Three New Health Professions Programs

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Utah State University Eastern will launch three new health professions programs this fall: Medical Laboratory Technician, Pharmacy Technician, and Surgery Technician. All three programs will fill the needs of health care facilities and providers in southeastern Utah and the Four Corners regions.

Administrators and program directors at USU worked with local healthcare providers to determine what programs would fill their need for qualified and trained employees. Many employers are struggling to find qualified candidates to fill positions for these jobs, and are not able to attract qualified employees from larger markets to move to the rural areas where these jobs are needed. The goal of USU’s new programs is to train local residents interested in living and working in these areas to create a stronger local workforce.

“We worked closely with local hospitals and clinics to find out what jobs they needed most, and were able to create three new programs to help strengthen the workforce with trained and qualified employees.” says Michele Lyman, Director for Health Professions at USU. “We’re accomplishing two major objectives, providing employers with skilled job candidates, and providing students from our area with the opportunity to find meaningful careers.”

Lyman headed up the effort to create these new programs from the Blanding campus, where she serves as an instructor for several health professions programs, as well the director for these programs statewide for USU. All three USU campuses in southeast Utah, Blanding, Moab, and Price, will have these programs available either through live instruction or interactive video broadcast starting this fall. Applications for students are currently being accepted.

The medical laboratory technician (MLT) program will take four semesters to complete, once certain prerequisites are completed, and will award an applied associate degree (AAS) once completed. The surgical technician and pharmacy technician programs can both be completed in two semesters, once prerequisites are completed, and provides students with a certificate of completion once finished. Students who finish a certificate of completion may also earn an AAS after completing additional general education classes.

The process for creating the new programs took over two years, and included creating an approved curriculum, hiring new faculty and staff, and ensuring there was proper classroom and lab space for the programs. With the addition of these programs all the healthcare programs in Price and Blanding will be moving into new teaching and lab spaces to accommodate the growth. In Price a newly renovated space in the Reeves building is currently under construction, and in Blanding the University recently completed a deal with San Juan County to occupy the former San Juan Clinic on 400 E 800 N.

For more information about these, and other health professions programs visit usueastern.edu/health-professions, or call (435) 678-8173