

**NEWS RELEASE**

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**UNIVERSITY MEDICINE LAUNCHES**

**PRACTICAL NURSING APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM FOR ITS EMPLOYEES**

***LPN preparatory courses conveniently taught***

***at UM by CCRI faculty;***

***First program of its kind in the nation***

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (September 21, 2017) [University Medicine](http://www.umfmed.org/3/) (UM), a nonprofit primary care, specialty outpatient and sub-specialty medical group practice with over 200 physicians and multiple patient care locations across the state, announces the launch of its Apprenticeship Program for medical assistants employed by UM who wish to become Licensed Practical Nurses.

The program is the result of a collaborative effort initiated by UM between Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) and Building Futures/

Apprenticeship Rhode Island (ARI). It is funded in part by University Medicine and by a grant CCRI received from the State of Rhode Island Governor’s Workforce Board. Rhode Island was one of 38 states to be awarded the American Apprenticeship Initiative Grant in 2015 by then-President Barack Obama with the goal to expand apprenticeship in nontraditional trades industries nationwide.

**“**University Medicine’s program marks the first time an apprenticeship is tied to an LPN curriculum in the nation,” states Dr. Louis B. Rice**,** president and CEO of University Medicine. “No other program like this for LPNs exists – the closest apprenticeship program model can be found in England. It is also groundbreaking for CCRI to offer such a customized program onsite to meet the specific needs of our employees. We are grateful for this highly collaborative effort that results in significant career growth opportunity for our staff.”

UM’s LPN Apprenticeship Program trains medical assistants on staff who are interested in pursuing careers as licensed practical nurses. The Governor’s Workforce Board grant provided CCRI with funding for a three-month collaboration with UM to design the LPN curriculum around an apprenticeship model. CCRI staff assesses the level of academic readiness for program candidates and identifies required courses needed to successfully enter the Practical Nursing Program at CCRI. This past year, courses such as math and biology were delivered onsite at the UM Patient Center at 375 Wampanoag Trail in East Providence, and onsite advisors provided assistance with entrance placement testing and the application process. A customized schedule for the courses was developed so the employees could conveniently take classes at times which least impacted their professional duties at UM.

“We are seeing employers eager to have academic opportunities to offer to their employees,” comments CCRI VP of Academic Affairs Rosemary Castigan. “University Medicine’s program is a great example of a partnership between the academic side and workforce development side of CCRI, delivering college services to employees in a way that is very specific and respectful of their work time, and creating a deeper connection with the employer. This is not just about offering a standard course or training onsite which we have done in the past, rather this is tailoring our course schedules and bringing placement testing and advisor services onsite to work directly with the individual students, to fully prepare them to enter the LPN program. For a CNA or a medical assistant, it is the natural next step in their career.”

After the course curriculum was developed, ARI worked with UM to design and develop the apprenticeship phase of the program, acting as intermediary between the state for registering the apprenticeship and assisting with required paperwork. Four UM employees have been accepted into the LPN apprenticeship program. “Once the UM employees enter the nine-month Apprenticeship Program, they can continue working a reduced schedule,” explains Dr. Rice. “Although the curriculum timeframe was customized for our employees, the content and rigor of the program remains unchanged and is exactly what a non-UM employee would go through if they were enrolled in CCRI’s LPN program on a full-time basis. Together with our program partners, we’ve identified the skills and competencies needed in order to become competent, full-fledged LPNs. What makes our program unique is that they will spend a year on the job learning as an apprentice. It is paid employment and not a temporary internship or clinical rotation experience in a purely academic context.”

“Apprenticeship in the healthcare sector makes sense,” comments Andrew Cortés, executive director of Building Futures, the home of Apprenticeship RI.   “University Medicine is a great example, using apprenticeship to upskill medical assistants to become licensed practical nurses through an innovative partnership with us and the Community College of RI.  Standardizing the skill levels of these critically important caregivers ensures that everyone wins.”

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*Established in 2000, University Medicine is a nonprofit primary care, specialty outpatient and sub-specialty medical group practice with over 200 physicians and multiple patient care locations across the state of Rhode Island. One of the largest physician groups in Rhode Island, University Medicine is affiliated with The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, and employs most of the full-time faculty of Brown’s Department of Medicine. Specialties and clinical divisions include: general internal medicine; primary care (family and pediatrics); diabetes and endocrinology; infectious disease; hospital medicine; hypertension and kidney diseases; hematology/oncology; nephrology; pulmonary, critical care and sleep; gastroenterology; rheumatology and geriatrics. Over 100,000 patients are served annually from Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut and other states and countries. The three-part mission of University Medicine is high-level quality medical patient care, state-of-the-art clinical research studies, and dedicated teaching of more than 400 medical students, residents and fellows trained by University Medicine physicians annually. University Medicine is headquartered at 17 Virginia Avenue in Providence, RI 02905-4406; phone: 877-771-7401; web: http://www.umfmed.org*