

BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing to showcase need for medical assistants, career selections

June 26, 2019



Alyssa Dietz, director of Butler County Community College's medical assistant program, will give presentations and organize hands-on activities for prospective students attending BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing's first Spotlight on Medical Assistant event July 10. The event is open to the public. Dietz is shown Wednesday, June 19, 2019, in the medical assistant laboratory on BC3's main campus in Butler Township.

(New Castle, PA) BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing, the only of Butler County Community College's five additional locations to offer a two-year degree and one-year certificate program for a profession whose salary averages \$33,610 and expects 29 percent job growth, will host hands-on activities and presentations during its first Spotlight on Medical Assistant event July 10.

Scheduled from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. at BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing, 2849 W. State St., New Castle, the event will introduce prospective students in Lawrence and Mercer counties to career paths in

clinical and administrative health care available through BC3's medical assistant program, said Alyssa Dietz, program director.

"There are a number of health care offices in these counties," Dietz said, "and so many different avenues you can take."

A 29 percent increase in job openings for medical assistants, whose average salary in 2018 was \$33,610, is expected through 2026, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Health care and social assistance organizations as of May employed the highest percentage of workers among industries in Lawrence County at 21.2 percent and in Mercer County at 20 percent, according to the state Department of Labor & Industry's Center for Workforce Information and Analysis.

The 347 health care and social assistance organizations in Lawrence County and 527 in Mercer County as of May were also the most of any type of industry, according to the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis.

Coordinator: Medical assistants have diverse skills

BC3's students, Dietz said, are educated in administrative tasks such as updating medical records, coding insurance documents, scheduling appointments, billing and bookkeeping; and clinical tasks such as recording medical histories, assisting physicians with medical procedures, drawing blood and wound care.

"Medical assistants are the only health care professionals who are trained in clinical skills," Dietz said, "and in administrative skills."

"You can take a purely administrative role, or a clinical role, or you can take a role where you do both. It makes you very diverse and increases your chances of being hired."

Graduates of BC3's medical assistant program can serve as a phlebotomist; EKG, medical laboratory, ophthalmology or emergency care technician; or as a telemedicine associate, among other positions, Dietz said.

"It's a career path for those who want to work in the health care field, who don't want to spend thousands and thousands of dollars on their education," Dietz said, "and want to make a difference."

BC3's tuition was the most affordable among 43 regional colleges and universities in 2018, according to the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard.

Seventy-five percent of BC3 graduates are debt-free.

Because certified medical assistants are in demand, said Sean Carroll, director of BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing, “The sooner one can complete his or her degree, the sooner he or she can start earning money and start a career, not just a job to pay the bills.”

“A steady career,” Dietz added, “with benefits, good pay and an opportunity for advancement.”

According to the most recent data available, 93 percent of BC3’s 2017 medical assistant graduates passed the American Association of Medical Assistants’ certified medical assistant examination.

“The gold standard,” Dietz said, of certification organizations.

BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing offers a 68-credit associate in applied science degree and a 38-credit certificate in medical assistant, programs that prepare students for the examination. BC3’s programs are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs and require a four-credit, 232-hour externship in a health care environment.

Students who pursue the associate of applied science degree in medical assistant can develop additional skills to become officer managers, Dietz said.

They would also need only two additional courses to obtain a BC3 medical coding and billing specialist certificate, which is also offered at BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing and whose graduates could earn an average of \$45,000 a year, according to the American Academy of Professional Coders, which certifies those in the field.

Her presentations will address medical assistant job duties, career paths, employment outlook and BC3’s program, Dietz said, and will include hands-on activities illustrating to prospective students how to find viable veins, take blood pressure and administer and score an eye exam.

A 2.5 grade-point average in either high school or college is a prerequisite for the program.

Prospective students can RSVP at bc3.edu/medical-assistant.