

## News Release

February 15, 1990

CONTACT: Lynn Gentry  
Office: 214/688-3404  
Home: 214/231-3677  
Fax: 214/688-8252

**\*\*\*\*Hospital offers nine-month work schedule  
to bolster nurse recruitment**

As the competition for nurses heats up, Zale Lipshy University Hospital at Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas has become the first hospital in the nation to offer a nine-month work year to nurses, according to the American Nurses Association and the American Hospital Association.

"Much has been done in recent years to give nurses more flexibility in their work schedules. At University Hospital we're ready to take the flexible schedule concept one step further by introducing the nine-month work year," said Connie Edelman, M.S., R.N., C.N.A.A., assistant administrator of nursing services.

The concept is similar to that in the teaching profession, she said. But nurses can apply for positions requiring only a nine-month work commitment and have the flexibility to choose which three months they would like to be off. They can elect to work nine months and have three consecutive months off or take one month off every three months, Edelman said.

"Most importantly, nurses participating in the nine-month work year plan are considered full-time employees," she added. "They will be eligible for all full-time benefits, including paid time off, sick time and insurance coverage."

(More)

"As the nation's newest university hospital, we've incorporated the latest in technology to give our medical staff everything they need to operate efficiently as well as to ensure patient comfort," said Ronald F. Garvey, M.D., M.B.A., president and chief executive officer of the hospital. "We're on the cutting edge in many areas, so it's only natural we break new ground in the human resources area too."

University Hospital, the 160-bed teaching, research and referral facility affiliated with The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas, opened last November. It is not only the nation's newest university hospital, but one of the most computerized. While computers on patient floors and in the intensive care unit perform many routine nursing functions, reducing by half the time nurses spend performing these duties, the hospital still needs nurses to complete its staffing. The hospital opened 35 beds initially and is ready now to expand its services.

"We believe this program will help us attract additional nurses," said Arianne McCord, R.N., nurse recruiter for the hospital, "because it offers something nurses can't get anywhere else -- optimal flexibility. Surveys show that unless salaries are 10 percent higher than those of your competitor's, it will be difficult to entice nurses to your hospital. Since the market does not allow that much difference in salaries, we have to do our best to offer nurses the second most important job benefit, flexible scheduling."

(More)

Nine-month work schedule for nurses - 3

"Before this program was announced two weeks ago, I received about 20 calls a day from nurses wanting to work here," McCord said. "Now it's up to 50. We've placed ads in several regional and national nursing magazines, and we're getting calls from nurses who like the idea of having extended blocks of time off for vacation or education or who feel as though their present work schedules do not meet their personal needs."

Susan H. Cronin, University Hospital's associate administrator for professional services, said the nine-month work year will help patients as well as nurses. "We feel this program will benefit our patients because the time off will give nurses the opportunity to recapture energy and motivation for their work."

###