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Career Tech Program Wins Statewide Excellence in Practice Award

Health Sciences Recognized for ‘Engaging Instruction’

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. – Northwest Education Services (North Ed) Career Tech is the winner of another Excellence in Practice award from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), with its Health Sciences program winning the Engaging Instruction category.

The [Health Sciences](#) program will be recognized during a special awards ceremony on Jan. 27 during the 2025 Michigan Career Education Conference at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids.

“Through hands-on training, clinical rotations and industry certifications, our Health Sciences students are well prepared for a future career in health care,” said Pat Lamb, Assistant Superintendent of Career and Technical Education at North Ed. “Michigan needs high-quality health care professionals, and our students are gaining foundational skills that will enable them to be successful in a variety of positions.”

Health care jobs in Michigan are projected to grow by 10% over the next decade, amounting to nearly 49,000 new jobs, [according to the Michigan Health Council](#). Registered nurses is one of the most in-demand occupations in the state, the council noted, and health care industry wages have increased by 47% since 2013.

The Health Sciences program covers topics like medical terminology, anatomy and physiology, patient care and health care delivery systems. Through agreements with Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) and [Grand Valley State University](#), students can earn college-level credits while in high school to get a jumpstart toward completing an associate or bachelor’s degree. With the opportunity to earn multiple certifications, some students leave the program upon graduation and immediately enter the workforce as Certified Clinical Medical Assistants or Pharmacy Technicians.

The program is elevated due to its partnership with Suttons Bay-Bingham Fire & Rescue Authority that allows students to receive Basic Life Support (BLS) certification, which is CPR training specific to health care workers. Other certifications include OSHA 10, Dementia Training, Stop the Bleed and National Consortium for Health Science Education (NCHSE) standards certifications.

The [Excellence in Practice awards](#) are coordinated through MDE's Office of Career and Technical Education and recognize educational institutions that have implemented successful, exemplary career and technical education programs and practices that focus on student outcomes and employment success.

"Your program exemplifies the highest standards in preparing Michigan's students for postsecondary education and careers," Celena Mills, director of MDE's Office of Career and Technical Education, wrote in a letter to North Ed Career Tech staff.

There are 162 students participating this year in the Health Sciences program, which is open to high school juniors and seniors from throughout North Ed's five-county region. All first-year students participate in a job shadow at Munson Medical Center. Some students return to Munson their senior year to conduct clinicals while other classmates may participate in co-ops with other local health care professionals.

In partnership with students in Career Tech's [Early Education](#) program, Health Sciences students also operate a Teddy Bear Clinic for area kindergarteners each year. The young students visit Career Tech with a stuffed animal for part of the day, and their furry friends are put through various mock medical procedures to show the kindergarteners that health care appointments don't have to be an intimidating process. The event gives older students a chance to demonstrate the training they've received through Career Tech, while also learning how to interact with children to build soft skills. The program has produced positive results by improving younger children's experiences with local health care.

HOSA, or Future Health Professionals (formerly known as Health Occupations Students of America), is [another opportunity](#) for students to demonstrate their medical knowledge while developing skills like leadership, teamwork, planning and problem-solving.

Students also participate in on-campus blood drives at Career Tech, gaining practical skills in blood donation, processing and testing, while other experiences like field trips, tours of NMC's nursing program and a [visit from Central Michigan University's Mobile Health Central](#) serve to enrich students' learning.

Health Science's advisory board is made up of health care professionals, industry leaders and community representatives who guide the program's direction and provide students with work-based learning experiences in real-world settings.

The program's curriculum integrates [NCHSE](#) standards with Common Core English Language Arts standards, creating a comprehensive experience that prepares students for both academic and career success.

North Ed Career Tech won several Excellence in Practice awards, including:

- [2024](#) Evidence-Based Reporting and supporting the regional Jobs for Michigan's Graduates program.
- [2019](#) Film & New Media
- 2016 Early College
- 2015 Engineering Academy (formerly Manufacturing Tech Academy)
- 2013 Teacher Academy
- 2011 Academic Integration

Career Tech has also been recognized with national Excellence in Action awards by Advance CTE:

- [2018](#) Teacher Academy in the Education and Training Career Cluster.

- 2016 Engineering Academy (formerly Manufacturing Tech Academy) in the STEM Cluster.

Career Tech offers 22 state-approved CTE [programs](#) to high school juniors and seniors from Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska and Leelanau counties. Students are educated in career and technical fields, offering hands-on practical experiences, job shadowing, career exploration and early college opportunities, along with rigorous academic integration. For more information about North Ed Career Tech, [click here](#).

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Nora McGrew, right, checks vitals on classmate Abby Harrington. The students, both seniors from Traverse City Central High School, are enrolled in the Health Sciences program, offered through Northwest Education Services (North Ed) Career Tech, at 880 Parsons Road, Traverse City. The Michigan Department of Education recently chose the program as the winner of an Excellence in Practice award in the Engaging Instruction category. Representatives from North Ed Career Tech will be honored with the award at the Michigan Career Education Conference in January. (Photo courtesy of Northwest Education Services).