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News Release
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 2, 2004

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Grossmont College to Award Pins to 35 New Nurses Dec. 17
Pioneers Accelerated RN Program for International Medical Graduates

The health care community has a Dec. 17 appointment with Grossmont College to receive a crucial transfusion of new nursing blood. On that day, Grossmont's innovative "Welcome Back Program" will graduate the first 35 members in a special effort to infuse international medical professionals into the American health care system to help alleviate the critical shortage of qualified nurses. The event will be noted by a "Pinning Ceremony" on campus at 5 p.m. in room 220.

The Welcome Back Program, a project of Grossmont College's Regional Health Occupations Resource Center, recognized the nursing shortage in the United States, and also the number of international health professionals, both doctors and nurses, eager to work in health care in San Diego as well as other parts of the country.

Under the innovative leadership of Dr. Elisabeth Hamel, Associate Dean of Health Sciences, an accelerated curriculum was developed to prepare these IMGs, or International Medical Graduates, for the California board licensing exam in 14 months.

The 35 participants in the Grossmont College program represent 14 countries. Nearly one half are from Mexico.

There are more than 3,100 IMGs from more than 100 countries participating in the statewide Welcome Back program, that also has centers in Los Angeles and San Francisco. The Grossmont curriculum serves as a demonstration pilot project for the State of California.

“This is a wonderful opportunity to help meet the need for bilingual nurses in underserved communities in San Diego County,” said Dr. Ted Martinez Jr., Grossmont College president. “I am proud of Dr. Hamel’s innovative new curriculum, the dedication of our nursing faculty, and the leading role Grossmont College maintains in finding new solutions to emerging health care needs. I am also pleased to recognize the sponsorship of Sharp Health Care as a partner in this program.”

The Welcome Back Project is funded by the California Endowment. The project offers counseling and educational program opportunities to IMGs who wish to work in health care in California.

Bob Yarris directs the Grossmont College Regional Health Occupations Resource Center and serves as Welcome Back Project Director. Dr. Rolando Castillo is Welcome Back Center Director.