

Workforce Solutions Spotlight—St. Luke’s University Health Network

As Pennsylvania ages, many health care professionals are reaching retirement just as the need for health care is rapidly growing. Hospitals and health systems are leading the way in growing the next generation of health care professionals to care for Pennsylvanians and our communities.



St. Luke’s University Health Network (SLUHN) recently announced the creation of the Cultural & Linguistic Workforce Development Centers—a new joint venture with the Hispanic Center Lehigh Valley.

The workforce development centers will assist workers at every stage in their career path, offering English classes, General Education Development (GED), and specialized training for health care positions starting this fall.

The centers will operate at Hispanic Center Lehigh Valley (HCLV) in South Side Bethlehem and SLUHN’s Sacred Heart Campus in Center City Allentown. Services will be offered in collaboration with Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC), Northampton Community College (NCC), and The Literacy Center.

“This program is important to St. Luke’s because it will develop a pipeline of qualified, bilingual healthcare workers,” said Dr. Rajika Reed, vice president of St. Luke’s Community Health. “These efforts will also market the region to diverse, motivated individuals looking to relocate as they know there are established trainings and employment opportunities.”

Starting this fall, participants also can enroll in programs to become phlebotomists, nurse’s aides, dental assistants, emergency medical technicians, community health workers, EKG technicians, and pharmacy technicians.

“The Workforce Development Centers are providing the Lehigh Valley community the opportunity to train for high-priority skilled occupations in health care while learning employability skills and developing a career ladder for professional growth,” said Victoria Montero, executive director of the Hispanic Center.

Participants work with bilingual workforce development coordinators to identify career goals and barriers to employment. Participants will create individualized action plans to complete English as a Second Language (ESL) and/or GED programs through community partner organizations.



Workforce Solutions Spotlight: St. Luke's University Health Network

Page 2

"The programs are 12 to 20 weeks, so participants can get educated quickly and be qualified for jobs that are not only important to the health of the community but also rewarding," said Lauren Loeffler, vice president, workforce development/community education and dean at NCC. Classes will be held at sites in Bethlehem and Allentown. The Bethlehem classes will be held at NCC, while classes in Allentown will be held at St. Luke's Sacred Heart Campus, LCCC, and The Literacy Center.

"Lehigh Carbon Community College is very much looking forward to participating in this partnership to help train students for healthcare careers," said Jennifer Leach, job training health care specialist at LCCC. "Healthcare is a growing field and in high demand." The program is funded by a \$450,000 grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Community and Economic Development. Participants must meet Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) eligibility requirements.

Anyone interested in participating can fill out a survey [online](#) or contact the Hispanic Center Lehigh Valley at (610) 868-7800, extension 225, or via [email](#). They can also contact St. Luke's Sacred Heart Campus in Allentown at (484) 658-4603 or via [email](#).

September 7, 2023