



## *News Release*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**KNORR-BREMSE GLOBAL CARE NORTH AMERICA AND BENDIX COMMIT  
GRANT FUNDING FOR VOCATIONAL NURSING PROGRAM IN ACUÑA, MEXICO**

*\$80,000 Grant Is Helping Technical Nursing Program Educate*

*Its First Class of High School Students*

**AVON, Ohio – Feb. 1, 2022** – A local shortage of medical professionals, combined with the need for affordable educational options for high school students in Acuña, Mexico, has led to the creation of a federally funded technical nursing education program at the Centro de Bachillerato Tecnológico Industrial y de Servicios No. 54 (CBTIS), a local vocational high school.

The \$554,000 project has also earned the support of two North American-based foundations: Knorr-Bremse Global Care North America (KBGCNA), a philanthropic entity operated by Munich, Germany-based Knorr-Bremse; and the Bendix Foundation, directed by Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems LLC.

Knorr-Bremse is the global market leader for braking systems and a leading supplier of other safety-critical rail and commercial vehicle systems. It's also the parent company of Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems, which manages its own foundation and is a significant employer in Acuña, where it has operated a major manufacturing complex for more than 30 years. In addition, in October 2021, the Knorr-Bremse rail subsidiary, Watertown, New York-based New York Air Brake LLC, opened a new rail production operation in Acuña.

KBGCNA, in partnership with its representatives at Bendix Acuña, is one of the funders of the program in support of its larger mission to contribute to the education and well-being of underserved populations.

The foundations' support took the form of an \$80,000 grant that KBGCNA awarded to the school in early 2021, by way of the Bendix Foundation. The grant, which is being distributed to the school in two installments, supports its newly implemented Nursing Vocational Technical Education program. The first class of 160 students enrolled in the program began their studies in August of 2021.

"We're exceptionally proud to support the new technical nursing education program at CBTIS in Acuña and are so excited about the impact it will have, both for local students and for the greater community," said Maria Gutierrez, president of KBGCNA and director of corporate responsibility and sustainability at Bendix. "This new program is one that can help the community fill its current and vital need for medical professionals and has also resulted in a much-needed education program that's far more accessible to local students in terms of its cost."

### **Filling a Vital Need in the Community**

The new technical nursing education program at CBTIS marks the first time the vocational high school has offered coursework or a degreed technical program in a medical field. Other programs at the school include accounting, human resources, programming, industry maintenance, and electronics.

Rocío Isabel Mata Quiñones, clinic coordinator for CBTIS, said the program grew from a local need for more medical professionals in the border town community, a need that has worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic. During 2020, almost a quarter of the town's population experienced moderate poverty, while the entire country has faced a high deficit of nurses.

"The COVID-19 pandemic only made it more evident that the community was lacking medical resources," Quiñones said. "By adding this new specialty, CBTIS will be able to help reduce the local deficit of nursing professionals while also providing students the needed academic options that are on par with what's offered by private high schools."

Quiñones explained that only two other schools in the larger vicinity, both private institutions, have offered similar nursing vocational programs, but both schools charge much higher tuitions than CBTIS, which is a public school.

The Acuña school received federal authorization to integrate the new nursing specialty into its offerings in December 2020. It is also the only public high school to offer such a program in the region at this time, Quiñones said.

### **Pursuing Donor Support**

Quiñones, a medical educator who has previously implemented a nursing education program in nearby Monclova, helped the school obtain funding and support for the program by seeking support and donations from the local government, hospitals, community centers, and local companies in Del Rio and Dallas, Texas. She also reached out to KBGCNA and Bendix, submitting a grant request on behalf of the school.

“When we received the petition for the school, because of the timing with the COVID situation we were facing, we saw that Acuña needed this possibility for our students,” said Patricia Flores, Plant 3 manager at Bendix in Acuña and project champion for the effort. “According to the information we received, the options that students in the community have for this type of technical specialty have only been offered by private schools at a much higher level of tuition.”

### **Building the Technical Nursing Program**

The process of renovating the school to accommodate the new program is itself a four-year, \$544,000 project, requiring both infrastructure modifications to the school’s existing facilities and acquisitions of furniture, equipment, and supplies. The first phase of these modifications took place in early 2021, when the school began renovating two classrooms and two laboratories to house the nursing program. Two additional classrooms, a computer room, and one more laboratory will be added during later phases of the project, with the newly renovated facilities expected to be named in honor of both KBGCNA and Bendix, Quiñones said.

The first \$45,000 installment of grant funding from Bendix and KBGCNA was transferred in early 2021 and was used to cover the costs of equipment and supplies for the program, such as patient simulators and other training supplies and resources. The second installment of \$35,000, awarded in late 2021, will help to cover the cost of additional equipment and supplies.

While the \$80,000 grant has been designated only for the first phases of the program’s implementation, the school has the opportunity to reapply for additional KBGCNA funding in the future years of the project.

## **Opening Doors to Opportunities**

With the addition of the nursing program, CBTIS now offers seven technical education programs, Quiñones said, more than any other technical vocational program in the country.

The curriculum for the three-year program includes both standard coursework and vocational training in five specific modules, plus clinical practices for each module. The five modules cover the care of both adult and pediatric patients, with training in preventive medical care as well as low- to medium-complexity medical care administered in hospitals, emergency rooms, and clinics. Students also receive specific training on caring for women of reproductive age, children, and the elderly.

Flores noted that the new program has been very popular with local students, eliciting some 400 applications for acceptance into the 160 available spots. With the addition of those students, Quiñones said, the school experienced a 20% increase in enrollment this year over 2020, the largest one-year increase the school has experienced in its 48-year history. Quiñones said that while a majority of the program's students reside in Acuña, some also live in nearby Del Rio, and some students have dual citizenship.

With the first semester of courses underway, Flores said both students and their families have been grateful for and enthusiastic about the program.

"I think this program gives so many opportunities to our students, not only to have a fulfilling career but also to fill a great need for the larger community," Flores said. "These students have so many options, whether they choose to join our healthcare facilities in Acuña or if they decide to further their experience beyond the community."

### **About Knorr-Bremse Global Care North America**

Knorr-Bremse Global Care North America Inc. (KBGCNA) is an independent organization operating as the North American arm of a global nonprofit organization – Knorr-Bremse Global Care. With an aim to address local social challenges more effectively, KBGCNA investments are centered in the surrounding communities of Knorr-Bremse's three largest North American companies: Avon, Ohio-based Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems LLC; Westminster, Maryland-based Knorr Brake Company; and Watertown, New York-based New York Air Brake LLC. Funding activities are championed and supported by the employees of each of the three local companies. Follow us on LinkedIn at [linkedin.com/company/knorr-bremse-global-care-north-america-inc](https://www.linkedin.com/company/knorr-bremse-global-care-north-america-inc).

### **About Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems LLC**

Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems, a member of Knorr-Bremse, develops and supplies leading-edge active safety technologies, energy management solutions, and air brake charging and control systems and components under the Bendix® brand name for medium- and heavy-duty trucks, tractors, trailers, buses, and other commercial vehicles throughout North America. An industry pioneer, employing more than 4,100 people, Bendix – and its wholly owned

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Feb. 1, 2022/Page 5

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