



## Virginia CC uses labor market data to bolster output of nurses

*For administrators at Tidewater Community College, taking a careful look at regional labor market trends and projections has become an essential element of program development. A prime example is TCC's nursing school, which got a significant boost thanks to a foundation that was convinced through timely data to **donate \$1.4 million**.*

### Dealing with a shortage of RNs

nursing. Between new positions and openings created by things like turnover and retirements, the region (with a population of 1.6 million) was not meeting the demand for RNs by several hundred per year. And it was clear that the region's community colleges, career colleges, and universities did not have the programs in place or capacity to replenish the labor pool.

To help address the issue, [Tidewater Community College](#) crafted a five-year plan to expand its nursing curriculum and number of faculty members—enhancements that came after a donor was convinced to help by seeing the dramatic need through labor market figures.

### TCC's data-driven program planning

A new program at TCC is not approved unless two things can be substantiated with hard data: (1) that there's sufficient labor market demand for the program in the service territory, and (2) that it's not being provided by another institution. "We have a philosophy brought by our president 10 years ago that we would use data to drive decision making at every level of the institution," says Dr. Michael Summers, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs at TCC. "We have set up an annual process that relies on data."

Summers and other TCC planners accomplish this sort of analysis with EMSI's web-based tool, which shows trends and projections on the growth of specific occupations and how many graduates are coming from the area in those fields. By measuring the output of RNs versus current or projected annual openings, Summers knew the shortage had to be addressed—and he was able to craft a "compelling story of what the numbers were" to the Beazley Foundation, a prominent TCC donor. "If I wasn't able to show that shortage, I would have never been able to convince that foundation to be a donor."

### Foundation donates \$1.4 million to nursing school

The Beazley Foundation ultimately pledged \$1.4 million in 2005 to what became a new nursing school at TCC's Portsmouth campus. The Beazley School of Nursing opened in the fall of 2008 with capacity for almost twice as many nursing students as before.

Since data played a key role in securing the sizable donation and helping the nursing program, Summers says it started an "avalanche" of other decision-makers at TCC understanding the usefulness of labor market data for resource allocation and curriculum development. "I just firmly believe that's how all colleges should make decisions—with data. It's just nice to have one place to go do that with EMSI."

## About EMSI

Economic Modeling Specialists Inc. (EMSI) is a professional services firm that offers integrated regional data, web-based analysis tools, data-driven reports, and custom consulting services. EMSI has served thousands of workforce, education, economic development, and other policy professionals in the U.S., Canada, and the United Kingdom, and the company's web-based **Strategic Advantage** research and analysis suite is used by over 2,500 professionals across the U.S. For more information, call (866) 999-3674 or visit [www.economicmodeling.com](http://www.economicmodeling.com).