



Media Release

February 9, 2017

Four Provincial Institutions Team Up to Promote Health Care Education & Employment Opportunities For Young Learners

For grade 11 and 12 students interested in a health care-related career, there is a direct path from high school to full time employment in rural Saskatchewan. A team of provincial institutions has come together to help learners connect the dots and get a jump-start on their post-secondary education while in high school.

Great Plains College, Heartland Health Region, Saskatchewan Polytechnic and Sun West Distance Learning Centre (DLC) have recently signed a memorandum of understanding to collaboratively educate families about the dual credit courses available to high school students; there is particular emphasis on dual credits that relate to the Continuing Care Assistant (CCA) certificate program. For learners who complete CCA dual credit courses and are enthusiastic about continuing down the CCA career path, the next step is to have readily available information on CCA post-secondary programs and employment opportunities in this field.

"The notion of a dual credit is still relatively unknown in Saskatchewan and we want to educate families about what they are and the opportunities they provide," says Aaron Biberdorf, Vice Principal of the DLC. Although developed and instructed by post-secondary institutions, these courses are intended for high school students. They are delivered online, typically involve a heavier work load and are held to a higher level of assessment than a typical high school course. In return for their extra effort, students have an opportunity to thoroughly explore a career path while simultaneously earning credit at both the high school and post-secondary level.

Four of the twelve courses - Body Systems, Human Growth and Development, Personal Competence, and Interpersonal Communication Skills - included in the CCA certificate program are offered as dual credit. This provides students with the opportunity to graduate high school with one-third of their post-secondary education complete.

"Dual credit courses allow students interested in becoming a Continuing Care Assistant to either fast-track their career plans or explore the field as a career path before finalizing their post-secondary plans," says Dr. Anne Neufeld, Saskatchewan Polytechnic Provost and Vice-President, Academic. "Both scenarios contribute to a more efficient use of students' time and will give employers earlier access to grads. Students can continue their Continuing Care Assistant studies at Saskatchewan Polytechnic or at a regional college, such as Great Plains."

“Our Continuing Care Assistant program has increased its enrolment dramatically in recent years,” says Brian Gobbett, Great Plains College Vice President, Academic. “Our aim is to provide the very best theoretical and practical training possible for students as they prepare for vital roles within the health care system.”

And for Heartland Health Region, which hires approximately 60 CCAs each year, building bridges and streamlining opportunities for high school students makes perfect sense. “Dual credit courses provide an excellent introduction of health care concepts. We believe that exposing young learners to this intensive educational experience will translate to a prospective labor pool that is better prepared to take on their first CCA role,” says Brenda Scholer, Director of Human Resources of Heartland Health Region. “As they are immersed in their courses, we also want to make sure that they are aware of the types of employment opportunities that exist.”

"We are excited to be able to connect learners to dual credits, especially when they can expedite the path towards long term employment in our province. The earlier we can expose learners to the realities of a potential field or workplace, the better prepared they are to make solid, career decisions." says Biberdorf.

For more information on the four partners involved, visit their respective websites:

Great Plains College	www.greatplainscollege.ca
Heartland Health Region	www.hrha.sk.ca
Saskatchewan Polytechnic	www.saskpolytech.ca
Sun West Distance Learning Centre	www.sunwestdlc.ca

Media Contact:

Tanya Ringdal
Marketing & Communications
Sun West Distance Learning Centre
E: Tanya.ringdal@sunwestsd.ca
P: 306.252.1000