road
Building A, 1st Floor
Bonita, CA 91902
(619) 409-6417

Boston

Bunker Hill Community College
250 New Rutherford Ave.
Boston, MA 02129
(617) 228-4226

Rhode Island

Dorcas Place
220 Elmwood Ave
Providence, RI 02907
(401) 273-8866 x155

Puget Sound

Highline Community College
Building 9 – 207
2400 S. 240th St MS 9-3
Des Moines, WA 98198
(206) 878-3710 x3345

Suburban Maryland

8630 Fenton Street, 10th Floor
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(240) 777.3168

New York

LaGuardia Community College
31-10 Thomson Avenue
Long Island City, NY
(718) 482.5498

Alamo Area

563 SW 40th Street
San Antonio, TX 78237
(210) 485.0245

Colorado

Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning
1610 Emerson Street
Denver, CO 80218
(303) 863.0188 x113

DONATE

If you want to make a donation to the San Francisco Welcome Back Center, please visit our website www.welcomebackinitiative.org/sf/, click on the *DONATE* tab and follow directions.

Your donation is tax deductible.

Every contribution makes a difference, no matter how big or small.

www.welcomebackinitiative.org

