

US Department of Labor launches Virtual Career Network to highlight job opportunities and training in health care fields

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WASHINGTON, April 16, 2012 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- Online tool developed in partnership with American Association of Community Colleges

The U.S. Department of Labor today announced a new online tool that will allow current and prospective health care workers to explore more than 80 different occupations, identify local education and training programs, and tap into current job listings. Through the Virtual Career Network, users also can learn how previous experience such as military or on-the-job training can be applied toward a health care career, take free online courses and find sources of financial aid.

"Health care continues to be one of the bright lights in our improving economy," said Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis. "In order to sustain this positive momentum, we must do everything we can to ensure that our workforce is equipped with the skills and experience that meet the needs of this growing industry. This exciting new platform will help connect people with the knowledge and training they need to qualify for available health care jobs."

The Virtual Career Network, available at <http://www.vcn.org>, is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration under the leadership of the American Association of Community Colleges, and is funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. To build the Virtual Career Network and provide initial content, the AACC collaborated with the National Association of Workforce Boards, the American Council on Education, the National Association of State Workforce Agencies, the DirectEmployers Association, the U.S. Department of Defense, Jobs for the Future, the American Dental Education's Explore Health Careers, XPAND, Education 2 Go and iSeek Solutions.

Designed as an open-source platform, the Virtual Career Network will encourage additional organizations to contribute content, and the model can be replicated to meet the needs of other industries.

Goodwill Industries International, the International Association of Jewish Vocational Services and SER-Jobs for Progress National have received additional grant funds to ensure that local training centers in nearly 100 sites across the U.S. have the appropriate number of computers, sufficient Internet connections and trained career coaches to make use of the Virtual Career Network and provide in-person support for job seekers.

For additional information about the Department of Labor's range of employment and training resources, visit <http://www.doleta.gov>.

U.S. Department of Labor news materials are accessible at <http://www.dol.gov>. The information above is available in large print, Braille or CD from the COAST office upon request by calling 202-693-7828 or TTY 202-693-7755.

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