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Governor

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## **Secretary Gassman: Assembly Budget Denies Students Apprenticeships in Health Care**

### ***Governor Doyle's Proposal to Double Youth Apprenticeship Funding Will Help Ensure Skilled Workforce in Health Care, Other Areas and Keep Economy Healthy***

CEDARBURG – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman said today investing in Youth Apprenticeship funding now will help ensure quality health care in the future, but the Assembly's extreme budget would deny school-to-career opportunities to nearly 2,000 students a year by cutting Governor Jim Doyle's proposed increase in youth apprenticeship funding.

"Health services is the number one school-to-career track in Youth Apprenticeship, an extremely successful and popular program with both students and employers since it began 15 years ago with bipartisan support from lawmakers," Secretary Gassman said. "Every year, between 550 and 600 high school students become apprentices in health services. Many of them decide to pursue careers in health care, and we need them, especially nurses. Yet the Assembly's extreme budget would deny apprenticeship opportunities to roughly 2,000 high school students who are interested in health care, skilled trades, and many other areas in demand."

Earlier this year, Governor Doyle offered a fiscally responsible, opportunity budget for working families that reflects Wisconsin's values. Among a number of proposals building on the success of his first term, the Governor's budget doubles funding for Youth Apprenticeship, from \$1.1 million to \$2.2 million a year. The new funding would allow as many as 4,000 juniors and seniors statewide to participate in the school-to-work program that has created strong partnerships between local schools and businesses.

"Since Youth Apprenticeship began, over 10,000 students have graduated from the program, and many are now mentoring a new generation of apprentices," Secretary Gassman said. "At a time when we should be celebrating the program's success, the Assembly budget says no to new funding, no to high school students who want to become apprentices in health services and other areas, and no to employers searching for new talent and future workers as baby boomers approach retirement. The Assembly budget takes us backwards, undermining economic growth and our future, when we need to move forward."

Nearly nine out of 10 Youth Apprenticeship graduates get permanent job offers from their employers when they graduate from high school. Apprenticeship graduates who go on to college or technical school generally do better than their peers. The program is also very popular with employers; virtually every one of them highly recommends the program.

Secretary Gassman made the comments while visiting Lasata Care Center in Cedarburg. She met with apprentices and their mentor, Dawn Nimitz, a nurse and director of training at the long-term care facility. Nimitz also is co-chair of Workforce 2010, which received a nearly \$23,000 Youth Apprenticeship grant during the 2006-07 school year from DWD. Wisconsin needs over 26,000 registered nurses alone in the decade ending 2014.

Besides apprenticeship funding, Governor Doyle provided the University of Wisconsin System and the Wisconsin Technical College System additional funding to meet the demand for well-educated and trained workers. The Assembly budget cuts over \$162 million from UW campuses and financial aid for thousands of students, and cuts \$13 million in direct aid to the state's technical colleges.