



March 29, 2005

Jane Karas, PhD, President
Flathead Valley Community College
777 Grandview Drive
Kalispell, MT 59901

Dear Dr. Karas:

I wholeheartedly support Flathead Valley Community College's (FVCC's) efforts to establish a Practical Nursing program. This educational program will safeguard our healthcare system by providing well-educated and trained licensed practical nurses (LPNs). These professionals are needed to care for our growing aging population in long term care, assistive living and mental health facilities. Filling these positions with LPNs will allow more registered nurses to care for our critically ill patients.

As you know, it has been my goal to partner with FVCC to establish this Practical Nursing program. By working together, we have started programs in Paramedicine, Radiological Services and Surgery Technology. I would continue to support FVCC by providing the Practical Nursing students with clinical experiences at KRMC.

Students will have learning opportunities in the medicine, surgery, obstetrics and rehabilitation departments. In addition, students would be able to access clinical experiences for mental health training at Pathways Treatment Center, while long term care and geriatric clinicals may be provided at Brendan House Skilled Nursing facility. KRMC would provide excellent clinical experiences for FVCC practical nursing students. Further, I would collaborate to support our RN staff becoming preceptors.

We are currently providing clinical experiences for nursing students from Montana State University and Salish Kootenai. After attending the first FVCC advisory board meeting regarding the Practical Nursing program, it was determined that FVCC students would utilize our facilities during different semesters than the other schools and possibly during evening hours. Statistics show that LPNs commonly work evening and night shifts. Therefore, this clinical model would serve the students' education and not interfere with other educational institutions receiving clinical education at KRMC.

I believe we can work together to provide potential faculty with continuing education workshops as well as support faculty in their professional development as they complete graduate work.

I look forward to serving on the advisory board for this program. I hope to hear that the Montana board of Nursing and the Montana Board of Regents grant program approval. Please contact me at (406) 752-1724 for further discussion of my sincere support of the FVCC Practical Nursing program.

Very truly yours,

Fran Laukaitis, RN

Fran Laukaitis, RN
Chief Nursing Officer



March 28, 2005

Jane Karas, PhD
President
Flathead Valley Community College
777 Grandview Drive
Kalispell, MT 59901

Dear Dr. Karas:

As the Human Resources Director at Northwest Healthcare, I enthusiastically support your efforts to start a Practical Nursing program. Healthcare continues to be challenged by a national nursing shortage.

The Flathead Valley is the perfect location for hiring LPNs. The majority of newly licensed practical nurses work in long-term care facilities or hospitals of 299 beds or less. This proposed program is highly welcomed as the Flathead Valley's population ages and will demand nurses to care for clients with stable, chronic illnesses.

Furthermore, this educational program will improve the employment opportunities for those living in this area and statewide. As an employer, I value the work of the practical nurse and understand how critical these professionals are to the healthcare system. I look forward to the partnership this program brings between Flathead Valley Community College and Northwest Healthcare. This partnership continues to assist us in providing a workforce that contributes to our staffing needs.

Please contact me at (406) 751-1760 when I can be of further assistance as you move forward with developing the Practical Nursing program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pat Wilson".

Pat Wilson, RN, MN, PHR
Director, Human Resources



April 26, 2005

Jane Karas, PhD
President
Flathead Valley Community College
777 Grandview Drive
Kalispell, MT 59901

Dear Dr. Karas,

It is my pleasure to write this letter of support for the Flathead Valley Community College proposed Practical Nursing program. As a member of the advisory board, I am aware of the consensus regarding the need for such a program given the nursing shortage facing not only this county, but also the nation. It was thought that a program of this type would provide individuals an avenue into the nursing profession while addressing the current shortage of LPNs in long-term care and assistive living settings.

In addition, North Valley Hospital is willing to contribute equipment such as beds and wheelchairs to the student lab. When possible, North Valley Hospital is willing to provide clinical experience for the students as well. I would encourage FVCC to also look at funding additional clinical faculty for clinical sites as hospital resources for clinical oversight is at a minimum.

I look forward to the future success of this program. Please feel free to contact me at 863-3554 for further discussion or questions.

Sincerely,

Maura Fields, RN
Assistant Administrator/Clinical Operations

ST. JOHN'S
LUTHERAN HOSPITAL
Excellent Healthcare Close To Home

April 29, 2005

Jane Karas, PhD
President
Flathead Valley Community College
777 Grandview Drive
Kalispell, MT 59901

Dear Dr. Karas:

I am the Director of Nursing at St. John's Lutheran Hospital in Libby. I have been in contact with Linda Hunt regarding the feasibility of offering an LPN program at Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC). I am very excited about this proposal!

