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**WHATCOM COMMUNITY COLLEGE RECEIVES \$400,000  
HEET INNOVATION GRANT TO CONTINUE HEALTHCARE TRAINING**

*WCC leads collaborative effort among colleges, local industry*

**Bellingham, WA, Aug. 13, 2013** – A nearly \$400,000 state grant will provide continued funding of a Whatcom Community College project designed to fill a critical training gap for nursing students. The Hospital Employee Education and Training (HEET) Innovation grant supports the creation of medical surgery ward simulation curriculum. The coursework will replicate real-world patient care experiences traditionally found in clinical placements. Whatcom is the lead agency on the collaborative project that includes Bellingham Technical College, Skagit Valley College, SEIU Healthcare 1199NW Multi-Employer Training and Education Fund, the Northwest Workforce Council, PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center, and the Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Advancement.

The project, which last year received \$189,000 in state funding, will leverage the colleges' current and expanding simulation labs, equipment and faculty expertise. State-of-the-art simulation labs are a highlight of Whatcom's new Health Professions Education Center, which will open for classes in September.

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In addition to helping nursing students and active healthcare professionals gain clinical experience, the WCC initiative addresses the shortage of employer-based clinical training opportunities in Whatcom and Skagit counties as well as across the state. The curriculum Whatcom is developing will also include scenarios involving coordination of care among teams of health professionals and across general medical patient situations. This skill set is critical under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which includes access to care coordination as a key strategy for improving the quality and cost effectiveness of healthcare.

The second year of the project is focused on the roll-out of the new curriculum, recruitment of students and student support. Once completed, the new curriculum will also be made available for use by other colleges across the state.

The grant is part of \$2 million in state support awarded to six community and technical colleges to develop or expand and evaluate innovative training programs for incumbent hospital workers that lead to careers in nursing and other high-demand healthcare fields. The purpose of the funds is to build new programs that enhance the accessibility of college education for hospital workers, lead to increased capacity of the college system in nursing and other high-demand healthcare fields, and bring greater diversity to the healthcare workforce.

Whatcom Community College is an accredited, comprehensive two-year college serving more than 11,000 students annually. On its 71-acre campus in Bellingham, WA, and through on-line courses, Whatcom offers transfer degrees, professional and technical training programs, as well as basic education, job skills, and Continuing and Community Education classes. For more information about WCC, visit [www.whatcom.ctc.edu](http://www.whatcom.ctc.edu).

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