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Oklahoma Health Care Workforce Resources Center Names Interim Executive Director; Center to Coordinate Efforts to Meet Health Care Workforce Needs

The governing board of the newly formed Oklahoma Health Care Workforce Resources Center has named Sheryl McLain interim executive director, effective immediately. She will lead efforts to establish and position the Center for addressing both current and future health care workforce needs. A search will continue for a permanent executive director with the expectation of filling the position by the end of the year. McLain will be a loaned executive of the Oklahoma Hospital Association (OHA) through 2007 and will also continue serving as the OHA's vice president of workforce initiatives. From 1985-2006, McLain served as vice president of communications for the OHA, overseeing communications, marketing, media relations and issues management. Assuming oversight of OHA communication functions will be Susie Wallace, who has served as director of communications for the OHA for the past three years.

Since 2001, McLain has served as the OHA's staff liaison for workforce initiatives. She has provided leadership and staff support to a number of broad-based workforce groups including: the OHA's Workforce Steering Committee and the committees on recruitment, retention, education & training, and funding. Since 2004, she has served as a member of the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development (GCWED), serving as one of two individuals representing the health care industry. She served on the GCWED's executive committee in 2005 as chair of its public awareness and outreach committee, and played a key role in the development of the GCWED's Health Care Industry Workforce report, released in June 2006. In 2005, she was appointed as a member of the Governor's Task Force for Health Care Workforce Resources, the group which worked for passage of SB 1394 to create the Health Care Workforce Resources Center for Oklahoma. In 2006, McLain was named to Oklahoma's core team for the National Governor's Association Policy Academy on State Sector Strategies: Innovative Workforce Policies to Address Worker and Employer Needs. This group will be developing a strategic workforce plan for

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Oklahoma's health care, aerospace and manufacturing industries. McLain obtained a bachelor of arts degree in journalism from the University of Central Oklahoma and earned a master of science degree in health administration from the University of Oklahoma.

During the past legislative session Senate Bill 1394, by Sen. Susan Paddock (D-Ada) and Rep. Doug Cox (R-Grove) was passed by the Oklahoma Legislature, signed by Gov. Brad Henry and became effective Nov. 1, 2006. It established the Health Care Workforce Resources Center to serve as the coordinating entity for the state's efforts to meet supply and demand needs for Oklahoma's health care workforce. If current trends continue, Oklahoma is expected to have a shortage of more than 3,000 nurses, 500 lab technicians, 400 physical therapists, 300 surgical technologists and 200 occupational therapists by 2012. Other clinical workers in short supply include pharmacists, imaging technologists and respiratory therapists.

Primary goals of the Center are to: 1) Ensure Oklahoma's current education and training systems have the resources and support necessary to produce the number of health care workers needed; 2) Increase the job satisfaction and retention rates of current health care workers; and 3) Increase the level of awareness among young people and adults of the opportunities available in health care; therefore, increasing the number of individuals entering a health career.

To date, support for the Center has come from in-kind contributions or commitments from the following organizations: the Oklahoma Hospital Association, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education, OU Medical Center, Oklahoma Department of Commerce, Oklahoma Nurses Association, and the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. A public/private partnership, funding options for the Center could include: monetary contributions, in-kind donations or services, public or private foundation grants, contractual arrangements, fee-for-service products, and state or federal appropriated dollars.

The Health Care Workforce Resources Center, which will be housed in the Presbyterian Research Park, Oklahoma City, will become an affiliate of the Communities Foundation of Oklahoma (CFO). CFO serves as a vehicle for donors across the state of Oklahoma to contribute assets to charitable concerns of their choice.

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The following individuals have been appointed to serve on the Health Care Workforce Resources Center Governing Board: Sen. Susan Paddock (D-Ada); Sen. Brian Crain (R-Tulsa); Rep. Doug Cox (R-Grove); Rep. David Braddock (D-Altus); Dr. Debbie Blanke, associate vice chancellor for academic affairs, designee for the chancellor for higher education; Dr. Phil Berkenbile, state director, Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education; Dr. Ramona Paul, assistant state superintendent of public instruction, designee for the state superintendent of public instruction; Jane Tune, RN, director of nursing, Oklahoma Forensic Center, designee for the secretary of health; Dr. Doyle Fortney, chief of human resources, Oklahoma State Department of Health, designee for the commissioner of health; Ron Webb, CEO, Valley View Regional Hospital, Ada, representing the Governor's Council on Workforce and Economic Development; Dr. Carole Sullivan, dean, College of Allied Health, representing the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center; Jauna Head, senior budget analyst, representing the Office of State Finance; Dr. Steve Eddy, associate professor of family medicine, director of continuing medical education, representing the Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences; Clare Delaney, RN, representing the Oklahoma Nurses Association; Dr. Sherri Baker, representing the Oklahoma State Medical Association; Dr. Michael K. Cooper, representing the Oklahoma Osteopathic Association; Marietta Lynch, RN, director of quality services, Oklahoma Association of Health Care Providers, representing the long-term care industry; and Claudean Harrison, representing the general public as a lay member.

The next meeting of the governing board will be held on Feb. 7.

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