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hen leaders from local healthcare providers outlined the most pressing "needs" in their industry last spring, officials from SUNY Orange listened, and then responded by quickly formulating a nuclear medicine technology program that was unveiled in January.

This exciting new program is a 12-month, non-credit certification course directed by the College's Diagnostic Imaging Department. It features evening classes and accompanying clinicals designed to prepare students for their certification exam (offered

Valley to offer a certificate program that fully trains registered nurses and radiologic technologists to become nuclear medicine technologists.

"Through the Diagnostic Imaging Department's expertise and network of contacts, they were able to put together a didactic and clinical program," Kohn adds. "There is a

of Labor Statistics predict the field of nuclear medicine technologists will grow faster than the national average over the next 10 years, rising by as much as 18 to 26 percent.

"Our program is designed for radiologic technologists and registered nurses who wish to expand their skills, focus on additional specialization or change career fields," says **Diedre Costic**, chair of the College's Diagnostic Imaging Department, adding that a one-year program allows health professionals

Answering Healthcare's Call

by the Nuclear Medicine Technologist Certification Board and the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists) and application for a state-issued license.

"The creation of this program is a direct result of the Healthcare Industry Forum that Continuing and Professional Education hosted in the Spring of 2006," says **David Kohn**, the College's continuing education director. CAPE's Business Solutions and Professional Development Department invited the leaders of 16 local healthcare organizations to discuss issues facing the region's healthcare industry.

"They told us that nuclear medicine is one of the 'hardest-to-fill' areas because of a lack of a qualified workforce," Kohn continues.

By uniting its credit and non-credit resources, the College was able to move quickly. And once Orange Regional Medical Center, of Middletown, generously stepped forward with a donation to cover start-up costs, SUNY Orange finalized its program, thus becoming the only college or university in the Hudson



Professor Mark Stearns instructs a student during the initial offering of the College's new nuclear medicine technology certification program.

need in this program for 1,000 clinical hours, and that's where the Diagnostic Imaging Department's network came in handy, because CAPE would not have been capable of establishing such a program."

It is estimated that over the next 10-15 years, as a large portion of the baby-boom generation enters retirement, the need for technologists and technicians across many health fields will increase. Projections by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau

who already possess a degree (associate, bachelor's or beyond) in radiologic sciences or nursing to specialize in nuclear medicine.

When word that SUNY Orange was considering establishing a nuclear medicine technology program began circulating through the local healthcare industry, Costic says her phone and e-mail heated up with inquiries.

"We had a lot of interest, which tells you just how much a program like this is needed in the Hudson Valley," Costic says.

"The development of this program shows that SUNY Orange is responsive to the community's needs, adaptable to changing workforce demands and eager to maintain its place as a regional educational leader in both the credit and continuing education arenas," Kohn adds.

By fostering a collaborative atmosphere among staff and faculty, both internally and with partners throughout the community, SUNY Orange is poised to quickly respond to future "calls for help" as well.