

**News Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## NW Michigan Council of Governments Receives Grant, Adds Healthcare RSA Personnel

NORTHWEST, MI — Healthcare Regional Skills Alliance of Northwest Michigan (Healthcare RSA) is developing more extensive training for healthcare employers and their direct care staff resulting from a one-year grant award of \$100,000 from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG). Earlier this summer, the Healthcare RSA was one of only six organizations in the nation to be awarded \$500,000 for three years from the U.S. Department of Labor's High Growth Jobs Training Initiative (HGJTI) to implement a Comprehensive Direct Care Worker Career Pathway. The combination of these two grants will be used to develop trainings for direct care workers in the long-term care industry. Portions of the state grant will be pooled in partnership with the Northeast Regional Skills Alliance.

Healthcare RSA is composed of partners from private and public sectors who are committed to finding solutions to workforce issues in the healthcare industry, which is the region's fastest growing job provider. The alliance sponsors topical trainings for healthcare workers in the acute, community, and long-term care settings. Trainings are provided by Community Services Network of Michigan, local colleges and hospitals, and include Basic Healthcare, Certified Nurse Aid, and Staff Development. Healthcare RSA is administered by Northwest Michigan Council of Governments.

Jean Peters has been awarded the position of Coordinator for the Healthcare RSA. Prior to accepting this post, Peters consulted non-profit organizations and aging services. She is a graduate of Michigan State University and studied medical sociology at Wayne State University.

Cindy Phillips was hired recently to work with Peters to develop and implement training programs aimed to form a sustainable, qualified workforce in healthcare fields in the region. Phillips owned a home healthcare business and served seven years on the State Board of Nursing, a gubernatorial appointment.

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“Through collaboration with members of the alliance, I hope to assist in the mission to provide easy access to free or low-cost training and placement for students interested in careers in healthcare. Working with employers and educators, we will also provide staff development and skill upgrading training for incumbent workers in northwest Michigan,” Phillips stated.

One of the new initiatives will be the development of a web-based clinical placement system throughout northern Lower Michigan. “This communication tool will help alleviate roadblocks and facilitate clinical placements for students and interns in all facets of healthcare, including long term care,” stated Peters. “A model of this system is currently being used very successfully in other parts of the state.” Such a web-based system is expected to save healthcare educators and employers time and money. Scheduling for clinical placements associated with training and educational programs will be efficient and beneficial for student participation.

A listing of training sessions will be available at the organization’s Web site as classes are developed and scheduled: [www.HealthcareRSA.org](http://www.HealthcareRSA.org)

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The Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, founded in 1973, facilitates and manages services and programs for ten counties in the region. These programs include Northwest Michigan Works, Workforce Development Board, Northwest Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center, TeamWork NorthWest, the Procurement Technical Assistance Center program, Northwest Michigan Sustainable Business Forum, KAL-TEC, the Regional Planning Department and the Regional Repository for US Census data, and the Healthcare Regional Skills Alliance of Northwest Michigan which was formed in 2004, fueled by a state grant of \$88,000 from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth.

Some services of NWMCOG are in direct support of the counties, some are independent services provided to the public and business at large. NWMCOG is able to leverage collaborative partnerships to extend limited resources and provide economies of scale for projects that operate on a regional basis. NWMCOG’s member counties are: Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford.