



## ARTICLE RELEASE

**Contact:** Tasha Albert, Marketing Coordinator  
780-849-8610  
[tasha.albert@northernlakescollege.ca](mailto:tasha.albert@northernlakescollege.ca)

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### **Online Sterile Processing program helping meet health care industry demand**

When students graduate from Northern Lakes College's new Sterile Processing training program, they will be well prepared as integral members of the health care team, trained for careers where they will contribute to delivering safe, quality health care to Albertans.

This brand new program, which is offered online through eCampusAlberta, is running the first cohort this fall. The program was developed in response to an industry request, says Northern Lakes College Co-ordinator of Allied Health programs, Shona Hommy-Bugarin. New Alberta Health and Wellness infection prevention and control standards, released in January 2008, require that employees working in medical device reprocessing departments be certified.

"In sterile processing there is an emerging need for education and training to meet these certification requirements and to comply with the standards of the Canadian Safety Association," Hommy-Bugarin says.

"The Northern Lakes College training program is geared to ensuring our graduates are capable of working to meet and exceed those standards in sterile processing," she says.

With an emphasis on work safety and infection control, the Sterile Processing program provides a foundation that will enable graduates to work as part of an inter-disciplinary health care team. Students will learn medical terminology, sterile supply reprocessing, microbiology and infection control, proper care of medical equipment and other duties managed by sterile supply processors.

The program, which includes a four-week practicum, allows students their choice of enrolling in a full-time, five-month program or in a part-time program that can be completed over the course of one year. The part-time offering is particularly attractive for people who are already in the workplace.

"It would be easily completed by someone working in the field, because it is all online delivery."

To support the online learners, audio-conferences with a tutor are scheduled.

Students are currently enrolled in the full-time program and there has been considerable interest from prospective students interested in the second course offering, which begins in February. Once they have

completed the program, graduates will be prepared to work in the medical device reprocessing department of acute care facilities.

“Northern Lakes College has been very responsive to the health industry, and has worked really hard to make education accessible.”

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