



# News Release

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## **NMCC medical assisting students work on health education teaching displays during National Medical Assistants Week October 19-23**

**Aroostook County** - Northern Maine Community College will join with higher education and medical facilities across the country to mark National Medical Assistants Week October 19 through 23, as students in the program work on projects to educate the public about the profession, as well as one of the College's newest programs.

Since 1984, the third week of October has been designated nation-wide as Medical Assistants Week to honor and acknowledge the 350,000 medical assistants working in the field and the many of thousands of medical assisting students preparing to begin their career. This academic year, the commemoration holds special significance at Northern Maine Community College, as the College welcomes its largest group of entering students (13) into the two-year program since it was introduced in the fall of 2007.

As part of NMCC's medical assisting week activities, the nine senior-level students will work on health education teaching displays, which they will present publicly at the College on Friday, October 30. The teaching projects will include visual presentations of healthcare topics that are commonly experienced in the profession and are timely. The exhibits will be on display for the public in the Christie Lobby at the College between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. The students will be present to discuss their work.

"The presentations provide a great opportunity for the students to take key points and apply it to real life situations," said Susan Dugal, coordinator of the medical assisting program at NMCC. "It helps them to develop critical thinking skills and gets them to use resources. It also helps improve oral communication skills, which are vitally important in the medical assisting career field."

Presentation topics to be covered include Halloween safety, childhood obesity, staying active indoors during winter, the food pyramid, Seasonal Affective Disorder and preventing falls among the elderly in the winter.

Medical Assistants week is sponsored annually by the American Medical Technologists, who have selected “A Caring Touch that Means so Much” as the theme for this year’s celebration to emphasize the commitment of the professionals as vital members of the healthcare team.

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.

The development of the two-year medical assisting program was in direct response to the specific request of regional healthcare practices and professionals, who were looking to fill positions throughout Aroostook County.

“Medical Assisting is a growing field and I have been proud to play a role in developing a program that will address the growing need for healthcare services in Aroostook County, as well as offering an opportunity for gainful employment in the region. It is wonderful to see the outcome of teamwork between NMCC and the community it serves,” said Dugal.

In developing the medical assisting program, NMCC followed the guidelines and standards delineated by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs. With the first class of students having graduated this past May, College officials now have begun the formal accreditation process for the program.

As was the case with the program’s inception, a key component for the program is the continued collaboration with area partners in delivering the education. Several area medical practices and hospital departments have provided sites for student clinical externship sites.

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