

Issue 7—June 27, 2011



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Council on Occupational Education

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# GACTC Update

Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center

## Continuing Education News

### PRACTICAL NURSING NOTES

#### Student Update

The Program is preparing to graduate 50 practical nursing students in August at a ceremony to be held on August 18 at the Altoona High School Auditorium at 7:00 p.m. These soon-to-be graduate LPN's will attend a Job Opportunity Fair on June 24 here at the school from 1-3 p.m. There is a strong likelihood that many of them will be offered employment positions before they walk across the stage that evening to receive their diplomas.

#### Relay for Life

The Relay for Life "Walk for Life" was held at Mansion Park on June 10 and 11. Several students from the part-time program partnered with the team from Blair Gastroenterology to walk the track during this 24-hour event. The 101 Dalmatian theme was used to set the background for an educational focus entitled, "101 Ways to Prevent Cancer."

#### Future Student Enrollment

Over 250 applicants are in the process of being considered for admission to the program. Approximately 65 students received their acceptance letters thus far. They are busy completing necessary requirements such as criminal background checks, physical exams, and drug testing in order to maintain this acceptance status. There is no doubt that the program will exceed past enrollment numbers.

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## Summer Camp

A week-long Career Exploration Camp for students entering seventh grade was held during the week of June 13. Electronics Instructor, Brian Kelley, Computer Technology/Cisco Academy Instructor, Tim Keener, and Culinary Arts Instructor, Jim Bumgarner, provided the students interesting hands-on experiences in the electro-mechanical and culinary fields. A total of 19 students participated. The program was sponsored by the Southern Alleghenies Tech Prep Consortium with Guidance Counselor Gayle Swales as the local site coordinator.

## *Continuing Education News*

### **ADULT EDUCATION NOTES**

#### 2010-2011 Graduation

Graduation for programs under the Office of Continuing Education was held on Friday, May 27, 2011, beginning at 11:00 a.m. in the GACTC Cafetorium. The Office of Continuing Education graduated 60 adult students (excluding Practical Nursing) for the 2010-2011 academic year. Including students, guests, GACTC administration/ faculty/staff, members of the JOC, and other community guests, nearly 225 people attended the graduation ceremony. Graduates and guests were treated to a keynote address from Mr. Michael Snow, Human Resources Manager at Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) Bedford facility. Attendees also delighted in a meal prepared by the GACTC food service staff.

#### Expanded Function Dental Assistant (EFDA) Program

The Coordinator of Continuing Education and the EFDA instructor are working diligently to prepare the new EFDA Certificate to Associate Degree for an August start. On Monday, June 13, 2011, an article appeared in the Altoona Mirror highlighting the new program. As a result, our department has received phone calls and sent out many applications to prospective students. At this point, we have ten applications in process. Also, the Coordinator of Continuing Education and Dr. Zajac made a trip to Central Pennsylvania Institute for Science & Technology (CPI) on June 9 to speak to a group of Dental Assistant high school graduates.

#### Welding Technologies Program

Due to increased interest and enrollment numbers in the Welding Technologies program, administration began a late afternoon/evening full-time postsecondary Welding program. The program will operate Monday through Thursday from 2:00 to 8:00 p.m. beginning August 29, 2011, ending June 5, 2012. Currently, 14 applications have been received and many calls of interest regarding the program. Due to space limitations, material costs, and offering the part-time evening Welding program, enrollment in this program is limited to 15 students.

#### Other Summer Undertakings...

In addition to fall enrollment (which continues to improve daily) undertakings, preparing for part-time fall evening classes, and WEDNetPA endings/beginnings, Continuing Education personnel continue working on the following:

- The Postsecondary Perkins Action Plan and Performance Reporting for the current year is completed and substantially approved. With some new federal regulations, reporting was more comprehensive this year than in previous years. Much time over the past three weeks has been devoted to Perkins reporting in order to ensure that the Perkins report is complete and accurate before the final submission.
- Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) reporting for the current year is underway. Due to a late rollover of the system from the 2010-11 to the 2011-12 year, copying over existing programs and entering new programs is in the beginning stages. As well, performance reporting has not yet begun for the next system update. In order to be eligible for TRA, TAA, OVR, and WIA funding, schools must go through the process of entering information and performance data about each program of study. The Office of Continuing Education oversees the approval process for all postsecondary programs of study at the GACTC. The process involves entering information about all of the Postsecondary and Intergenerational programs into the state's CWDS, including program performance data.
- The Federal Corrections Institution (FCI) contract training began on June 13, 2011. Due to the late budget start, the training this year was reduced to 27 completions, instead of a normal budget year of 66 completions. For every completion, the GACTC will receive \$885 for this fiscal year. Next year, the reimbursement rate jumps to \$911.50 per completion. Training is going very well so far.
- Mount Aloysius College, Saint Francis University, and Gannon University are all offering summer classes at the GACTC.



