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## **MSCC, Crittenden Regional Hospital Partnering on Respiratory Therapy Program**

Mid-South Community College and Crittenden Regional Hospital are working together to design and implement a respiratory therapy program that will benefit patients in a three-state area.

Beginning in the fall semester of 2011, MSCC will offer an associate of applied science degree program that will train students to meet the growing healthcare needs of the region.

“We’ve been working with Crittenden Regional Hospital in many positive and creative ways to establish this program, and the partnership we’ve initiated will be good for our students, the college, the hospital, and the people of our region,” said Dr. Barbara Baxter, MSCC Executive Vice President.

“We couldn’t have accomplished this on our own, so we greatly appreciate Crittenden Regional’s commitment to the program and to the long-term healthcare needs of the region. This partnership works well for everyone involved.”

“We’re extremely excited about the new collaborative relationship between the hospital and the college,” said Jamie Carter, Chief Executive Officer of CRH.

“Respiratory therapy training and care is a critical need in a three-state area. We believe the program at Mid-South Community College has the potential to become one of the premier training providers in the region.”

With the help of a Title III grant to the college and resources at the hospital, “we will have the latest, greatest, and most technologically-advanced equipment to enhance the students’ experiences and maximize the level of care we can provide for the people of our region,” Carter added.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of respiratory therapists is expected to increase faster than average over the next decade, primarily because aging baby boom generation will increase the number of older people who tend to develop respiratory distress.

“MSCC is very excited to offer the Associate of Applied Science in Respiratory Therapy,” said Jason Sparks, Academic Program Coordinator for Allied Health & Life Sciences. “This is a wonderful educational opportunity for residents in the region to earn a degree in a first-class program, seek licensure, and give back to the well-being of the community.”

“We are proud to have Crittenden Regional Hospital as a partner in the development of this program. Because our respective organizations are committed to meeting the healthcare needs of the Delta, MSCC and CRH will make a great team in the education of future respiratory therapists.”

MSCC will have academic responsibility and oversight of the curriculum and will award degrees to students who successfully complete the program. The college has hired Janet Weathers, RTT, who brings 18 years of management experience in healthcare combined with four years as an education coordinator, to serve as Program Director for Respiratory Care.

“I am very excited to be involved with Mid-South Community College in offering this respiratory therapy training,” Weathers said. “While the degree program is not unique to MSCC in the state of Arkansas, the closest school with similar training is 100 miles from us. I look forward to establishing this much-needed program.”

Weathers, who most recently served as Director of Cardiopulmonary Services at Baptist Hospital Desoto, has primary responsibility for developing the curriculum and preparing documentation for program accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Respiratory Care (CoARC).

Crittenden Regional Hospital will employ a Director of Clinical Education and support clinical rotations for Mid-South students enrolled in the program. In addition,



**Janet Weathers, RTT**

hospital representatives will serve on the Respiratory Therapy Academic Advisory Committee and will provide input and guidance to help ensure the program meets accreditation standards and prepares students to meet the expectations of local employers.

Over the next four years, the MSCC will use grant funding to purchase and/or lease \$225,000 worth of equipment to be housed at the hospital in support of the clinical education of respiratory therapy students. The hospital will not be restricted in its use of the equipment other than to ensure it is readily available for Mid-South students who are engaged in clinical rotations.

For more information on the Respiratory Therapy program at MSCC, please contact Weathers at (870) 733-6076, [jfweathers@midssouthcc.edu](mailto:jfweathers@midssouthcc.edu) or [alliedhealth@midssouthcc.edu](mailto:alliedhealth@midssouthcc.edu).