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WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Labor today announced The Montgomery Institute and partners will receive \$4.5 million over three years to implement a model training and residency program for approximately 1,000 Health Care workers in East Mississippi and West Alabama.

"The Recovery Act's investments are making a positive difference in the lives of America's working families," said Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis. "The Recovery Act funded grants announced today will ensure thousands of workers across the nation can receive high-quality training and employment services, which will lead to good jobs in health care and other industries offering career-track employment and good pay and benefits." Grants were awarded in each of the 50 states. The Montgomery Institute received the grant for Mississippi.

Exactly four years ago, the Institute and partners were awarded a \$15 million Department of Labor WIRED grant for workforce training in West Alabama and East Mississippi.

"We do these things in Sonny Montgomery's name for the benefit of this region," said Bill Crawford, president of the charitable organization named for the late Congressman.

"Over 90% of this grant will go to our training partners – East Mississippi, East Central, and Meridian Community Colleges – our employer partners – Rush Health Systems, Alliance Health Center, and East Mississippi State Hospital – and our coordinating partner – the East Mississippi Area Health Education Center."

Through this project, The Montgomery Institute and partners plan to implement a model nurse career ladder and residency program that will train and prepare participants for jobs in the nursing industry. Their comprehensive approach includes a number of key strategies including: 1) implementation of a Nursing Career Lattice Program; 2) recruitment, training, and placement of unemployed and dislocated workers into Certified Nurse Aid positions; 3) improving basic skills of participants; 4) upgrading skill levels of low wage incumbent workers; 5) building career ladders; 6) enhancing opportunities and resources for advancement; and 7) reducing turnover. The partnership will develop customized curricula and train and place approximately 1,000 dislocated and incumbent workers in Health Care occupations.

Secretary Solis' announcement marks the sixth and final round of competitive grants made available for employment and training through the Recovery Act. Projects funded through these grants will be conducted in partnership with the public workforce system, businesses and other organizations to guarantee that training leads to jobs.