## *New Choices Career Development*

The **New Choices Career Development Program** has concluded for the 2010-2011 year. The office is closed except that additional allocations, invoicing, and reconciliation of the budget will continue through June 30, 2011.

During the 2010-2011 budget year, the New Choices office confirmed the following:

<b>New Choices graduates:</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>*Returned to work:</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Average hourly wage:</b>	<b>\$11.70</b>
<b>Average hours/week:</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>*Completed or in training:</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Of the 35 in training, those completed/enrolled at GACTC:</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Projected Savings due to reduction/termination of public assistance/unemployment:</b>	<b>\$221,315</b>

\*Includes current and previous year graduates.

## *Altoona Mirror Article*

In case you missed it, the Altoona Mirror featured this article on the front page of the June 13, 2011, issue:

### **Career and technology center offers associate degree program with help of Mount Aloysius, clinic**

June 13, 2011

By Russ O'Reilly ([roreilly@altoonamirror.com](mailto:roreilly@altoonamirror.com)), The Altoona Mirror

The Greater Altoona Career and Technology Center will offer a two-year associate degree program this fall in partnership with Mount Aloysius College.

The program, open for enrollment through August, would equip 25 students with an associate degree of applied science with an emphasis in expanded function dental assisting.

"There is a major demand for dental assistants, and an access-for-care issue statewide," said Thomas Zajac, program instructor and retired dentist with 30 years' experience.

Medicaid recipients have an especially difficult time finding dentists willing to fit them into their schedule, Zajac said.

Through state law approved in 2009, dental assistants have gained more responsibilities previously exclusive to a dentist's job description, easing a dentist's workload.



Dr. Haley Hawk with patient at James Barner Pediatric Dental Clinic located in the GACTC.

Blair County has more dentists per patient than many other counties in this region, with 2,154 patients per practicing dentist based on Pennsylvania Dental Association 2010 data. The region's average is 3,317 patients per practicing dentist. Juniata County skews that ratio with 6,159 patients per dentist.

"With assistants able to take on more responsibilities, such as filling cavities, dentists could double the number of patients they see," Zajac said.

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## *Altoona Mirror Article (continued)*

Altoona-area dentists will provide dental training and internships while Mount Aloysius professors will teach general education courses.

Students are to learn first-hand at a nonprofit children's dental clinic attached to the career and technology center. The clinic serves more than 3,000 children who receive Medicaid assistance.

Some patients travel hours to Altoona because so few private-practice dentists accept Medicaid access cards, clinic coordinator Nancy Hawk said.

"Patients travel from as far as Williamsport," Hawk said.

Dentists have no legal obligation to accept Medicaid patients, but those who do, do so sparingly for reasons including low state reimbursement rates that fall short of covering visit costs.

Dr. Don Betar, who serves as the nonprofit clinic's director in addition to operating a private practice, said he can't blame dentists for not accepting Medicaid patients.

"Doctors can't afford to see Medicaid patients on a regular basis, they would be out of business in five years," Betar said.

The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare sets Medicaid reimbursement rates, and representatives said rates are set with taxpayers being a priority before doctors.

"We need to be responsible stewards of taxpayer money," welfare department spokesman Michael Race said. "We feel the doctor reimbursement rates are fair."

Pennsylvania reimburses dentists 53 cents on the dollar for retail fees involved with serving Medicaid recipients, a 2010 Pew Center On the States study shows. The national reimbursement average is 60 percent.

The study pegs Pennsylvania as a failing state in six categories for providing dental care for child Medicaid recipients. More than half of Pennsylvania's children on Medicaid received no dental service in 2007, the center's most recent data shows. In Blair County for 2010, state welfare data shows 5,923 of 14,224 Medicaid-eligible people under age 21 received dental services.

Reimbursement rates have been a point of contention between the Pennsylvania Dental Association and state lawmakers for decades, association spokesman Rob Pugliese said.

The children's dental clinic and a clinic serving adult Medicaid recipients are funded by an endowment from the Altoona Regional Health System Partnership for a Healthy Community. Without that money, Betar said the clinics would not be in business.

One possible outcome of the new dental assistant program that most interests Zajac is the possibility that graduates could indirectly boost dentists' acceptance of Medicaid patients.

"If assistants have the skills to free dentists to see more patients, then maybe they could see more people on Medicaid and not worry as much about not being reimbursed."

Mirror Staff Writer Russ O'Reilly is at 946-7435.

## *2011-12 Perkins Secondary Grant*

Substantial approval of the 2011-12 Perkins Secondary Grant has been received for \$311,740, which is an increase of \$11,819 over the 2010-11 school year allocation. Part of this increase reflects the elimination of tech prep consortia across the state and folding that funding into the basic grant. The state-administered federal Perkins Secondary Grant is the largest grant that the school receives each year.