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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Beginning next year, British Columbia hospitals can stop relying on other provinces as their only source of qualified Canadian respiratory technologists.

The first crop of third-year students from Cariboo College, the province's only training institution for this health-science specialty, will begin their one-year supervised practicum on June 8 at hospitals in Vancouver, New Westminster, Kelowna and Kamloops.

The role these technologists play in the treatment of cardiac and respiratory patients is being increasingly recognized, with an estimated 18 jobs open province-wide at present and a projection of 85 vacancies in the next few years because of hospital expansion and growing awareness of their value.

The practicum supervisor for the Lower Mainland who will oversee the clinical training of students assigned on a rotation basis to the Royal Columbian Hospital and the new Vancouver Children's Hospital, is Keith Olimb of Royal Columbian. He is a graduate of the respiratory technology program at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology and formerly worked at Foothills Hospital in Calgary.

Similar assignments will be undertaken by Lorne Yelland of Royal Inland Hospital in Kamloops and Martin Uitvulgt of Kelowna General Hospital. Both studied at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology and came to British Columbia from hospitals in Edmonton.

The students will be observing and, under supervision, participating in the care of patients to reinforce and develop their clinical knowledge and skills, according to Robert A. Smith, coordinator for the Cariboo College program. Meanwhile, these students are sponsoring the annual conference of the B.C. Society of Respiratory Technologists at Cariboo College on May 1 and 2. Yelland is currently president of the Society.

(more)

The College enrolled its first respiratory technology class in September 1979. It is this group that, having now completed its pre-requisite year (emphasizing science courses) and its pre-clinical year (emphasizing specialized training) is ready to undertake the clinical stage of the program. At the end of it, the students will be ready to write the national qualifying examination required for designation as Registered Respiratory Technologist.

Meanwhile, Cariboo's second group of students is now completing the pre-requisite academic year preparatory to entering the pre-clinical stage in September. A new first-year class will start the three-year program at the same time.

Registration for the new class is underway. Class size is limited, but Smith said there is still room for eligible applicants. Enrollees must have completed Grade 12 with a minimum grade of "C" overall and specifically in Mathematics 12 and Chemistry or Biology 12.

Information about general requirements and course content is available from Smith or other respiratory technology instructors or from the office of the Registrar, Cariboo College, P.O. Box 3010, Kamloops, V2C 5N3. The College telephone number is 374-0123.

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