

Helping a Healthcare Partner Succeed

Hospital emergency rooms are busy places and as things move at a rapid pace, communication is key. At Northern Westchester Hospital in Mount Kisco, an evolving patient base required staff to learn a new language to be able to communicate with Spanish-speaking patients and their families. The administrators there contacted the college's Professional Development Center (PDC), which provides training services for local businesses. Several area hospitals are among the dozens of PDC clients and each benefits from its own customized, on-site training program.



NORTHERN WESTCHESTER HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM STAFFERS MAXINE TYREE AND CATHERINE CIOFFI HAVE BENEFITED FROM THE COLLEGE'S SPANISH-LANGUAGE TRAINING SESSIONS.

"More and more, we found that our staff members, especially those working the emergency room, needed to know conversational Spanish," says Kerry Flynn, the hospital's vice president of human resources.

Thanks to funding from a Northern Metropolitan Health Workforce Retraining Consortium (NORMET) grant, Flynn worked with PDC Director Harry Horowitz on an affordable training program to assist hospital nurses and other staff.

"We learned many basic Spanish phrases and in no time at all, we found that our ability to communicate with Latino patients and their families improved tremendously," says Catherine Cioffi, a registered nurse. "Many of us now feel much more comfortable speaking and understanding the language, and that's important to our work at the hospital," she says.

"We found the training to be convenient and effective, and of tremendous benefit to both our staff and our patients," says Flynn, who is one of a dozen local business leaders on the PDC advisory board.

KERRY FLYNN, VICE PRESIDENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES, NORTHERN WESTCHESTER HOSPITAL; CATHERINE CIOFFI, REGISTERED NURSE; HARRY HOROWITZ, DIRECTOR, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER (LEFT TO RIGHT).

In addition to tailoring specialized training for local hospital employees, the PDC program offers a variety of additional services to other clients, ranging from sole proprietorships to large corporate clients. One of its most successful offerings is the Academy for Entrepreneurial Excellence, a series of professional workshops offered jointly with The Business Council of Westchester. The Academy features fifteen three-hour sessions with experts in business planning, marketing, sales, legal issues, accounting, and more. Each participant is paired with a professional business coach who provides individual guidance.

