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NEWS RELEASE

(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

British Columbians who aim for a career in the new and rapidly expanding health specialty of respiratory technology no longer have to travel to Alberta or points east for their training. They need go no farther than Kamloops, where Cariboo College now offers a complete four-semester program followed by a year of practical application in a training hospital.

Registered Respiratory Technologists are part of a medical team dealing with cardiopulmonary and related disorders. They assist the physician in a variety of diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, including the operation of mechanical ventilatory support equipment. The RRTs now practicing in British Columbia have all been trained elsewhere, many of them at one of the two Alberta Institutes of Technology.

They play an increasingly important role in patient care, according to Dr. Dennis M. Karpiak, Director of Cardiopulmonary Services at Royal Inland Hospital in Kamloops. They are called on in cardiac arrest and intensive care cases, and are an integral part of the team which functions in emergency departments, in post-operative recovery, neonatal and pediatric cases, as well as training paramedics and others in cardiac arrest resuscitation and assisting anaesthesiologists in the operating room.

Dr. Karpiak is chairman of the advisory committee which developed the curriculum for the new program, which is a companion to the College's long-established programs in Nursing and in Medical Laboratory Technology. Support for the program has been expressed by Lower Mainland hospital officials and specialists.

One of the latter is Dr. Murray Robinson, Anaesthesiologist at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver and clinical instructor at the University of British Columbia. "The province certainly needs this program," Dr. Robinson said.

"As equipment and procedures become more sophisticated the technologist becomes more necessary than ever in our work."

(more)

Cariboo College Principal Charles W. Brewster points out that the College-Hospital training program is pointed directly toward the certification requirements of the Canadian Society of Respiratory Technologists.

In the first eight months, students take a broad spectrum of academic courses, with emphasis on physical and life sciences. Most of the latter courses are prerequisites for the second, or pre-clinical, year curriculum. These second-year courses, such as pulmonary physiology, respiratory procedures, respiratory and circulatory pathophysiology, and neonatal anatomy, are directly related to future professional practice.

Students spend the third year in a practical application environment in one of the several accredited training hospitals in British Columbia. They are then eligible to write the qualifying examination for certification and registration.

Robert A. Smith of the Victoria General Hospital staff has been appointed coordinator for the program. Trained in Toronto, he recently served as Chief Respiratory Technologist at the St. Catharine's General Hospital, and prior to that on the staff of St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton.

Although enrolment is limited, Brewster said, applications are still being accepted. Applicants need a Grade 12 education, with grades of "C" or better in Mathematics 12, Chemistry 12 and Biology 11.

He invited interested persons to write or telephone Cariboo College (374-0123) for further information, which can be supplied either by the Registrar or by Dr. M.R. Granger, Chairman of the Department of Physical and Life Sciences.

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