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For Immediate Release:

Kishwaukee College graduates first class of medical assistant students

Kishwaukee College graduated its first class of Medical Assistant students during a pinning ceremony on Friday, Dec. 17, at the College. Kish pinned six students before family and friends as recognition for their completion of the Medical Assistant Certificate.

Kishwaukee College's Medical Assistant program trains students to work in hospitals and other health care facilities where they complete both administrative and clinical tasks. Through collaboration with area medical partners, Kishwaukee College identified a strong need for qualified medical assistants within the local community and started the program in Spring 2021. All six graduates of the initial Medical Assistant class had employment lined up before completing their certificate.

"There is a lot of work available. You can really go wherever you want to go. Employers all want to hire you," said graduate Mayla Sanders.

Students can make connections with local health care facilities through on-the-job training, where they apply their education to real-world clinical scenarios. Many of the graduates were able to find work through the employers they practiced with.

"There are a ton of options," graduate Kyla Rachas said. "The two places I had my externships were fighting to hire me."

Along with strong local demand, the national outlook for the medical assistant position is expected to grow by 18% over the next decade, much faster than the national average, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Kara Schreiner, Director of the Medical Assistant Program at Kish, praised the students for navigating the challenges of being the first class of a new program.

"The Medical Assistant Certificate is a short-term program, where students obtain their credential in just under a year," Schreiner said. "The students worked hard, putting in the time and effort to successfully complete. They were leaders in the classroom, and I have no doubt they will be leaders in their new field. I am so proud of them all."

The students also celebrated the quality of instruction they received during their education at Kish.

“There were challenges throughout the semester, but our instructor was really great. She was able to help us out the whole way,” graduate Asia Brown said.

To create a state-of-the-art learning space for the program, Kishwaukee College modeled an existing classroom after medical facilities to have patient rooms, a reception desk and a lab area. The space allows students to practice their skills before starting rotations at an externship site.

The graduating class includes Asia Brown, Felicia Craig, Shalana Jones, Rebecca Nelson, Kyla Rachas and Mayla Sanders. Each graduate was pinned individually by a friend or family member who had supported the student or acted as a mentor while completing the program.

Medical Assistants work as multi-skilled health professionals in a clinical setting. They need to be able to perform a wide range of tasks in health care, including administrative and clinical duties. Kish prepares students to become fully certified or registered medical assistants. Fall 2022 applications will be available starting Tuesday, Feb. 15. To learn more about Kish’s accredited Medical Assistant program, visit www.kish.edu/medicalassistant.

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Photo Caption: Kishwaukee College’s first graduating class of medical assistants pose for a photo during a pinning ceremony. Kish created the Medical Assistant Program to help address the high demand for qualified medical assistants within the local community.

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