



projoJobs

Finding the right fit in the health-care field

01:00 AM EST on Sunday, February 24, 2008

By **Andy Smith**

Journal Staff Writer



Sandy Derevyanko, a branch manager for Favorite Healthcare Staffing, talks about how her company offers per diem positions, at the Nursing & Allied Healthcare Career Fair last week at the Crowne Plaza hotel, in Warwick.

The Providence Journal / Gretchen Ertl

Lori Nardone, of West Warwick, holding her 13-month old child in her arms, said she's a registered nurse, but hasn't worked since taking time off to have her baby. Now she'd like to start again, on a per-diem basis.

Antonetta Spicola retired in December from the state's Department of Human Services, where she worked as a social worker, casework supervisor and clinical training specialist. But she never thought she'd stay retired. "I knew I would go back to work full time," said Spicola, who didn't reveal her age.

“I’ve got two children in college — I have no choice.”

Kim Landry, of Warwick, is studying to be an x-ray technician at the Community College of Rhode Island, due to graduate in May. “I’m scoping out the scene.”

All three were at a health-care career fair sponsored by projoJobs at the Crowne Plaza hotel in Warwick last Tuesday. The dozen employers who were there included the Roger Williams Medical Group, St. Joseph Health Services of Rhode Island, the Providence Community Health Center, Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island and Sturdy Memorial Hospital in Attleboro.

Health care has been identified by state economic officials as an area of job growth in Rhode Island. Employers at the Crowne Plaza said they were looking to hire nurses, lab technicians, radiology technicians, social workers and more. Most reported a steady stream of applicants. Jennifer Vacca, an employment recruiter for St. Joseph, said she had heard from 50 job seekers less than two hours after the event had started.

Pearl Lachance, of Pawtucket, was recently certified as a medical assistant after studying at MTTI, in East Providence. She said she had previously worked at Paramount Cards, in Pawtucket, which closed in 2006. “I’d worked in factories all my life, and in Rhode Island that’s not the way to go anymore,” she said.

Sue Darling, senior employment specialist at Sturdy Memorial, said she had spoken to some very qualified people at the job fair. But she seemed puzzled by the well-known reluctance of Rhode Islanders to travel very far, particularly if crossing a state border is involved. “Rhode Islanders seem fearful of driving to Attleboro. It’s a phenomenon,” she said. “I asked if they’d be willing to drive to Attleboro, and half of them say no.”

In an adjacent meeting room at the hotel, Kerry Cudmore, of Westport, Mass., a professional life and business coach, offered tips about interviewing. “I was talking to the people at the job fair, and they’re looking to hire the right fit. They want to know who you are, your authentic self.... They want to know you. They don’t want to know the person you think they want,” she said.

Cudmore advised interviewees to maintain positive expectations. If you lack confidence, she said, it will come through to your interviewer.

But interviews are not just a one-way street, she said. Remember you are interviewing the employer as much as the employer is interviewing you. And if an employment situation just doesn’t feel right, don’t be afraid to say so. “If you get a bad vibe, you should say so,” she said. “They’ll be thankful, because you will be saving them time and money.

asmith@projo.com