The Nursing Facility Employees Scholarship Program has been a very effective tool for attracting and retaining staff at Rice Care Center. Those that have graduated from our program have the credibility that comes with experience but also that fresh perspective that comes with recent education. The program impacts our facility in three important ways. First, by helping us fill critical staffing shortages. This year alone three graduates have started working at Rice Care Center. 

Second, the program is keeping staff in the long-term care field and making them even more valuable components to our facility. They are the swing to self-sufficiency. I am a single mother and my change in status will help in a promising future for my daughter. Eliminating this program may cause [fewer] people to work in long-term care and [result] in less qualified care for seniors. 

Third, the program enhances the quality of our care and skills [attained] to serve the community, the elderly, the disadvantaged, and the state at large. It has provided us with consistent staffing who are dedicated and interested because of the coursework they are involved in at school. They bring knowledge and a 'learning' attitude to the workplace. "The Nursing Facility Employees Scholarship Program has helped me as a person to achieve higher quality care for our elderly." - Kristi Shamp of Alexandria has worked at Knute Pelican Valley Health Center. She is currently working on her degree in social work. 

"The program has helped me as a person to know that so many people care about my education. I really enjoy working with the elderly population and I hope to work as an LPN at the Clara City Care Center until I retire."- Nancy Kollmann, RN/Director of Nursing, Good Shepherd Community, Sauk Rapids.

"My income is barely enough to take care of my family's needs, and I don't have savings that can pay for college. My income is barely enough to take care of my family's needs, and I don't have savings that can pay for college. "Three months into the school year my husband was laid off from his job. Neither one of us were expecting that, but I decided to take advantage of the scholarship and go back to work full time. Money raises. This makes it impossible to afford the cost of education classes and books. If the program is stopped it will be impossible to continue in school. It will be impossible to continue in school." I will be forced to decide between this job I love or school loans with full-time school and not being able to afford to work in a nursing home." - Ann R. Dirks, Facility Administrator, Park View Care Center, Buffalo.

"I am finally a registered nurse, which fulfilled my individual educational goals and to use the skills [learned] to render better service to the elderly. It has also promoted my family's values in regard to education, and uplifted my spirit and morale. I will use the skills [learned] to serve the community, the elderly, the disadvantaged, and the state at large." - Cletus Nkwenti of Spring Park has been a NAR for three years as an activity assistant and CNA at Bethany Community for four years as a TMA. She completed her Practical Nursing program in July 2004, and plans to return to school in Fall 2004 to start working on her nursing degree.

"I really enjoy working with the elderly population and I hope to work as an LPN at the Clara City Care Center until I retire."- Jan Mulder of Clara City has worked as a nursing assistant at Clara City Care Center for four years. She is currently working on her degree in December 2004.

"I really enjoy working with the elderly population and I hope to work as an LPN at the Clara City Care Center until I retire." - Nancy Stratman, Facility Administrator, Rice Care Center, Willmar.

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the scholarship program allows facilities to improve the standard of care by further educating and training existing staff to better perform their care responsibilities, care providers, and registered nurses. 

The student-employee agreement must provide job-related training that would likely lead to educational opportunities which otherwise would not be available, and the student-employee will not be eligible for scholarship reimbursement. Moreover, the scholarship program is perhaps the quintessential low-input, high-yield venture, providing career advancement opportunities to line staff and low-wage workers. It is not merely a luxury item for the state's eldercare provider community, but rather is indispensable in helping to resolve their immediate and future workforce challenges. Its continued application and growth will help ensure that each nursing facility is equipped with sufficient and well-trained staff to meet the ever-growing demands and needs of their field.

How the program works:

From July 1, 2001, to June 30, 2003, each participating facility was allowed to receive a 75-cent per resident day reimbursement from the state. The program itself costs very little, and if eliminated, the actual savings will be minimal. Recent projections by House Fiscal Analysis forecast the program's costs to be less than $740,000 annually through fiscal year 2007. When compared to the actual savings, the program would be minimal. The investment is not merely a luxury item for the state's eldercare provider community, but rather is indispensable in helping to resolve their immediate and future workforce challenges. Its continued application and growth will help ensure that each nursing facility is equipped with sufficient and well-trained staff to meet the ever-growing demands and needs of their field.

Moreover, the Nursing Facility Employee Scholarship Program is perhaps the quintessential low-input, high-yield venture, providing career advancement opportunities to line staff and low-wage workers. It is not merely a luxury item for the state's eldercare provider community, but rather is indispensable in helping to resolve their immediate and future workforce challenges. Its continued application and growth will help ensure that each nursing facility is equipped with sufficient and well-trained staff to meet the ever-growing demands and needs of their field.

The population of Minnesotans age 65 and older is expected to double in the coming years, and the state's eldercare provider community needs long-term care providers, employees, and the communities they serve. This program provides much-needed financial support for health care facilities to improve the standard of care by further educating and training existing staff to better perform their care responsibilities, care providers, and registered nurses. The program must provide job-related training that would likely lead to educational opportunities which otherwise would not be available, and the student-employee will not be eligible for scholarship reimbursement.

Impact of the Scholarship Program

Minnesota's long-term care facilities are facing a growing workforce challenge. Over the past two decades, staff shortages have become acute, as an aging workforce, low wages, and lack of career advancement opportunities have hurt efforts to recruit and retain a sufficient number of employees to care for Minnesota's aging population. Given the future health care needs of Minnesotans, it is critical that the Legislature has the opportunity to make certain that such progress is sustained. Simply put, the Nursing Facility Employee Scholarship Program is a small investment that helps go a long way for long-term care providers, employees, and the communities they serve. By providing money for nursing employee scholarships, Minnesota has begun to address the additional problem of current staff shortages.

The Nursing Facility Employee Scholarship Program is a small investment that helps go a long way for long-term care providers, employees, and the communities they serve. By providing money for nursing employee scholarships, Minnesota has begun to address the additional problem of current staff shortages. Certainly, we cannot sit idly by and ignore the statewide staffing problems facing the long-term care community, simply hoping that more nurses or students choose to pursue careers in long-term care. Instead, a more proactive strategy is needed. The program itself costs very little, and if eliminated, the actual savings will be minimal. Recent projections by House Fiscal Analysis forecast the program's costs to be less than $740,000 annually through fiscal year 2007. When compared to the actual savings, the program would be minimal. The investment is not merely a luxury item for the state's eldercare provider community, but rather is indispensable in helping to resolve their immediate and future workforce challenges. Its continued application and growth will help ensure that each nursing facility is equipped with sufficient and well-trained staff to meet the ever-growing demands and needs of their field.