

A New Model for CTE Courses

After years of planning by a number of partners, there is a new model for delivering career and technical education (CTE) courses in the region.

Fifteen high school students from Lakeview, MACCRAY, Montevideo, Renville County West and Yellow Medicine East started a unique **Medical Careers Program** in January. This program matches regional labor market needs, fills gaps in the courses that high schools are able to deliver, and meets students' interest in elective courses. Health care is one of the career fields that drives the economic engine for the region and medical/health careers are consistently the top interest among high school students.

These five high schools agreed to be part of a pilot project to share resources and pool students to form a class they could not offer on their own. The **Introduction to Medical and Health Careers** course is a "hybrid" course, which includes online instruction, face-to-face instruction and community based opportunities. Students meet two days a week at Minnesota West-Granite Falls with SWWC instructor Shanda Walker. Students engage in classroom discussion, go on field trips, have guest speakers, and participate in job shadowing experiences.

Partnership was key to getting the project started – no one organization would have been able to do this on their own. Special thanks goes to these key players:

- **Lakeview, MACCRAY, Montevideo, RCW and YME** for taking a risk on a different approach to delivering career and technical education.
- **High School Students** for having courage and the commitment to be part of something very different from the typical school experience.
- **Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development** for providing labor market data to ensure regional economic needs were being met.
- **SWWC** for organizing and facilitating meetings between the partners and serving as fiscal host.
- **Minnesota West Community and Technical College** for providing classroom space and access to their nursing lab.
- **SW Minnesota Private Industry Council** for their extensive relationships with the business community which have been instrumental in making connections for students' job shadowing.
- **Business Partners** for being classroom presenters and supporting student job shadowing experiences.
- **Minnesota River Valley Education District (MRVED)** for providing support and opportunities to meet with school leaders about the project.
- **Southwest Initiative Foundation** for providing seed money to get the program started.
- **Minnesota Carl Perkins Program** for providing a grant to help offset start-up costs.

Even before the course started in January, there was in interest in replication in two other locations in southwest Minnesota. It will likely branch to other career fields such as Information Technology, Mechanics and Construction Trades. For more information, please contact Tom Hoff at SWWC. He can be reached at 507-537-2271 or tom.hoff@swsc.org.