

Respiratory Care Program, AAS

Program Features – Overview (Course sequencing meant as a guideline for planning)

Northampton Community College (NCC) is partnering with Reading Area Community College (RACC) to offer a cooperative agreement between the two schools to better serve students in the Northampton, Monroe, Wayne and Pike regions who are interested in pursuing a career as a Respiratory Therapist. This career pathway requires completion of the Respiratory Care Program (RCP) which RACC currently offers at the campus in Reading, PA. This collaborative agreement would be similar to the agreement currently in place between RACC and Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC) which allows students to take all of their general education courses for the RCP program at their “home” college and then take the core Respiratory Therapy courses at RACC. After the students have completed all of their general education courses (34credits) in the RCP curriculum and met the program admissions requirements at NCC, they would apply to the RACC RCP program by April 15 for a fall second year start. The students would then spend the first semester of their second year on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at NCC and Tuesday and Thursday at RACC. The second semester of their second year would include their clinical rotations on Monday, Wednesday and Friday with Tuesday and Thursday classes at RACC. Students can complete their clinical rotations in clinical facilities located closer to their home, based on clinical affiliation agreements that RACC has in place with 24 healthcare organizations. The RACC RCP program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care. An informal advisory discussion was held with Lehigh Valley Health Network and St. Luke’s University Health Network, our two largest employers of the RCP positions, and they agree that the partnership is needed in the area for our students, and that there would be positions in their networks. The cooperative agreement also includes “in county” tuition rates for RCP program courses for students from NCC who are enrolled in the RCP program despite their county of residence.

The job opportunities are projected to grow by 23% (U.S.DOL Occupational Outlook, 2018) from 2016-2026 with an average salary of \$58,670. There are 786 positions posted in Pennsylvania.

Program Rationale

RACC is the closest community college offering the AAS in Respiratory Care Program, and the AAS is the entry level for the respiratory therapists to this high demand occupation. The Respiratory Therapist (RT) position has been on the high priority occupation list for a few years and is highly needed in the local healthcare employers due to an aging workforce. To address the challenges of transportation for students in the program, the RACC program is designed so students from similar locales could carpool together, and students’ clinical rotations are located close to where they reside.

Programmatic Program Outcomes

Upon completion of the program, the students will:

- Provide, under medical direction, treatment, management, diagnostic evaluation and care to patients with deficiencies and abnormalities of the cardiorespiratory system.
- Administer the therapeutic use of the following: medical gases and administration apparatus, environmental control systems, humidification, aerosols, medications, ventilatory support, bronchopulmonary resuscitation and airway management.
- Demonstrate behavior consistent with acceptable professional conduct standards such as appearance, quality of work, quantity of work, continuing education, human relations skills, leadership skills, reading skills, writing skills and verbal communication skills.

Proposed Sequence

Course	Title	Credits	NCC/RACC
FALL SEMESTER			
COLS 101	College Success	1	NCC
ENGL 101	English I	3	NCC
BIOS 204	Human Anatomy and Physiology I	4	NCC
MATH 150	Introduction to Statistics	3	NCC
CISC 101	Introduction to Computers	3	NCC
CMTH102	Introduction to Communication	3	NCC
Semester Total		17 Credits	
SPRING SEMESTER			
ENGL 151T	English II Technical Writing	3	NCC
BIOS 254	Human Anatomy and Physiology II	4	NCC
BIOS 202	Microbiology for Allied Health	4	NCC
PHIL202	Ethics and Morals	3	NCC
PSYC103	Introduction to Psychology	3	NCC
Semester Total		17 Credits	
FALL SEMESTER			
RES 150	Respiratory Care I	5	RACC
RES 212	Pharmacology	2	RACC
Semester Total		7 Credits	
SPRING SEMESTER			
RES 200	Cardiopulmonary Anatomy and Physiology	2	Distance RACC
RES237	Respiratory Care II	8	RACC
Semester Total		10 Credits	
SUMMER SEMESTER			
RES 237	Respiratory Care III	3	RACC
Semester Total		3 Credits	
FALL SEMESTER			
RES 255	Respiratory Care IV	10	RACC
Semester Total		10 Credits	
SPRING SEMESTER			
RES 265	Respiratory Care V	12	RACC
Semester Total		12 Credits	
Total Degree Credits		76 Credits	

Career Potential

Employment of respiratory therapists is projected to grow 23 percent from 2016 to 2026, much faster than the average for all occupations. Growth in the middle-aged and elderly population will lead to an increased incidence of respiratory conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and pneumonia. These respiratory disorders can permanently damage the lungs or restrict lung function. The job opportunities are projected to grow by 23% (U.S.DOL Occupational Outlook, 2018) from 2016-2026 with an average salary of \$58,670. There are 786 positions posted in Pennsylvania.

