

BULLETIN

New diagnostic medical sonography program opens in Prince George

August 16, 2018

After several years of advocacy efforts by HSA, British Columbians will see the launch of the College of New Caledonia (CNC)'s Northern Diagnostic Medical Sonography program, scheduled to begin in Prince George in January 2019.

Sonographers form a critical part of the public health team through producing sonographic images to assist medical practitioners in the diagnosis of a variety of medical conditions. An increase in training spaces in sonography will help to reduce waitlists for ultrasounds and improve patient care across BC.

"For several years, our public health system has been impacted by a critical shortage of sonographers, particularly in northern and remote communities. These new training spaces are an important step forward," said HSA President Val Avery.

The College of New Caledonia is the first public post-secondary institution in BC to offer a sonography program outside Metro Vancouver. Eight seats are available beginning in January, and the program will expand the following year to 16 spaces.

The British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) is the only other public institution in the province that offers students an opportunity to be trained in sonography.

Through its Constituency Liaison program, HSA has lobbied the province to invest in training spaces for sonographers outside Metro Vancouver, calling for a second training program to support recruitment efforts in northern and remote regions.

HSA has also called for an increase to the number of training spaces offered in BCIT's Diagnostic Medical Sonography Diploma program.

In August 2016, the joint Recruitment and Retention Committee of the Health Sciences Professional Bargaining Association (HSPBA) and Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC) recommended that the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Advanced Education consider creating a second Diagnostic Medical Sonography Diploma program located outside of Metro Vancouver. HSA played a lead role in the HSPBA's work, with important input from member Sonographers and the BC Ultrasonographers' Society.

"Health science professionals are the backbone of our public health system," said Avery. "HSA will continue to advocate for a provincial health human resources strategy, with dedicated funding for training and retention across health science professions."

The application deadline for CNC's two-year Northern Diagnostic Medical Sonography program is September 14, 2018 for the 2019 winter semester.

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