Health Sciences Career Cluster

What is the Health Sciences Career Cluster?
The Health Sciences Cluster focuses on preparing students for careers in planning, managing, and providing therapeutic services, diagnostic services, and health informatics. Strands within the pathway include but are not limited to: Dental Services, Diagnostic Medical Imaging, Dietetics, Health Information Technology, Human Services, Emergency Medical Services, Exercise and Sports Medicine, Holistic Healthcare, Medical (Clinical) Laboratory Science, Nursing, Nutrition, Optometry, Pathology, Pharmacology, Rehabilitation Therapies, and Surgical Technology.

What is the need for Health Care Professionals?
The aging population, declining workforce and high cost of healthcare are coming together to create a crisis situation in many of the health care professions. Although the Nursing shortage is widely publicized, there is a lack of skilled employees in the majority of the careers in health care. The greatest need is in Diagnostic Medical Imaging, which has a 17% - 19% shortage. Health care facilities are often forced to hire traveling technologists.

What are the core courses?
A strong background in the life sciences is the foundation of the health sciences cluster: high school biology and chemistry. Advanced courses in Anatomy and Physiology, Biology, Chemistry, and Microbiology are strongly encouraged. Physics is an essential component in the Diagnostic Medical Imaging strand. Mathematics courses are also an important part of the curriculum, especially algebra. Fourteen high school technical centers throughout the state offer Health Science and Technologies Programs. Many of the programs offer students the opportunity to become certified in CPR and First Aid and to enroll in a Certified Nursing Assistant Program. All the programs include clinical experience in nursing homes, clinics or hospitals.

The Post-Secondary Connection
The New Hampshire Community Technical College offers students the opportunity to receive college credit in approved courses within the pathway through the Project Running Start program. Several of the Health Science and Technologies Programs include the Medical Terminology course. The program at Sugar River Valley Technical Center in Newport also includes a Medical Law and Ethics dual enrollment course. Students at the following high schools can enroll in the NHCTC Anatomy & Physiology I course through Project Running Start: Londonderry, Winnacunnet. Articulation agreements between the programs at: Creteau Technology Center, Pinkerton Academy, Seacoast School of Technology and Sugar River Valley Technical Center Newport and the Surgical Technology program at NHCTC Stratham allow students to make a seamless transition to this
What students, educators and employers say about the Health Sciences Career Cluster:

"Now I know what I want to do - Surgical Technology! When I did a job shadow at the hospital, I saw everything in the operating room – everything the doctor, operating nurse and surgical technologist did. I was supposed to stay during one operation but I ended up staying for three. I had been thinking of a career in radiology, but now I know I want to work in surgery."

Ashlee Cote, Health Sciences & Technology Student, Seacoast School of Technology

"Healthcare leaders continue to compete for a limited pool of candidates in a fiercely competitive labor market. There are increasing pressures to provide more services efficiently. New technologies have entered the healthcare market at a rapid pace, and the talent required to use this technology is multiplying at a phenomenal rate. The Health Science Career Pathway available in our local community has enabled students to take advantage of hands on experience in real world careers."

Deborah Mears, Vice President, System Quality Exeter Health Resources

"Students in the Health Science Career Pathway have many options. Some of them have visited our laboratory at the college to learn about a career in surgical technology. Our laboratory closely simulates a hospital operating room – including sterile procedures, laparoscopy equipment, use of sutures, etc. This is a very fast-paced, exciting career and there is a strong demand for surgical technologists as well as opportunities for advancement for those who continue their education. High school students who have the opportunity to enroll in the dual enrollment Medical Terminology and Anatomy & Physiology courses can get a great head start on a degree in Surgical Technology."

Dorothy Sloan, RN, CNOR, Program Director, Surgical Technology, NH Community Technical College, Stratham.

More Information

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