Potential Employers

All the local hospitals, rehabilitation and long term care facilities, as well as, outpatient ambulatory centers hire respiratory therapists.

Certification/Licensure

The program is fully accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care. Graduates are therefore eligible to take a national certifying exam to become a certified or registered Respiratory Therapist.

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Respiratory Therapists, on the Internet at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/respiratory-therapists.htm> (visited *January 30, 2018*).

**READING AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
RESPIRATORY CARE PROGRAM
SELECTION PROCESS FOR ADMISSION AND CONTINUED ENROLLMENT IN
RESPIRATORY CARE (RES) COURSES**

To be considered for Admission into the Respiratory Care (RES) clinical courses, applicants must:

- Job shadow a Respiratory Therapist in an acute care hospital.** Instructions for job shadowing can be obtained from the Respiratory Care Program Director.
- A summary of the job shadow experience must be submitted to the Program Director prior to April 15.**
- A letter of application must be submitted to the Program Director prior to April 15.**
- Meet with the Respiratory Care Program Director to discuss the academic and clinical requirements of the program and to be informed of the selection process for enrollment in the Respiratory Care (RES) courses. The meeting is mandatory and must be done by April 15 prior to the intended Fall entry into RES 150, Respiratory Care I.
- Declare Respiratory Care as their major course of study at the college.
- Attain and maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher to be eligible for enrollment in Respiratory Care I and continued enrollment in all RES courses.
- Attain a C or higher in each required course within the curriculum for progression and graduation from the Respiratory Care Program.
- Send a "Letter of Application" and "job shadow summary" to the Respiratory Care Program Director and verify receipt by April 15 of the Spring Semester prior to the intended Fall entry into RES 150, Respiratory Care I.
- Send transcripts from outside institutions and verify receipt and evaluation of transcripts by April 15 of the Spring Semester prior to the intended Fall entry date into RES 150, Respiratory Care I.
- Show evidence of completion or course registration in Anatomy & Physiology 1 (BIO 250) with a C or better prior to RES 150, RES 200, and RES 212.

The Respiratory Care Program is accredited by the Committee for Accreditation of Respiratory Care (CoARC) for a maximum of 24 students in each of the 'RES' or clinical courses. A cohort of 24 students (maximum) is selected in the Spring semester prior to the first RES course (Respiratory Care I or RES 150), which begins each Fall semester.

In the event that more than 24 students submit Letters of Application, a selection process will be used to rank the students. The top 24 ranked students will be accepted into the cohort. The remaining students will be placed on a waiting list for the upcoming Fall semester, based on ranking in the selection process. On the first day of the Fall semester, the wait list will be cleared and the remaining students must resubmit a Letter of Application for the next academic year.

Essential Functions for Success as a Respiratory Therapist

All Respiratory Care Program students of Reading Area Community College are required to meet the following essential functions for success in the Program:

Physical Demands:

- Perform prolonged, extensive, or considerable standing/walking, lifting, positioning, pushing, and/or transferring patients or equipment
- Possess the ability to exert 20 to 50 pounds of force occasionally. (Occasionally: activity or condition exists up to 1/3 of the work time) and/or 10 to 25 pounds frequently (Frequently: activity or condition exists up to 2/3 of the work time)
- Possess the ability to lift and carry 20 pounds occasionally
- Perform repetitive movements such as stooping, bending, kneeling, twisting, and crouching
- Possess the ability to run up a flight of stairs for patient emergencies

Motor Skills:

- Possess the ability to perform fine motor movements with hands in order to grasp, pull, push, hold, squeeze with both hands, or manipulate objects
- Possess the ability to perform fine motor movements with fingers to write with a pen or pencil, to type on a keyboard, to twist or turn an object, such as a dial on a mechanical device, and to squeeze, push, or pull a small object with fingers, such as a syringe or eye dropper
- Possess the ability to perform gross motor skills, including movement within confined spaces, maintaining balance while sitting or standing, reaching above the shoulders, and reaching below the waist.
- Possess sufficient motor function to perform inspection, palpation, auscultation, and percussion of patients.
- Possess physical dexterity and strength to lift and transfer a patient and to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation

Sensory Demands:

- Color vision: ability to distinguish and identify colors (may be corrected with adaptive devices)
- Distance vision: ability to see clearly 20 feet or more (may be corrected with adaptive devices)
- Depth perception: ability to judge distance and space relationships
- Near vision: ability to see clearly 20 inches or less (may be corrected with adaptive devices)
- Hearing: able to recognize a full range of tones (may be corrected with adaptive devices) and a full range of person-to-person sound levels, including situations when face masks are in place
- Smell: ability to detect bodily odors, smoke, gases or noxious fumes