



News Release

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VA Graduates 19 in Workforce Partnership Program



NEW ORLEANS —19 Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System employees were the first graduates of the new Hudson Thomas Program, a project of New Orleans Works, on June 16.

The Hudson Thomas Program is a unique partnership between NOW, SLVHCS and Delgado Community College. It is a workforce collaboration focused on the health care sector and housed at the Greater New Orleans Foundation.

The Hudson Thomas Program teaches literacy, mathematics and computer skills to incumbent entry-level employees within the SLVHCS to help employees advance in their careers and meet the future workforce needs of SLVHCS.

“I want SLVHCS to not only be the health care system of choice for our Veterans but also the employer of choice for the professionals we have and still need,” Fernando O. Rivera, SLVHCS director, said in his speech to the graduates. “To do this, we must be an organization that trains, learns and prepares for the future while simultaneously meeting the needs of patients, and by being graduates of this program; you have already taken the first step to helping us reach that goal.”

The Hudson Thomas Program was made possible by a grant from NOW to help pay for instructional time, tuition, curriculum, software and supplies SLVHCS workers who are federally classified as General Schedule 1-5 and equivalent. The program focuses on competencies in reading, writing, mathematics and computer literacy as well as soft-skills and career coaching.

“This program has proven to be a stellar model one that I have no doubt will be replicated by other industry sectors,” said Dr. Larissa Littleton-Steib, Vice Chancellor for Workforce Development and Technical Education at Delgado Community College. “It has truly been an honor for Delgado to be part of this unique partnership, which provided entry level employees with the training needed to advance their careers.”

The average class size is 20 and the second group is scheduled to begin in August 2015.

The program is named in honor of Hudson Thomas, a dedicated SLVHCS leader who passed away in 2012. Thomas served as a respiratory therapist with SLVHCS for 22 years, and also served as president of the American Federation of Government Employees. Thomas was a Veteran who proudly served in the U. S. Navy

and Air Force. He had a strong commitment to assisting others to achieve their goals, and it is in this spirit that this educational program was founded.

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