

## **AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

### **AGENDA ITEM**

OTA/PTA Collaboration  
Coordinating Board for Higher Education  
December 4, 2008

### **DESCRIPTION**

To fill an urgent and growing need for health care workers in rural Missouri, East Central College (Union), Moberly Area Community College (Moberly), North Central Missouri College (Trenton), State Fair Community College (Sedalia), and Three Rivers Community College (Poplar Bluff) have teamed up with the University of Missouri-Columbia (UMC) to create the Missouri Health Professions Consortium. Collaboratively, the community colleges will offer AAS degrees for Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant and Physical Therapist Assistant.

### **Background**

Over the last decade, UMC has developed a number of clinical and externship sites throughout Missouri. In 2006, several community colleges in the vicinity of these sites began discussions with UMC regarding potential collaborative opportunities for delivering health care programs to underserved populations.

The result of these discussions was formation of the Missouri Health Professions Consortium (MHPC). This consortium brings together the University of Missouri-Columbia, rural Missouri community colleges, and affiliated public and private Missouri health care providers “to solve a workforce shortage in physical and occupational therapy.”

### **Progress to Date**

The goals of the consortium are, “to partner with hospitals, businesses, and industry to enhance the economic and workforce development of its service regions by addressing the needs of both individuals and businesses so that Missourians will have affordable access to skills for lucrative employment, and conversely, health care providers will have access to a steady supply of skilled associate degreed employees.” RehabCare Group, Inc. has pledged \$1.3 million to help support the consortium’s programs.

Approval for the delivery of two associate degree programs offered collaboratively by the community colleges in the consortium will expand the ability to train more allied health care professionals. These degrees are an Associate of Applied Science (AAS), Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant and an Associate of Applied Science (AAS), Physical Therapist Assistant.

Students admitted to these programs will be enrolled in a “home” community college. However, they will be free to take courses in their program from any of the five community colleges in the

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consortium. The majority of the courses will be delivered by distance education methods (e.g. interactive television networks, online) allowing students increased options. In addition, students will have access to externship and clinical sites around the state. The University of Missouri-Columbia will “serve as an organizational and fiscal structure for consortium coordination, as a distributor of instruction, curriculum content and design, distance education technology support and network, and corporate fundraiser.” Members of the consortium have agreed to consider expanding the program to include additional institutions in the future.

### **Conclusion**

This innovative approach to efficient delivery of instruction in acutely needed fields represents a model of collaboration among institutions and businesses that can be successfully replicated in other areas of the state. The consortium and its members created a model program that builds on individual strengths while addressing the multiple needs of students, businesses and communities.

### **STATUTORY REFERENCE**

Sections 173.005.2(1); 173.005.2(7); 173.030(1); 173.030 (2), RSMo

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

**It is recommended that the Coordinating Board commend East Central College, Moberly Area Community College, North Central Missouri College, State Fair Community College, Three Rivers Community College, and the University of Missouri-Columbia for their collaborative efforts in developing the Missouri Health Professions Consortium and the AAS, Occupational Therapist Assistant and AAS, Physical Therapist Assistant programs. The combined delivery of these programs will efficiently fill an urgent and growing Missouri need for additional health care workers in these fields.**

### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

None