***The Maryland Higher Education Commission Awards Nearly $1.5 Million to Maryland Nursing Faculty***

BALTIMORE, Maryland – (April 6, 2021) – The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) Secretary, Dr. James D. Fielder, announced that $1,470,000was awarded to 36 Maryland nursing faculty members in an ongoing effort to increase the number of doctoral prepared nurse faculty in Maryland.

“These types of proactive measures are necessary to keep Maryland health care providers equipped and ready to meet the demands of the current pandemic, while educating students about potential medical situations and concerns that may impact us in the future,” said Governor Larry Hogan.

The 36 nursing faculty are employed at 12 nursing programs across Maryland and were awarded the Nurse Educator Doctoral Grants for Practice and Dissertation Research (NEDG). The recipients will receive awards between $5,000 and $60,000 to expedite the completion of their terminal degree and reduce existing student loan debt.

“This is one more example of how MHEC is investing in Maryland's future,” Secretary Fielder said. “Despite the pandemic, MHEC continues to prepare to meet the need for highly trained and educated nurses to become the faculty of the future.”

While 13 percent of nurses hold a graduate degree, less than 1 percent have a doctoral degree. Nurses with doctorates are needed to teach future generations of nurses and to conduct research that becomes the basis for improvements in nursing science and practice. Research is showing a critical need for an increase in highly educated nurses and an improved education system to address the nursing shortage expected to impact the state by 2025 through implementation of the following goals:

· Increase the proportion of nurses with a baccalaureate degree to 80 percent;

· Double the number of nurses with a doctorate;

· Ensure that nurses engage in lifelong learning; and

· Build an infrastructure for the collection and analysis of inter-professional data.

The Deans and Directors of Nursing Programs at six Maryland universities and six Maryland community colleges recognized and nominated nurse faculty for the awards.

* Allegany College of Maryland- 4 awards
* Baltimore City Community College- 2 awards
* Bowie State University- 2 awards
* Carroll Community College- 2 awards
* Cecil College- 1 award
* Community College of Baltimore County- 1 award
* Coppin State University-10 awards
* Howard Community College- 2 awards
* Notre Dame of Maryland University- 3 awards
* Salisbury University- 2 awards
* Towson University- 5 awards
* University of Maryland, Baltimore- 2 awards

This is an annual process instituted in 2012, with new nominations due every September. The program is recognized as effective in the retention of new nurse faculty. The findings of the most recent program evaluation indicate 93 percent of the NEDG recipients remain employed full time at a Maryland nursing program.

The Fiscal Year 2021 Nurse Support Program II (NSP II) Nurse Educator Doctoral Grants for Practice and Dissertation Research (NEDG) were awarded by the Maryland Higher Education Commission, administrator for the Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC).

The Nurse Support Program is funded by HSCRC and administered by MHEC.  Over the years, the Nurse Support Program, both NSP I and NSP II (originally Nurse Education Support Program) has been expanded to encourage new and innovative approaches to address the challenges and demands facing nursing.

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