

Nursing Care Technician Scholarship

Sue Strup and Jennifer Barnes

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Jennifer Barnes:

Hello, and welcome to The Loop Podcast. Thank you for joining us today, my name is, Jennifer Barnes. I'm the manager for nurse recruitment for UK HealthCare. Today, I am joined by my colleague, Sue Strup, senior career consultant for the UK HealthCare Career Center – and co-coordinator, along with myself, of the Nursing Care Technician Scholarship program. Good morning, Sue, can you tell me a little bit about the Nursing Care Technician scholarship program?

Sue Strup:

Yes. In February 2020, the UK office of nurse recruitment and the career center partnered to re-establish our Nursing Care Technician scholarship program to be able to meet the need of our many - many job openings for our Nursing Care Technicians in UK HealthCare. The scholarship program provides an opportunity for community members, non-licensed health care personnel at UK HealthCare, such as our house keepers, our unit clerks, patient dining assistance, patient relations assistant, and other techs – to become a Nursing Care Technician. To date, we have awarded 22 Nursing Care Technician scholarships, totaling almost \$17,000. We're very – very proud of that. The scholarships range from \$700 to currently \$850, and that covers the SRNA test, and the SRNA course; state registered nursing assistant course and test and American heart association CPR.

Then in return, those scholarships winners are required to secure employment with us within 60 days at UK HealthCare in a Nursing Care Technician role at .75 FTE or higher. We ask them to work one year, commitment once their orientation has been completed, but obviously we have many stay on after, which we love.

Jennifer Barnes:

Excellent. Let's talk a little bit more about what the role of a Nursing Care Technician is.

Sue Strup:

Well, as you know, Jennifer, there is a huge critical shortage of qualified state registered nursing assistance. Not only in Lexington, but in all of Central Kentucky. So, many SRNA's work in various places, such as hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and academic medical centers such as UK Chandler Hospital, and Good Samaritan, and Kentucky Children's Hospital. Our Nursing Care Technician's must have their SRNA to be at the bedside to be working in the hospital. They provide wonderful care. They assist our registered nurses with various needs of the patient; they work side by side with the health care team. I think one of the things that I've noticed with our Nursing Care Technicians is that they sometimes have more time to spend with our patients and their families; really getting to know them. Maybe understanding what they're fearful of – what their anxiety level is. Or maybe, in this case with COVID, they haven't even seen a family member and they really become the person that is a comfort to them during their hospitalization.

We are paying our Nursing Care Technicians \$15.20 an hour, and that does increase with experience. In almost two years' time, since October 2019, UK HealthCare has hired more than 450 nursing care technicians, and we are proud to contribute to that with our nursing care technician scholars. They work in all different areas in the hospital, including the perioperative services, patient floors, ICUs, our Emergency Department and our Children's Hospital – just to name a few areas.

Jennifer Barnes:

Sue, tell us a little bit about where some of the individuals who have received these nursing care scholarships have worked before they applied for the nursing care technician scholarship – a little about their background?

Sue Strup:

Well, what we have noticed is that about 75% of our nursing care technician scholars come directly from our own medical center. Maybe they are in a house keeper role, they've been a patient safety companion, or a unit clerk, or dietary aid. Then about 25% come from our community – which is awesome. We have had a cashier from Kroger get

awarded. We have waitresses and waiters from restaurants or the service industry. We have a pre-school teacher, someone that is in our telecommunications industry. We even have a graduate student from ECU, who is studying and completing her master's degree in public health, that was awarded the scholarship. She's currently working as a Nursing Care Technician in our Markey Cancer Center. When I talk to these nursing care technicians' scholars, you know, they were making about \$9 - \$13 an hour before they got the scholarship and now, as I mentioned, they are making \$15.20 an hour.

Again, they're fantastic, they are hardworking, we're excited that they have been awarded this scholarship. We are excited that some of them have dreams and goals of going on to nursing school. Of course, UK HealthCare will pay for that nursing school, especially if it's the University of Kentucky College of Nursing. We have someone that just recently enrolled in our bachelors' program, and she is working as a nursing care technician scholar.

Jennifer Barnes:

Let's talk a little bit more about how often the scholarship is offered; what the scholarship cycle is and the requirements that are required for submission when you apply for the scholarship.

Sue Strup:

Absolutely. We are excited to offer the scholarship twice a year. As I mentioned, we have had four cycles; the next deadline for those interested in applying is Friday, December 30th at 4:30 p.m. We do have an application online that they can go to, and so that they can click that. I'm sure that will be in The Loop.

There are just several pieces of important information that they need to fill out. They need to fill out a scholarship consent form, a scholarship questionnaire – which is more like an application. What we are really looking for are two reference letters from an immediate supervisor, and a faculty member, or a teacher an instructor, or a co-worker that would include specific skills and qualifications and qualities about the candidates.

We do review those applications very thoroughly and there is an in-person interview as well. So, they have to be prepared for that.

Jennifer Barnes:

One more time just reiterate what the scholarship money can be used for and what that covers?

Sue Strup:

Absolutely. So, right now we are offering \$850 for each scholarship. That covers the SRNA course, the American Heart Association CPR course, the SRNA test, and any books and supplies that they might encounter.

Jennifer Barnes:

Where can scholarship recipients take an SRNA course?

Sue Strup:

Well, we are fortunate that we have worked with about seven schools in the area, including our own, University of Kentucky College of Nursing and BCTC and Kentucky HealthCare training right here on Waller Avenue. Those schools are awesome because we want our nursing care technician scholars to be able to choose from a menu of those schools. You know, maybe, if they are working day shift and going to school – maybe they can only do the online program. Maybe they need to do a weekend option because of their family obligations or their schedules. So, these seven different schools offering the SRNA course can do that. Some even offer a hybrid where the candidate would go in-person to a classroom or do some online. There is our clinicals involved as well. Some of those are able to do it in the nursing home, or in the simulation lab.

Jennifer Barnes:

Lot's of different options for those that receive the scholarship that can suite their needs as they get through the course. That's wonderful.

If someone is interested in finding out more information, just tell us a little bit about how they can get more details or who they can contact regarding the Nursing Care Technician Scholarship program?

Sue Strup:

Well, they certainly can call me. I am Sue Strup, again and my phone number is, 859-323-3169; or email, Sue.Strup@uky.edu.

Or you, my co-coordinator, Jennifer Barnes, and the nurse recruitment number is, 859-323-5851; or your email, Jennifer.barnes@uky.edu.

Again, we will have that link to the Nursing Care Technician scholarship information, the consent form, the questionnaire application, and what they need to include in their application.

One thing I am very proud of also, is that we have pictures of all of our Nursing Care Technician scholarship recipients on our webpage. So, people can see their colleagues, or family members that might have received the scholarship.

Jennifer Barnes:

That's wonderful. That concludes our Loop Podcast for today, thank you for joining us. If you would like more information about the Nursing Care Technician Scholarship program, please, feel free to reach out to Sue Strup or myself, Jennifer Barnes.