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Media contact:

Jenny Park, 415-901-0111, jpark@fenton.com

YOUNG JOBSSEEKERS SAY JOB SECURITY MORE IMPORTANT DURING TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES, HEALTH JOBS CARRY HIGH APPEAL

New poll is first to take pulse of young adult workforce in California since economic downturn

SAN FRANCISCO — Job security is especially important to young adults, who are keenly aware of the state's economic downturn, according to the first survey of young Californians after the nation's economic prospects darkened this year.

Three quarters of respondents—Californians ages 16 to 34—hold a negative perception of the job market in the state. While they described salary, benefits and job security as important to their careers, two-thirds (66 percent) of young adults say that job security is more important to them than it was before current economic problems.

The survey also found that health jobs, such as emergency medical technicians, medical assistants and pharmacy technicians, hold strong appeal among young Californians, with 47 to 50 percent describing these positions as appealing compared to bank tellers (36 percent), security guards (20 percent), retail clerks (29 percent) or waiters or bartenders (31 percent).

These findings are significant, given that more than one-third of respondents (36 percent) say that the current job market and economic situation is causing them to consider making a job change. Workforce and health care experts note that these jobs—collectively known as allied health jobs—present a key opportunity given their job security, family-sustaining wages and relative ease of entry.

Institutions such as The California Wellness Foundation have noted that California's growing and aging population puts more demand on our health care system and that the state is experiencing a shortage of health care workers.

Additional survey findings position health jobs as attractive in today's economy:

- When asked about employment prospects across various sectors, health care came out on top, with almost half (49 percent) saying that job seekers are very likely to find good-paying jobs with benefits. Information technology was a distant second at 29 percent, while auto repair (11 percent), retail and sales (12 percent), and restaurant and hospitality (13 percent) lagged at the bottom.
- Among survey respondents who are currently employed, those working in the health care sector feel more secure in their jobs than non-health care workers: 69 percent of health care workers say they feel very secure in their jobs, compared to just 42 percent of non-health care workers.
- Health care workers are more satisfied with their work than those who do not work in the health care field. Almost half (49 percent) of health care workers say they are in the right field and plan to advance, compared to just 35 percent among non-health care workers. Room for advancement is an important factor for job seekers, with 82 percent saying it is one of the most/very important considerations in the job market.

Goodwin Simon Victoria Research conducted 728 telephone interviews between Nov. 16 and 23 to reach Californians ages 16 to 34 via cell phones and landlines. This survey was funded by a grant to Fenton Communications from The California Wellness Foundation.

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