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Communications Office
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Prepare for a Nursing Career at the Connecticut Community Colleges

The community colleges prepare students for the RN licensure examination

"Nurses who come out of a community college program are well-prepared, with real, patient care experience," said Kelli Brown, a Naugatuck Valley Community College Nursing Program graduate who is employed as a nurse at St. Raphael's Hospital in New Haven and at Waterbury Hospital. "I got a job right away as an ER nurse. I like the diversity of patients we have, and I love that I can make a difference in somebody's life."

More than one million new nurses will be needed by 2016, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. In Connecticut, registered nurses and licensed practical nurses will find over 1,300 job openings annually through 2014, according to the Connecticut Department of Labor's 2006 report *Connecticut's Industries and Occupations: Forecast 2014*.

The newly unified Connecticut Community College Nursing Program can give students the skills and education needed to start a rewarding nursing career. Starting salary for new nurses is over \$50,000 and partnerships with hospitals and other healthcare agencies can pave the way for graduates to land positions in the nursing profession. Sign-on bonuses, scholarships and recruitment incentives increase the appeal of a nursing career even more in today's uncertain economy.

According to data from the Department of Higher Education, approximately 60% of nursing graduates in the state of Connecticut are prepared at the associate degree level; five of the state's associate degree programs are offered by the System of Connecticut Community Colleges (CCCs). The CCCs' nursing curriculum prepares students for the national licensure examination for registered nurses (NCLEX-RN). The nursing associate degree graduates of the Connecticut Community Colleges take the same examination for RN licensure as baccalaureate-level graduates and enjoy similar or higher pass rates. According to current licensure statistics, the 2008 Connecticut Community College nursing graduates averaged a 93% success rate on the NCLEX-RN, above the national average of 87%.

Nursing students at the CCCs take two years of nursing courses with clinical/ hospital-based experiences to prepare for careers as RNs. "Community College nursing students have earned a reputation for being well-prepared clinically, and most graduates pass the NCLEX-RN exam on their first try," said Cory Pearce, a nurse at Backus Hospital in Norwich and graduate of the Three Rivers Community College Nursing Program.

The Nursing Program is offered at the following Connecticut Community Colleges: Capital (Hartford); Gateway (North Haven); Naugatuck Valley (Waterbury); Norwalk; and Three Rivers (Norwich). The Connecticut Community College Nursing Program partners with hospitals, healthcare providers, and state and local organizations to expand opportunities for students to enter the field of nursing. Partner hospitals, insurance and financial institutions have provided special funding, student scholarships, clinical sites, staffing and resources to support the efforts of the colleges to serve more students interested in becoming nurses.

Candidates may apply to as many as three of the Connecticut Community Colleges with one application to enter the Nursing Program, a four-semester curriculum. This streamlined application process has minimized waitlists. Most eligible applicants are accepted the first year they apply.

"I made the right choice," concluded Kelli Brown.

Persons interested in applying are encouraged to attend a Nursing Information Session at one of the 12 Connecticut Community Colleges. For a schedule of upcoming Information Sessions, and more information about the Connecticut Community College Nursing Program, visit www.commnet.edu/nursing, or call 860.244.7759.