

Letter of Commitment Between UCESC and Atlantic Health Regarding the AHS Peace Grant

Dear Dr. O'Keefe:

On behalf of Union County Educational Services Commission (UCESC) Project SEARCH, I am pleased to submit this letter demonstrating our commitment to collaborate with Atlantic Health System on the proposed program, *Atlantic Health System Pathway to Ensuring Access and Clinical Excellence in Nursing (AHS PEACE)*. I understand that this grant, should it be funded, will seek to expand and diversify the pipeline of nursing professionals to fill high-quality middle and high-skilled jobs that will strengthen the healthcare system in New Jersey while advancing health equity.

UCESC has successfully collaborated with Atlantic Health System since 2016 to operate the Project SEARCH employment skills training program on-site at Overlook Medical Center. The SEARCH program has since been replicated at AHS's Newton Medical Center. AHS has been a strong partner in this endeavor, providing a rich training environment and meaningful internship opportunities for upwards of 70 students with disabilities during this timeframe.

UCESC Project SEARCH will partner with Atlantic Health System as an *Education and Training* partner and will serve on the Advisory Committee, recruit and support trainees who are enrolled in high school as seniors and young adults with physical and developmental disabilities who are interested in healthcare.

A total contribution of \$60,000 will be made in the form of leveraged resources to Atlantic Health System from UCESC Project SEARCH in support of the proposed program, as described below.

- Staff Time (0.4% FTE, \$30,000 annual salary, 5 years of commitment) - \$60,000
 - We will serve on the Advisory Committee and its Nursing Assistant Working Group subcommittee
 - We will engage in data collection and sharing practices to support reporting of the DOL performance outcome measures; we will track, trend, and report on the following metrics: Students applied, Students enrolled, Students with AHS job offers post-graduation, Disabilities BRG activities, AHS Educational activities
 - We will continue to support building a diverse and inclusive nursing workforce in collaboration with AHS PEACE Advisory Committee directed training opportunities and initiatives
 - We will provide a pipeline of highly trained, diverse candidates for employment opportunities at AHS
 - We will schedule ongoing education and training to AHS team members regarding DEIA
 - We will provide community education to the AHS primary service area regarding the need for employment opportunities for young adults with disabilities.

- We will serve as content experts and full participating members on the AHS Disabilities BRG
- We will support, consultation, and resources to AHS team members who may have children or family members with disabilities
- We will meet with the Program Assistant Director and Program Manager bimonthly to communicate student needs and opportunities for upcoming employment at AHS (past history demonstrates successful onboarding and retention of graduated students)
- We will identify students with abilities and aptitude for employment in nursing units and patient facing roles (transport, EVS, equipment technicians, etc.)
- We will meet with Program Assistant Director and Program Manager bimonthly to identify training and educational opportunities for students with suitable abilities and aptitudes to create subspecialized internship opportunities (equipment technicians, nurse aides, central sterile technicians.)
- We will work with Program Assistant Director and Program Manager to create vocational pathways for targeted students, i.e., transport to equipment technicians/central sterile to nurse aide roles and positions.

Atlantic Health System will be providing UCESC Project SEARCH a total of \$258,400 of grant funds (years 1-4; \$64,600 annually) to cover the costs of two job coaches (equal to 1.6 FTEs) to increase the number of youth trained and placed at Atlantic Health System sites.

We are thrilled to be involved as a partner for the proposed *Atlantic Health System Pathway to Ensuring Access and Clinical Excellence in Nursing* program. This program will certainly provide our students with increased opportunities to explore new pathways and skilled entry level positions in the healthcare sector, which will support the overall goal of building a diverse and more inclusive nursing workforce.

Sincerely,

Josh Bornstein, M.Ed.
 Director of Special Projects, Union County Educational Services Commission
 Program Director for Project SEARCH

Trish O’Keefe, PhD, RN
 President, Morristown Medical Center
 Senior Vice President and Chief Nurse Executive, Atlantic Health System

