

UW-Green Bay: Collaboration with Aurora BayCare Medical Center gives thousands in scholarships to local nursing students

Posted on Thursday, Sep 21, 2023

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Green Bay, Wis.— Aurora BayCare Medical Center is deepening its investment to address a nursing shortage in Northeast Wisconsin by providing support to prospective and current nursing students at UW-Green Bay.

The support from Aurora BayCare was highlighted on Wednesday, September 20, 2023 when 18 UW-Green Bay nursing students received scholarship dollars through the Aurora BayCare Inspire Nursing and Aurora BayCare Future Nurses scholarships. Beginning in the fall of 2022, Aurora BayCare has committed to more than \$125,000 in scholarship dollars to “inspire” UW-Green Bay nursing students and plans to fund the scholarships through 2025. The aid comes after an initial gift of support to help launch the University’s new Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program in 2019.

“Providing this support at UW-Green Bay is just one way that we can invest in Wisconsin’s nursing workforce, and in the coming years, that investment will reflect in the excellent care nurses will provide for our community,” says Heather Schroeder, vice president and chief nurse officer for Aurora BayCare.

“We are grateful to Aurora BayCare for their support and belief in the ability for higher education to help our region solve the nursing shortage,” says UW-Green Bay chancellor Michael Alexander. “Since 50% of UW-Green Bay undergraduate students are the first in their family to attend college, Aurora BayCare knows how important it is for our region to have access to a great education. This partnership between a private company and public university helps to empower people to enter

a career that meets the region's workforce needs."

The shortage of nurses nationally and in Wisconsin was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, insufficient numbers of new nurse graduates, higher than expected retirements and the growth of health care needs of the aging population add to the critical need for nurses. At the current replacement rate, it is estimated the shortage of registered nurses in Wisconsin will increase to nearly 20,000 (35 percent) by 2035.

UW-Green Bay's traditional BSN program was started in 2019 in response to the demand for nurses in Wisconsin. Currently, five UW-System schools including UW-Green Bay, have nursing programs working to address the nursing shortage.

"Aurora BayCare Medical Center has been and continues to be an amazing supporter of UW-Green Bay nursing," said UW-Green Bay Professor Christine Vandenhouten, chair and academic director of the Nursing and Health Studies program. "The Aurora BayCare Inspire and Future Nursing Scholarships support both current (Future) and aspiring (Inspire) nursing students as they pursue their dream of becoming a registered nurse. For some students, this financial support could mean the difference between attending nursing school or not. The UW-Green Bay nursing faculty, staff, and students are grateful for Aurora BayCare Medical Center's ongoing commitment to support student learning through these scholarships as well as providing high impact clinical experiences throughout the program."

Aurora BayCare's commitment to UW-Green Bay has grown from letters of support of the BSN program to the UW System Board of Regents, to support for facilities, clinical rotations and opportunity to learn from health care professionals at Aurora Health Care's Simulation Center on its Green Bay hospital campus.

"As a practice-based profession, nursing students need simulation opportunities to learn and repeat clinical skills in a safe, controlled environment prior to working with ill patients," says Schroeder. "We also know that when new nurses find familiar settings and experiences as they enter practice, they will contribute to health care teams more quickly and confidently."

For more information, please visit [AuroraBayCare.com](https://www.AuroraBayCare.com).