

Virginia News Connection

A statewide news service for Virginia

Producer: Aries Keck, 3126 W. Cary St #616, Richmond, VA, 23221 Ph: 800-931-1882 Fax: 757.257.9523 E-mail:
vnc@newsservice.org

SOUND FILES ON THE PHONE: (888) 600-9800, ID Code: 41
Sound files online: www.newsservice.org Your Web Account ID is: VNC-

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Unique Stimulus Jobs Program Trains Pharmacy Assistants

South Hampton Roads - A job training program in Southeastern Virginia will use federal stimulus funds to create an innovative pharmacy training program that the organizers hope becomes a model for statewide efforts. Comments by Edith R. Jones, executive director of the Southeastern Tidewater Opportunity Project, Inc.

Intro: Money from the federal stimulus package is now making its way to those in need. In South Hampton Roads, a community action program is using the funds to add 100 people to its job training program. Edith R. Jones is the head of STOP (stop), the Southeastern Tidewater Opportunity Project. She's added a new training track to their jobs program, one that trains certified pharmaceutical assistants. Jones says that since the training is done by working pharmacists, graduates of the program have a leg up.

Cut 26 :13 *"We have inroads into all of the major drug stores that are known to be large chains, but additionally there are places like KMart and Wal-Mart and those large wholesale places."*

Tag: Jones says the project has trained the un- and underemployed for over 44 years. The pharmacist assistant training program begins on July 1st.

Second Cut: Jones says that the decision to add pharmaceutical assistant instruction to its ongoing nursing assistant program came about because there was a need for trained workers just waiting to be filled.

Cut 27 :13 *"Someone who was certified nationally, to be the go-between, not only to relieve some of the work of the pharmacist, but to be able to fill a gap that they could even dialogue to a degree with the customer."*

Tag 1: Jones adds that in addition to drugstores and pharmacy counters, the many military installations across the state also need trained pharmaceutical workers.

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEAD: A first-of-its-kind pharmaceutical job training program will begin this summer in southeastern Virginia. Aries (AIR-ease) Keck reports on how it's likely to become a model for similar programs across the state.

Cut 28 :50 *Outcue...on July 1st.*

Note to Editors: For more information: Edith R. Jones, STOP Inc. 757-858-1366.