



NEWS RELEASE

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CSUSM and Vista Community Clinic Join Forces to Offer Medical Assistant (MA) Training Program

New program will help address the need for qualified MAs in North County San Diego.

San Marcos, Calif. — Jul. 12 — Beginning this fall, California State University San Marcos will offer a new Medical Assistant Training Program designed to help lower-income residents of North County gain entry into the healthcare field. Developed jointly by Vista Community Clinic (VCC) and CSUSM, this six-month program combines classroom training and clinical experience to prepare students to become Medical Assistants (MAs). Prior to the launch of this program, the dearth of affordable, local education options contributed to a lack of qualified applicants to meet demand for MAs. This new Medical Assistant Training Program will attempt to fill that gap.

With the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), expanded access to Medi-Cal services has placed a growing demand on community clinics throughout the state. In North County San Diego, a rapidly expanding patient population has created an acute need for qualified Medical Assistants to help ensure underserved patients, in particular, have access to quality healthcare. MAs provide crucial assistance by facilitating a smooth process for both patients and practitioners. They work directly with patients, doing everything from taking vital signs and helping patients understand how to follow treatment protocols to administering injections and scheduling lab tests. MAs communicate directly with physicians, stepping in to help with procedures, providing translation services for non-English-speaking patients, and assisting with many tasks that help ensure efficient clinical service.

"This program helps members of our community learn a trade that provides a living wage while at the same time addressing a vital need for healthcare professionals. MAs trained through this program will become skilled at providing patient-centered primary care that supports quality care for vulnerable populations, including those who, prior to the ACA, were unable to access healthcare resources," explains Mike Schroder, Dean of Extended Learning at CSUSM. "By supporting trainees both during and after completion of the program, we hope to reach people who otherwise wouldn't have had the opportunity to participate in this kind of learning experience."

VCC and the CSUSM School of Nursing are partnering with numerous social service agencies in North County to refer potential students; entry-level administrative staffers at community clinics are also eligible to apply.

"The MA Training Program is a big step forward in fulfilling the urgent need for well trained medical assistants in North County health care organizations," said Fernando Sañudo, Chief Executive Officer of VCC. "For low-income residents in our communities, the program opens doors to rewarding careers in health care where they can make a difference and achieve economic self sufficiency. The low cost makes it affordable and accessible to our target population. VCC is proud to partner with CSUSM Extended Learning in such an important endeavor."

Upon successful completion of the program, students will receive a certificate of completion and will be eligible to sit for the California Certified Medical Assistant exam.

The classes will be led by nursing instructor Valerie Gwin, and will take place on weeknights and Saturdays over a six-month period beginning September 6, 2016. The \$2,000 tuition is considerably lower than the cost of programs offered through private universities, and includes the cost of textbooks. Some financial aid may be available, as well as support for childcare and transportation expenses. The deadline to apply is August 5, 2016. More information is available on the CSUSM Extended Learning website at www.csusm.edu/el/medicalassistant. To learn more about the Medical Assistant Training Program and the qualifications required to apply, contact Vista Community Clinic by phone at 760-407-1430 or send an email to MAProgram@vcc.clinic.

About Vista Community Clinic

With seven locations in the cities of Vista, Oceanside, Lake Elsinore, and La Habra, VCC provides affordable, high quality health care to more than 55,000 residents of North San Diego County and Lake Elsinore in Riverside County. Services offered by VCC include primary care, pediatrics, prenatal and women's health, optometry, dental care, chiropractic services, and behavioral health. VCC also offers a wide array of innovative health education programs for all community residents and free health insurance enrollment services. VCC is recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) as a Level 3 (highest) Patient-Centered Medical Home. For more information, please call (760) 631-5000 or visit www.vcc.clinic.

About CSUSM Extended Learning

As the academic outreach arm of Cal State San Marcos, Extended Learning is a leading provider of professional and continuing education in North San Diego and Southwest Riverside Counties. Offering degree programs, such as a master's degree in public health, as well as both academic credit and

noncredit professional enrichment courses, Extended Learning helps individuals and organizations achieve their educational and training goals. For more information about Extended Learning at CSUSM please visit <http://www.csusm.edu/el/>.