Tips for the Nursing/Healthcare Administration and Leadership Job Search

Please make note of the following steps and resources for moving along in your search for a position in administration and leadership in the field of healthcare.

1) Reflect on your previous experience and its relevance to your career goals going forward.
   • Are you making a transition from a direct service role such as a clinical nurse? If so, you can show how this hands-on experience with the people ultimately affected by administrative procedures, policy and programs can allow you to bring insight and credibility to the position.
   • Did your previous career involve an analytical, advocacy or managerial role in another field? If so, you will need to point to what motivates your interest in healthcare and note how your skills can transfer.

2) Explore and prioritize opportunities.
   • Consider where you see yourself in the field of healthcare.
     o Administration: Would you like to manage people, projects and/or processes in a hospital or other healthcare facility?
     o Advocacy / Communications: Are you interested in advocating for, facilitating or communicating about healthcare legislation?
     o Analysis / Research / Consulting: Do you want to use your analytical and research skills to inform health-related policy making or assess existing healthcare programs, products, procedures or operations?
     o Implementation: Would you be interested in designing, implementing and/or managing programs that emerge from health-related issues and needs?
     o Teaching / Training: Would you like to teach and mentor nursing students or new nurses?
   • Consider the many possible contexts in which you could work, including:
     o Hospital
     o Community Health Clinic/Private Practice
     o Long-Term Care Facility
     o Government (Federal, State or City)
     o Higher Education
     o Research/Consulting Firm
     o Think Tank/Advocacy Organization
     o Public Health Organization
     o Corporation (e.g., Insurance, Pharma)
     o Foundation

3) Build your network. Connecting with others in your profession of choice can provide insight into what it’s like to work at a particular organization in healthcare administration/leadership as well as how to market yourself effectively in the job search.

Informational interviewing is a great way to gather advice and build your network, though it’s important to remember that the purpose of this type of meeting is to gather information and advice, not ask for a job or job interview. Here are some resources to get started:

• QuakerNet (Penn’s Alumni Online Community): http://www.myquakernet.com
• Penn Alumni LinkedIn Groups: http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/networking/linkedin.php
• Professional Associations are also a good resource for networking: http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/careerfields/nursing.php#associations
4) Tweak your resume and cover letter. Career Services can provide critiques during appointments (call 215-898-4381 on weekdays between 9am-5pm to schedule), walk-in hours (Mondays, 12:00-1:00pm) or via e-mail. Keep in mind that the turnaround for e-mail critiques during this busy season is 2-3 business days on average. Therefore, it is best to use the following online resources to tweak your resume format as much as possible before a critique with a counselor.

- Resume Resources (including samples):
  http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/writtenmaterials/resumes.php
- Cover Letter Tips/Samples/Checklist:
  http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/writtenmaterials/coverletters.php

5) Attend career fairs and open houses. Career fairs allow you to meet a number of recruiters in one place so that you are able to offer resumes to and obtain contact information from employers of interest. For those interested in working in hospitals and other clinical settings, Career Services hosts Nursing Career Day in late November and early December for Penn Nursing students and alumni. Other relevant career fairs are offered via http://events.advanceweb.com/. Be on the lookout for open houses that hospitals or other health care facilities may host. For those interested in non-clinical settings, be aware of other types of career fairs that may be relevant to your job search. For more details on career fairs hosted by Career Services (including Nursing Career Day), go to: http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/careerfairs/

6) Prepare for Interviews. The key to successful interviewing is thorough and thoughtful presentation. It is crucial that you reflect on your previous experience as you prepare answers that reflect concrete examples of your experience and your readiness to transition to a health administration/leadership role.

- desire to work at a particular hospital/facility/organization
- demonstrated management and leadership ability (e.g., supervision, committee involvement, mentoring/teaching)
- ability to collaborate on various levels
- ability to use analysis in decision making
- interest and involvement in advancing healthcare by way of research, publications, presentations
- approach to working with patients, families and communities under challenging circumstances
- strengths/weaknesses
- highlights and best practices

It is also extremely useful to practice interviewing. Career Services offers mock interviews as well as other tips and resources that can be found at: http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/interviewingadvice/