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Triton College

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TRITON COLLEGE SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHES RESPIRATORY CARE PROGRAM, WELCOMES FIRST COHORT

RIVER GROVE, IL—This fall, Triton College successfully launched its new Respiratory Care program, welcoming its first cohort of students and preparing them for careers as registered respiratory therapists. The program is housed in newly developed classrooms equipped with advanced technologies, offering students and instructors an immersive experience. And thanks to the Pipeline for the Advancement of the Healthcare Workforce (PATH) grant, students received vital financial benefits to support their education.

“Respiratory therapists are so in-demand that students who graduate from our program and pass the board exam could get a job in any hospital,” said Dr. Peter Jaswilko, Triton College’s Allied Health chairperson.

Thanks to the PATH grant, Triton College provided educational support to more than 1,015 students, helping them pursue healthcare careers. PATH, a statewide program, creates, supports, and expands healthcare career opportunities in Illinois, supporting students across diverse backgrounds. As of 2023, Illinois community colleges have enrolled over 27,600 students in the program, 45 percent of whom are first-generation college students. Through PATH, Illinois community colleges have engaged 1,032 employers across the state, successfully opened 27 newly developed healthcare programs, and expanded 74 healthcare programs.

The PATH grant has awarded more than \$1.4 million to Triton College over the past three years. This funding has provided direct support to over 1,000 healthcare students and provided substantial funding to equip the college’s Respiratory Care lab with advanced equipment students will encounter in the field.

“Respiratory care continues to be one of the most in-demand health professions, with hospitals, health facilities, and clinical sites in the area actively seeking to hire respiratory therapists,” said Jaswilko. “Many clinical sites are eager to host Triton College students, seeing it as both a valuable learning experience and an opportunity for recruitment,” he said. The first cohort of students will begin their clinical work in January 2025.

During its accreditation site visit earlier this year, the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) recommended Triton College's Respiratory Care Program for accreditation, with no citations or areas needing improvement. "We are excited about this achievement and look forward to welcoming our next cohort of students," said Jaswilko.

Graduates of Triton's Respiratory Care program will be equipped to work in a variety of medical environments, including emergency rooms, critical care units, and neonatal intensive care. Respiratory therapists treat a wide range of patients, from those with asthma and COPD to individuals with complex, multi-organ conditions. Their skills include performing diagnostic tests, managing ventilators, assisting with high-risk deliveries, and more. Additionally, respiratory therapists can engage in research, evaluate healthcare technologies, and provide educational support to patients, families, and other healthcare providers.

A degree from Triton's Respiratory Care program opens career paths in a number of settings. According to Jaswilko, the beginning salary for a respiratory therapist can range from \$65,000 to \$70,000, with the median salary approximately \$85,000. From 2022 to 2024, the job growth has risen 14 percent.

The program's educational facilities include advanced equipment, such as four hospital-grade ventilators, a high-frequency oscillator ventilator, diagnostic pulmonary function testing machines, and both low- and high-fidelity simulators, allowing students to practice their skills prior to clinical experiences.

To learn more about the Respiratory Care Program, [view video](#) and visit triton.edu/respiratory.

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ABOUT TRITON COLLEGE

Triton College is an institution of higher education dedicated to student success. Triton offers more than 120 degree and certificate programs designed for students to realize their career aspirations and effectively compete in a global economy. The college campus spans 110 acres in River Grove, Illinois, holds classes at satellite locations and offers online learning opportunities. Triton's exemplary faculty and staff work to provide high-quality, convenient and affordable educational opportunities to more than 10,000 students each year. Triton College is a member of The Community Colleges of Illinois and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Learn more at <http://triton.edu/>.