Nursing school receives grants

Beaufort County Community College has been awarded nearly $375,000 in grants that help fund a $1.05 million expansion of BCCC’s nursing school, college officials announced recently.

The grants, along with renovations to the building housing the nursing school, will lead to a 43 percent expansion of the Associate Degree Nursing program and a 50 percent expansion of the Practical Nursing program at BCCC in the next 12 months.

The awards include $140,255 from the Duke Endowment and from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust and $50,000 from Beaufort County Hospital to fund three new nursing school faculty posts over the next three years and $42,388 from University Health Systems to fund professional development for existing nursing school faculty.

“These grants from the Duke Endowment and the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust and the support of Pitt Memorial and Beaufort County hospitals have made possible a great transformation for our programs at BCCC. It is a great reflection of the cooperative energy in this region,” said Laura Biley, head of BCCC’s Nursing School.

BCCC’s nursing school - ADN and PN programs - will expand from a total of 100 to 150 students.

The expansion of the nursing program is an effort by BCCC and area health care providers to increase the available pool of skilled nurses in the school’s service area by not only increasing the number of students admitted to BCCC’s nursing program, but also by increasing the retention rate of those students in the program.

BCCC hopes to increase the “on time” graduation rate of new nursing students in both the ADN and PN programs to 75 percent over three years, meaning that the number of ADN graduates will increase from 26 to 45 and PN graduates, from 14 to 23 by the end of the grant period.