

Practical Nursing Program Overview February 2007

Practical nursing programs are approved by the South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, Board of Nursing. The programs are provided support by the South Carolina Department of Education, Office of Career and Technology Education, Health Science Technology Education. These practical nursing programs are an eighteen months course of study, consisting of two nine month segments (Phase I and Phase II) that correspond with the public school calendar. Classes begin annually in August and end in May. Generally Phase I students attend classes all morning each day. Phase II students have a full-time schedule, attending classes two to three days a week and clinical sites two to three days a week.

The program hours vary but average a total of 1,496 clock hours, of which 444 are clinical and/or lab hours. There are no college credit hours given for any of the courses. However, since 2001 a statewide nursing articulation model was approved in South Carolina that awards 15 hours of nursing credits to graduates of practical nursing programs towards articulation with an approved registered nursing program in the state.

The purpose of the programs is to provide quality nursing education, incorporating professional work ethics, to meet the changing needs of healthcare. Graduates find jobs and historically work in long term care facilities, hospitals and physicians' offices. Other career opportunities are available and many of the graduates continue their nursing education.

The nursing programs subscribe to current beliefs about the practice of nursing. These beliefs serve as the programs' conceptual framework, and the curriculum and objectives flow from these. These objectives support the PEW Health Professions Commission's Competencies for 2005 and the twenty-one competencies for the 21st century.

Phase I of the programs is open to high school seniors. A large adult population is served by these programs. The Office of Career and Technology Education collects data on the phase I high school students. The content in phase I may vary throughout the programs, but generally addresses the following topics:

PHASE I

1st Nine Weeks

- Fundamentals of Nursing
- Anatomy & Physiology

2nd Nine Weeks

- Fundamentals of Nursing
- Anatomy & Physiology

3rd Nine Weeks

- Fundamentals of Nursing
- Nutrition & Diet Therapy

4th Nine Weeks

- Fundamentals of Nursing
- Nursing Math

Currently in South Carolina there are three practical nursing programs located on career and technology center campuses: 1) Applied Technology Education Campus, Camden, <http://atec.kcsdschools.com/home.aspx>, 2) Cherokee Technology Center, Gaffney, <http://www.cherokee1.k12.sc.us/ctc/index.htm>; and 3) Marion Technical Education Center, Marion <http://www.mctec.org/nurse.htm>.

Fifteen technical colleges in South Carolina offered practical nursing programs. These colleges are identified in the matrix posted at: <http://www.sctechsystem.com/PgmMatrix/default.aspx>