



For Immediate Release
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**Nursing Partnership Formed with Florida Memorial College,
St. Thomas University and University of Miami**
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Provides Gift to Launch Program

Miami, Fla. - In an effort to increase the number of nursing graduates and help combat a critical shortage of skilled nursing talent, Florida Memorial College, St. Thomas University and the University of Miami have formed a unique educational partnership.

The details of the partnership were announced today at a breakfast at the Hotel Intercontinental in downtown Miami.

Created through a \$1 million gift from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida (BCBSF), the south Florida program was designed to increase educational and professional opportunities for minorities and will help address the pressing issue for well-qualified nurses to meet communities' needs for high quality and compassionate health care.

"A key area of focus in BCBSF's philanthropic investments over the past year has been to nursing programs at the state's public and private four-year institutions because we know that the nursing shortage poses a severe threat to the future of our health care system," said Kenneth G. Sellers, group vice president for BCBSF in Miami. "Through our support of nursing education, we believe we can put more nurses on the front lines of health care right here in Florida – and more nurses equates to better care."

The nursing education partnership will allow students studying nursing at Florida Memorial College and St. Thomas University to complete their training, education and clinical experience at the University of Miami where students will graduate with dual bachelor's degrees in nursing and biology.

"Students who come to the University of Miami School of Nursing will graduate as nurses who have been trained by the best minds, exposed to the latest technology, and educated to be good problem solvers, team players and forward thinkers," said Donna E. Shalala, president of the University of Miami and formerly the nation's longest serving Secretary for Health and Human Services. "Dean Nilda Peragallo is committed to reaching this goal for nursing education and making a major contribution to the nursing profession and to the healthcare of our community and our nation."

Due in large part to the endowments established by BCBSF, the three Miami-based higher education institutions report that:

- In the fall of 2004, five science students from St. Thomas University will be admitted to the nursing portion of the dual baccalaureate program at the University of Miami.
- In the fall of 2005, more than a dozen honors science students from Florida Memorial College will enter the nursing portion of the dual baccalaureate program at the University of Miami.

“This collaboration helps Florida Memorial College to continue its efforts to enhance quality of life for people, especially those living in the urban communities,” said Albert E. Smith, president, Florida Memorial College. “We thank our partners University of Miami, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida and Economic Opportunity Family Health Center for their wisdom in supporting our Jessie Trice Community Nursing Program.”

“The addition of this new and exciting nursing program at St. Thomas University uniquely places us to play a role in bringing full-service quality health care to the people of Florida by supporting minority students in the healthcare professions,” said Monsignor Franklyn Casale, president, St. Thomas University. “We will continue to enroll and support competent, skilled nurses, which is important in expanding access to health care for all Floridians.”

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Florida Center for Nursing
16 member board
appointed by governor

UCF

workforce planning

Presm Board Health Care Fuller
St Mary's to Tenet

Dr. Carol Quinn

\$500,000 to create nurse staffing
model pilot