GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER ANNOUNCES RELEASE OF $2.75 MILLION TO EXPAND CALIFORNIA NURSING SCHOOL CAPACITY

SACRAMENTO – The Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) today announced that the Governor’s budget has made available $2.75 million through the Song-Brown Family Physician Training Program to increase the capacity at registered California nursing schools. The new funding is a part of the Governor’s $90 million California Nursing Education Initiative, a public-private partnership to directly address the root causes of California’s nursing shortage by improving nurse recruitment, training and retention.

"California is facing a significant nursing shortage. These funds help address this shortage by expanding nurse education programs in our state," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "I am committed to improving the quality and accessibility of healthcare for Californians and look forward to continued partnership with the healthcare and education communities to provide more opportunities to increase the number of nurses in California."

“The Governor's budget provides $20 million in additional funding to directly address California’s nursing shortage by improving nurse recruitment, education and retention. Of these $20 million in funds, $2.75 million will be administered through the Song-Brown Program. Since the passage of the Song-Brown Act in 1973, the Program has worked to increase the training of family physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants in medically underserved communities of California.

The Governor's budget expands this mission to include a focus on nurse education. "With the inclusion of nurse education programs in the Song-Brown Act, critical needs for nursing services for urban and rural Californians will be addressed," said Dr. David Carlisle, director of the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development. "With these additional funds, more nursing students will have education and training opportunities."

Estimates show that California will need an additional 116,000 nurses by 2020 to meet demands. Currently, about 40 percent of people who apply to California nursing schools are turned away because of a lack of space in programs. The Governor has taken several steps to address this shortage. In March, he announced the release of $13 million in funds to support statewide nursing job-
training and education initiatives. In April, the Governor announced the California Nurse Education Initiative, a $90 million public-private partnership to provide funding for nurse education.

His budget expanded upon that initiative with an additional $20 million to help California produce more nurses by: Offering loan forgiveness to graduate level nursing students to encourage more nurses to become faculty. Purchasing simulators to create regional simulation laboratories so that more nursing students have access to clinical education facilities: Increasing slots in high demand nursing programs within the California Community College system.

The Song-Brown Act is administered through the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development's (OSHPD) Healthcare Workforce and Community Development Division (HWCDD). The advisory body to the Song-Brown Program is the Healthcare Workforce Policy Commission. To ensure nurse education programs are represented on the Commission, the Governor's budget called for the inclusion of five additional commissioners on the Commission to represent nursing training programs. For more information about HWCDD or other OSHPD programs, please call (916) 654-2087 or log on to www.oshpd.ca.gov.