



Rochester Public Schools, Rochester Community and Technical College and Mayo Clinic

UNVEIL NEW HEALTH SCIENCE CAREERS CENTER

In January of 2006, Rochester Public Schools announced a community collaboration with Rochester Community and Technical College (RCTC) and Mayo Clinic to expand the District's Health Science Careers Program (formerly known as the Medical Careers Program). On February 1, 2007, the partners unveiled their new Health Science Careers Center.

The Health Science Careers Center is designed to allow the Health Science Careers Program to expand to meet the needs of students and the growing demand for health-care professionals. The facility boasts 11,000 square feet of state-of-the-art classroom and lab space, which can accommodate 270 students.

"The nursing lab provides 14 stations, complete with furniture and equipment found in real patient-care settings," says course instructor and registered nurse, Chris Kuhn. "There are even working patient call lights so students can practice watching for the signal and meeting patient needs in a timely manner."

"All students now have access to wireless-laptop technology to supplement research," adds instructor and registered nurse, Bonnie Barnett. "And because the facility provides space for presentations to 60 students at a time, we can now have guest speakers from the Mayo Clinic on a regular basis."

The Health Science Careers Program is a year-long course open to high school juniors and seniors. Appropriate for both pre-college and pre-technical programs, students learn the industry requirements for a number of health-care careers, from doctors, nurses, and first responders to pharmacists, dentists, and veterinary technicians. Students also study human anatomy and physiology and participate in hands-on activities with medical equipment such as hospital beds, blood pressure cuffs, and stethoscopes. This course is a Nursing Assistant State Approved Program that integrates a national student organization called Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) into the classroom learning.

The Health Science Careers Program allows students to earn credits toward both high school graduation requirements and college. RCTC provides articulation agreements for students to earn college credits that apply to RCTC programs.

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The District has offered the Health Science Careers Program for more than 20 years. In the fall of 2003-04, RCTC generously made classroom space available and

the program was moved to the Heintz Center. At that time, 61 students were enrolled in the program. Enrollment had nearly tripled by late December 2006, when 167 students moved into the new Health Science Careers Center.

"RCTC is very pleased that the Health Science Careers program has grown into new space designed to better meet the curriculum and enrollment needs of the program," says RCTC president, Don Supalla. "This move frees up space at University Center to accommodate new secondary career and technical programs."

The Health Science Careers Center will also help promote diversity in the health-care field. The ethnic diversity of the Health Science program is currently 28 percent—even greater than the 26.5 percent diversity in Rochester Public Schools' general student population. This is important as the United States continues to become more diverse and people seek health-care providers with cultural backgrounds similar to their own.

Mayo Clinic allocated \$1.3 million for the development of the new Health Science Careers Center, including renovation, facilities maintenance, computer and classroom equipment, and administrative support funding.

"Investing in educational space is investing in students and in our future," says Glenn Forbes, M.D., CEO of Mayo Clinic Rochester. "We take our partnership with Rochester Public Schools and RCTC very seriously. Great things happen when people collaborate, and we are excited to see this program expand."

By promoting health-care careers, this collaboration supports the human resources needs of Mayo Clinic and encourages enrollment in RCTC's health-care programs and programs at the Mayo School of Health Sciences, all while improving the student-learning experience.

"I am absolutely thrilled for the students who will benefit from this partnership," says superintendent Jerry Williams. "They will have access not only to outstanding professionals, but also to wonderful career opportunities in medicine."

For more information contact the Communications Office at (507) 328-4242 or niferrara@rochester.k12.mn.us

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