

# WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

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## COLLEGE OF NURSING

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **Upton Delivers \$285K to Create Jobs & Boost Health Care in SW MI**

*Distance learning scholarship program will allow nurses to pursue specialized Wayne State degree for mental health & substance abuse locally in exchange for commitment to remain in SW Michigan*

**Program to tackle nurse practitioner shortage in Kalamazoo is a priority for Upton – Rep. is seeking an additional \$475,000 for Fiscal Year 2010**

**DETROIT, April 2009 – WASHINGTON, DC** – Standing in front of Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Congressman Fred Upton (R-St. Joseph) today announced that he was successful in securing \$285,000 to support the organization's nurse practitioner distance learning scholarship program. Local nurses who sign up for the distance learning program will receive scholarships in exchange for a commitment to remain and serve their southwest Michigan communities. The funding was included in the Omnibus Appropriations Act, H.R. 1105, which was signed into law on March 11th – Upton was one of 16 Republicans in the House to vote in favor of the measure. The program is a high priority for Upton and he is seeking an additional \$475,000 for Fiscal Year 2010 to help create jobs and boost health care in southwest Michigan.

"This important program lays the foundation for good paying health care jobs in southwest Michigan, helping boost the local economy, all the while improving the public health," said Upton. "The bottom line is that we need more nurse practitioners here in southwest Michigan, especially in the field of mental illness and substance abuse. During these challenging economic times, many nurses who are interested in the program can't afford to travel back and forth to Detroit to pursue the specialized, three-year degree – this distance learning program opens a whole new world of opportunity for folks to receive advanced training in their own backyard. I applaud Jeff Patton and all his colleagues in Kalamazoo for creating a program that promises to be an innovative and successful way to address this pressing need for qualified nurse practitioners in the field of mental health and substance abuse, and our entire community will be better for it."

Jeff Patton, Executive Director of Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services added, "As a public community mental health agency, the mental health and overall health care of our region will be very much enhanced with the addition of nurses with advanced practice skills in psychiatric-mental health and/or public health nursing. We are grateful to have Congressman Upton's support in these efforts to improve health care for the residents of the 6th Congressional District."

Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services will partner with Wayne State University's School of Nursing, the only nursing school in Michigan offering an Advanced Psychiatric and Community Public Health Nurse Practitioner degree program. The partnership between Kalamazoo and Wayne State will bring the opportunity through the use of distance learning technology for nurses in Kalamazoo and surrounding communities to participate in this three-year program right in their home communities, rather than have to travel across the state to Detroit. Southwest Michigan is a medically underserved area with a shortage of nurses, but the region also has a critical need for nurse practitioners with training in mental health.