

SACRAMENTO STATE, SIERRA COLLEGE NURSING STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT HEALTH CARE AT WESTERN SIERRA MEDICAL CLINIC

Dozens of nursing students enjoy hands-on training at Grass Valley health center

GRASS VALLEY – Western Sierra Medical Clinic has established a partnership with California State University, Sacramento and Sierra College to provide hands-on education and on-site training for nursing students.

The state university and community college’s nursing programs are rotating about 50 students this semester through Western Sierra Medical Clinic.

Sacramento State nursing students, who are a few weeks away from earning a Bachelors of Science degree in Nursing, get a firsthand experience in Leadership and Community Health at Western Sierra, said Jennifer Hughes, a Registered Nurse who oversees the nursing rotation at the health center for Sacramento State.

Sierra College nursing students focus on pediatric health issues, especially preventive and urgent care, during their clinical rotation at Western Sierra.

Western Sierra officials and nursing educators from Sacramento State and Sierra College agree that the on-site training greatly helps the students by providing real-life clinical experiences, situations and training.

“We are so appreciative of Sacramento State and Sierra College for having the vision to collaborate with Western Sierra Medical Clinic on workforce development programs and look forward to working with them in the future to provide employment and training opportunities,” said Western Sierra CEO Scott McFarland.

“It’s an incredibly important part of their education,” said Jerusha Horlick, a Registered Nurse/Case Manager who supervises the nursing students at Western Sierra Medical. “It’s a fantastic experience for the students who are often surprised by what they see in a health center setting, which is very different from on-site training at the hospital.”

Western Sierra, the largest outpatient provider in Nevada County, offers comprehensive services at its 19,000-square-foot health center in Grass Valley.

“The outpatient experience is critical,” said Nancy Schwab, a Registered Nurse and Associate Dean of Nursing and Allied Health at Sierra College in Rocklin. The nursing students follow pediatricians at Western Sierra, from the diagnosis of an illness or injury to the implementation of treatment. “The students learn the development of children, their growth and the importance of immunizations.”

Horlick said Sierra College nursing students also learn about preventive care – such as blood work, testing and vaccines – and urgent care, where children may be dealing with a cough or cold to a cut.

“It’s an integral part of their training because Western Sierra is such an important community partner in health,” said Sierra College’s Schwab. “Even if the students don’t work at a community health center, it’s important for any nurse to know what resources are needed and available.”

Sierra College’s spring semester started in January and ends May 20. Western Sierra and the community college have agreed to at least a two-year partnership, with more nursing students returning to the community health center in the fall.

“We are truly grateful to be able to have the students go outside of our bubble at college and give them real-life experiences,” Schwab said. “You get the most valuable learning off-campus, and Western Sierra represents rural medicine at its finest.”

Sacramento State’s nursing students just completed their rotation at Western Sierra.

“Thanks to everyone who assisted with providing the students with an excellent learning experience,” said Hughes of Sacramento State.

About Western Sierra Medical Clinic

Western Sierra Medical Clinic provides comprehensive medical, dental and behavioral health care in Nevada, Sierra and Yuba counties. Founded in 1975, Western Sierra emphasizes preventive care, education and empowering patients to make informed decisions. Western Sierra is the largest outpatient health care provider in Nevada County, where a new full-service health center is meeting the growing demands in the community. Western Sierra Medical Clinic will expand later this year into Placer County, with a comprehensive health center in Auburn. You can learn more about Western Sierra Medical Clinic at www.wsmcmed.org and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/WesternSierraMedicalClinic.