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Augusta Tech and University Health Care System Partner to Establish a New Health Science Campus

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Leaders from Augusta Technical College and University Health Care System signed a letter of intent (LOI) today on a partnership that will greatly expand the healthcare workforce for the greater Augusta region.

The goal of the program is to graduate a minimum of 200 nurses a year within five years of inception, according to University Health Care System Chief Executive Officer James R. Davis.

"We are at a critical point in healthcare staffing in Augusta," Mr. Davis said. "Nothing is more important to meeting the healthcare needs of our community than creating a new local pipeline for training the next generation of nurses and other clinical professionals."

The letter of intent outlines the commitment of both Augusta Technical College and University Health Care System to grow the local healthcare labor force by developing an Augusta Technical College Health Science Campus on the University Hospital Summerville Campus, Mr. Davis said.

 "The goal is to increase the capacity to educate and graduate future health professionals predominantly in nursing, but also other clinical roles to include patient care assistants, patient care technicians, certified medical assistants and others," Mr. Davis said. "Because the need for clinical professionals in our community will continue to increase, we felt compelled to create a solution for our patients and the community."

Augusta Technical College President Dr. Jermaine Whirl said this partnership is unique not only to the Augusta region, but to the state of Georgia. "This campus will serve as a state model and a national exemplar of collaboration between a technical college and local healthcare system," Dr. Whirl said.

The LOI calls for University to provide Augusta Technical College's School of

Health Science access to designated space on the University Hospital Summerville Campus at 2260 Wrightsboro Road for clinical learning and academic instruction. University Hospital will provide upfits and renovations to adapt the existing space for educational use. The LOI further states that "as the program develops and shows its ability to produce nurses, consideration will be given to build a new academic classroom building on the University Hospital Summerville Campus."

University will also provide access to scholarship funds to support nursing students, as well as supplemental funding or clinical faculty to support the ongoing allied health and nursing instruction at the college, according to the LOI.

Dr. Whirl said Augusta Technical College's intention is to relocate its current School of Health Science from their main campus to the downtown Augusta Summerville campus where it will offer all healthcare programming and a full suite of student support services.

"We are extremely excited for the opportunity to partner with University Health Care to fill the critical workforce gaps in our community," Dr. Whirl said. "We are grateful for their initiative, and we look forward to a cooperative future in which two outstanding institutions work in concert for the betterment of our community."

Dr. Whirl said the college aims to launch Phase 1 in late spring or early summer, once state approvals have been authorized.

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About University Health Care
University Health Care System is anchored by University Hospital, an 832-bed nonprofit, acute care hospital serving Augusta-Richmond County, Ga., and the surrounding region. Founded in 1818 as City Hospital, University has moved through four facilities to its present location on Walton Way and includes its Summerville Campus on Wrightsboro Road. University specializes in heart, vascular, orthopaedic, spine, neurosurgery, medicine and women's services. Over the years, University has expanded its main campus to include University Hospital McDuffie in Thomson, Ga., and established medical centers in South Richmond County, Grovetown, Aiken, North Augusta and Columbia County to include physician practices, Prompt Care facilities and skilled nursing centers. In addition to being the longest serving health system in the region, University has the largest and most experienced medical staff and leads the region in quality and safety.

About Augusta Technical College
Augusta Technical College, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, is a public postsecondary academic institution that provides technical education, customized business and industry training, continuing education, student support, economic development, and adult education services to its service area (Burke, Columbia, Lincoln, McDuffie, and Richmond Counties) at a competitive financial value. Associate of Science Degrees, Associate of Applied Science Degrees, diplomas, and technical certificates of credit are provided through traditional and distance delivery methods. For more information, visit **augustatech.edu**.

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