I have staff that would love to be able to advance their careers at a local college. Most are mothers raising small children. They are unable to attend college in another town given the constraints of work and raising families. A program at the FVCC Libby Campus will allow these people to advance their careers while continuing to work and care for families.

Additionally, it is estimated that approximately 30% of each year's high school graduating class goes on to some kind of formal post-secondary education which does not require a four-year degree. This program would certainly attract a portion of those graduates, enabling them to affordably attend school close to home and keeping the education dollars in our community.

We have a great need for nursing personnel in our community. The proposal clearly shows that LPN's are most utilized in smaller facilities, rural areas, and with elderly populations, and we definitely meet all these criteria. St John's is a 25-bed critical access hospital, ninety miles from any larger hospitals. We also have Home Health, Libby Care Center (nursing home), multiple clinics in both Libby and Troy, and Public Health, all of which use LPN's and RN's.

There is a steady increase of retirees moving to our area. This adds to our already large and increasing population of elderly, with a number of these having specialized needs from asbestosis. Having the ability to offer an LPN program in our community will help us plan ahead to meet these needs.

We offer a wide range of clinic services at St. John's including med/surg, CCU, general surgery, OB, ER, chemotherapy, a sleep center, and a walk-in clinic. As such, we will be able to provide excellent clinical experiences and will be happy to do so.

I have concentrated on the benefits to our community, but obviously the benefits of this program would extend to our entire region and to the nursing profession as a whole. I strongly recommend this program to help our community and to provide a better future for our population.

Sincerely,



Jackie Hare, RNC
Director of Nursing Services

350 Louisiana Avenue • Libby, Montana 59923
(406) 293-0100 • FAX (406) 293-7931 • www.sjlh.com



We find a way.



To:
Dr. Jane Karas
777 Grandview Drive
Kalispell, MT 59901

From:
Kris Carlson, MBA, RN
1117 South Main Street
Kalispell, MT 59901
406.755.4968

RE: Letter of support for LPN program at FVCC

Dear Jane,

This letter is written in support of the proposed Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) program proposed by Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC). Our community is dependent on the needed professional, licensed clinicians for the healthcare of our area.

My business, Intrepid USA Healthcare Services, utilizes the *products* of such educational programs in many areas of our state. We provide in-home care, private duty nursing services, home health care, hospice services, and medical temporary staffing, for which all programs utilize LPN levels of training, as well as other medically trained personnel.

There are many alarming statistics depicting the needs for more educated healthcare persons. Montana's demographics are changing, as we are seeing more of the older populations. Many of Montana's nurses are of retirement age in the next few years. We look to the colleges to meet the needs within Montana.

Our company extends the welcome opportunity of providing many clinical sites for nursing students in home based care and hospice. Additionally, as the clinical coordinator of the Touch of Grace free medical clinic, we could provide community health nursing opportunities for students.

If you have thoughts or questions you would like to share, please do not hesitate to contact me. I do wish the best in this endeavor for our community and state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kris Carlson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kris Carlson, MBA, RN
Intrepid USA Healthcare Services
Grace Hospice Project
Touch of Grace Medical Clinic





March 28, 2005

Jane Karas, PhD
President
Flathead Valley Community College
777 Grandview Drive
Kalispell, MT 59901

Dear Dr. Karas:

This letter supports the continued affiliation between Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC) and Kalispell Regional Medical Center (KRMC). Because KRMC and FVCC have worked together to provide space and equipment for the Paramedicine, Surgical Technology and Radiological Technology programs, we have FVCC graduates who are now employed at KRMC.

KRMC continues assisting these programs and strongly supports FVCC starting a Practical Nursing program that will be located at KRMC. Dr. Linda Hunt, Director of Training for Health and Education Opportunity, and I have discussed available space for the Practical Nursing program's classrooms, lab, and faculty office space. Please see the attached diagram, which illustrates this space. KRMC is committed to providing this space to support this valuable program.

I urge the Montana Board of Nursing and the Montana Board of Regents to approve this joint venture of healthcare education between FVCC and KRMC. I look forward to hear that this program will begin in 2006.

If I can be of further help answering questions regarding KRMC's commitment to providing space for this program, please contact me at 406 752-1724. On behalf of KRMC, we look forward to our future working relationship with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ted W. Hirsch".

Ted W. Hirsch
Chief Operating Officer

