



Columbus Sees Impact of National Nursing Shortage

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The economy is in a recession. But one industry is booming. The US has a nursing shortage, which is expected to worsen, as the need for healthcare grows. And it is having a local impact.

“It just seemed like a natural choice for me. And I just love dealing with people and helping people,” said a nursing student at Columbus Technical College, Sarah Filipiak.

Filipek is one of 78 students in the Columbus Technical College nursing program that is spread over three campuses. the program, an even mix of first and second career students.

“Had people in the past with masters, bachelors in other professions that have come back to nursing and many of them said they had the heart for nursing initially,” said Lisa O’steen.

“It’s what I call a mature profession in the sense that nursing is physically demanding, it’s mentally, educationally demanding from a knowledge base, and nursing is very emotionally demanding,” said Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer, Babs McKnight.

The American Association of Colleges of Nurses has found that the need for nurses grows by about 3% each year. And it’s very difficult to meet that need. Something that McKnight says is no different here at the Medical Center.

“We have an opportunity locally to receive students from quite a few nursing programs that might ease that burden a little bit, but the reality is, is that the needs of the population as we age and grow and as diseases become more

complex are going to require greater and greater need for, particularly registered nurse hours in the in patient or the hospital setting,” said McKnight.

O'steen points out that even more urgent than the nursing shortage, is the shortage of nursing faculty.

“To teach, you really have to have a love for that and it has to be something you really want to do. And the nursing schools are having problems because they're not able to attract the faculty to teach.”

Something O'steen says is no different at Columbus Tech, especially as the college looks toward opening a new health science building.

McKnight says acute care nurses are the greatest need at the medical center, although there are also opportunities in outpatient care.

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