



News Release

Contact:
Jason Parent
Development and
College Relations Office
33 Edgemont Drive
Presque Isle, ME 04769
Phone: (207) 768-2808
Fax: (207) 768-2813
jparent@nmcc.edu

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Houlton Higher Education Center to host information session for nursing and allied health

Aroostook County - Southern Aroostook County residents interested in pursuing careers in nursing and allied health will have the chance to learn about opportunities available to them locally at a special public information session at the Houlton Higher Education Center on Thursday, October 4.

Northern Maine Community College will host the event at the Military Street facility between 5:00 and 7:00 p.m., with representatives from the Presque Isle campus and the local center present to speak about the associate degree nursing program the College offers in Houlton collaboratively with Houlton Regional Hospital.

NMCC Admissions Director Bill Casavant will also discuss and have information on the emergency medical services and intermediate EMT programs offered by the College, as well as two new programs in medical assisting and medical coding that were introduced by NMCC last year and are available for the first time this fall.

The evening will be tailored to discussing the needs of each individual who visits the center for information, with an emphasis on the entry requirements and prerequisites of the associate degree in nursing program and the related allied health programs.

Since the opening of the Houlton Higher Education Center in 2001, Northern Maine Community College and the Houlton Regional Hospital have collaborated in training two graduating classes of nursing students. In addition, the Higher Education Center offers many of the general education/liberal studies courses needed to complete the nursing and other college programs.

“For many Southern Aroostook residents beginning coursework at the Houlton Higher Education Center helps greatly with work and family obligations. It is a great way to get started on a college degree,” said Otis Smith, NMCC Houlton off-campus center coordinator.

This fall, the southern Aroostook students currently enrolled in the NMCC nursing program in Houlton began the second year of the two-year degree program. After successfully completing all courses, they will earn their associate in science degree and be eligible to take the NCLEX-RN national licensure exam.

Upon successful completion of the exam, students are able to apply for licensure in Maine and/or any other state. As part of their educational experience, the students train in a variety of clinical settings, including many learning opportunities at Houlton Regional Hospital.

The development of the new two-year program in medical assisting and one-year certificate in medical coding offered by NMCC are in direct response to specific requests of regional healthcare practices and professionals who are looking to fill positions throughout Aroostook County.

Medical assistants perform routine administrative and clinical tasks needed to keep the medical offices and clinics of physicians, podiatrists, chiropractors, and other medical professionals running smoothly and efficiently. Others in the profession may work in outpatient surgical centers, laboratories, or hospitals.

The services provided by medical assistants include both the office administrative and clinical aspects of their place of employment. Administrative duties include keeping patient records, managing financial matters, handling insurance arrangements, processing correspondence, and overall office management. Clinically, the medical assistant prepares and assists in patient examination, records laboratory data, assists with office surgical procedures, performs basic physical assessment and measures vital signs.

Medical coding professionals review medical documentation provided by physicians and other healthcare professionals and translate the information into standardized numerical codes. The universally recognized coding system is then used by third-party payers, such as insurance companies, to justify services provided and to facilitate reimbursement. The coded data is also used to facilitate statistical classification and research, as well as to examine utilization patterns.

The October 4 session at the Houlton Higher Education Center is recommended for high school students and adults who are considering attending college in the upcoming spring term (January 2008) or in the fall of 2008. All students, educators, business and health professionals, and other area residents are invited.

For more information, contact Smith at the Houlton Higher Education Center at 521-3154.

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