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Labor & Workforce Development Agency

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Schwarzenegger

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Labor and Workforce Development Agency's Budget is Victorious Governor's Nurse Education Initiative and EEEEC are a Go!

Sacramento - The Governor's 2005/06 budget gives the Labor and Workforce Development Agency (LWDA) the necessary tools and resources it needs to spearhead major efforts to increase capacity for nurse education programs, as well as to go after the bad guys in the California underground economy via the Economic & Employment Enforcement Coalition (EEEC).

The budget gives the Administration's nursing effort a substantial shot in the arm with a \$20 million investment for the Governor's Nurse Education Initiative. The money is distributed among several agencies, including the California Community Colleges (CCC) and the California State University (CSU). In collaboration with the CCC, the CSU and UC systems, and other state agencies, LWDA will continue to lead an effort to expand nurse education programs to try and avert a long-term nursing shortage crisis.

"The nurse shortage in California is real. And, it will only continue to get worse if we don't find creative solutions to expand programs so there's an ability to accept more qualified people interested in a nursing career," said LWDA Secretary Victoria Bradshaw. "This initiative helps drive this effort because it not only provides funding, but it also encourages all the stakeholders -- including the private sector community such as hospitals -- to get involved and help fund nurse education programs to increase capacity."

Along with the Governor's Nurse Education Initiative, the budget also gives LWDA the ability to put some muscle behind current laws by expanding its enforcement efforts against businesses operating in the underground economy. Comprised of the Labor Agency's Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE), the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) and the Employment Development Department, along with the Contractors State License Board and the U.S. Department of Labor, the Economic & Employment Enforcement Coalition will help level the playing field for California businesses and workers that are at a competitive disadvantage with those operating in the underground economy.

“This collaborative effort of state and federal government partners will not only help with more statewide vigorous and targeted enforcement, but will also help us educate the business community and its workers about their responsibilities and rights,” said Bradshaw.

The legislature approved \$5.5 million in non-general fund money and 54 positions for LWDA’s EEEEC (plus \$1 million and 11 positions for the Contractors State License Board) to add badly needed field enforcement positions throughout the state, including the central valley – which had been neglected in years prior to this administration.

Formed in July 2002, LWDA is the state’s first cabinet-level agency dedicated to labor issues. The labor agency was formed to simplify, coordinate and improve operation of programs that protect and provide services to California’s workers and employers. For more information on LWDA please visit our website at www.labor.ca.gov.

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