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News Release

Contact:
Karen Gonya
Development and
College Relations Office
33 Edgemont Drive
Presque Isle, ME 04769
Phone: (207) 768-2809
Fax: (207) 760-1101
kgonya@nmcc.edu

NMCC to offer Maine's first Community Paramedicine program

Aroostook County – Beginning this fall, Northern Maine Community College will offer an exciting new Community Paramedicine program that will allow for expanded career choices for experienced, licensed paramedics. It is the first of its kind in Maine, and one of only eight such programs nationwide.

The program is designed to educate licensed paramedics who are primarily employed in the pre-hospital emergency environment to become competent community paramedics. Community paramedics work collaboratively with public health, home care and primary care professionals in non-emergency settings, filling gaps in the healthcare workforce.

“This program is intended for paramedics already licensed and working in underserved areas who are looking to expand their role,” said Daryl Boucher, coordinator of NMCC’s emergency medical services program. “In rural areas paramedics may be one of the only health care providers in the community. With this additional training, a community paramedic can check on high risk patients with chronic diseases to make sure they are okay, as well as play an expanded role in public health by helping with activities such as immunization and blood pressure clinics.”

Community paramedics help patients meet critical health needs by helping establish health systems that promote health and wellness, while serving as advocates, educators, facilitators, liaisons, and resource coordinators. In addition to serving communities in the traditional roles, community paramedics are employed by acute care hospitals, long term care facilities, assisted living organizations, public health entities, and municipalities.

Community paramedicine is a relatively new concept nationally and in Maine. In order to allow paramedics from across the state to take advantage of this additional training, the program has been designed to be offered primarily on-line. All of the career training courses will be offered exclusively on-line. Students may then opt to take the required general education classes at NMCC or at a college closer to home. This flexibility will enable paramedics from across the state to take advantage of this new program.

“We are excited about the opportunity to provide this training not only to EMS personnel in Aroostook County but throughout Maine,” said Dr. Dottie Martin, NMCC academic dean. “Community paramedics are a valuable resource in their local community, playing an important role in preventing unnecessary hospitalization and readmission to the hospital.”

Paramedics already holding an associate degree can enroll in the advanced certificate level of the program, which entails five career courses totaling 16 credits, all but one of which will be offered on-line. Paramedics who do not have an associate degree will enter the Associate in Science degree level of the program, taking the same five career courses, as well as an additional 44 credits in math, science and other general education courses.

The NMCC admissions office is accepting applicants into the program for the Fall 2012 semester.

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