

Pembroke Regional Hospital Teams Up With Algonquin College To Train Cardiac Sonographers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 6, 2019

PEMBROKE – Supporting increased regional access to Diagnostic Cardiac Sonography services, a sub-specialty of ultrasound that looks at the heart, the Pembroke Regional Hospital has teamed up with Algonquin College to offer a 52-week Cardiac Sonographer program with guaranteed clinical placement spots at PRH.

The program, which began last September, will see the graduation of 24 Cardiac Sonographers at the end of November.

“Currently, due to a nation-wide shortage of Cardiac Sonographers, there are long wait times for this type of diagnostic test which is a core service,” said Jim Lumsden, Diagnostic Imaging Director at the Pembroke Regional Hospital, adding that since there are no local colleges or universities offering such a program, recruitment opportunities have been limited.

Recognizing the importance of such a service for more acutely ill patients, Mr. Lumsden said that discussions around offering this program have been ongoing for many years between Algonquin College and the Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) Diagnostic Imaging Community of Practice.

“Our hospital made a commitment to Algonquin College that we would provide clinical placement opportunities, in collaboration with our other health care partners across the Champlain LHIN, if they could develop the Diagnostic Cardiac Sonography program,” Mr. Lumsden said.

Dr. Erin Stitt-Cavanagh, Chair of Algonquin College’s Allied Health department said the Diagnostic Cardiac Sonography (DCS) program was created in response to feedback received from community stakeholders like PRH.

“The DCS program now complements our diagnostic imaging cluster of programs, which also includes Diagnostic Medical Sonography and Medical Radiation Technology,” Dr. Stitt-Cavanagh said.

The program spans four semesters with the first two 14-week semesters taking place at Algonquin’s Ottawa Campus and the last two 12-week semesters allowing for clinical placement rotations.

“This program could not run without support from our community partners,” Dr. Stitt-Cavanagh said. “The strong commitment from organizations like the Pembroke Regional Hospital ensures that we are preparing graduates to move

into the workforce. While we do intensive scan training on campus there is simply no equivalent to what a student would experience in the clinical setting.”

“Through Jim Lumsden, the Pembroke Regional Hospital has been a key stakeholder in starting up this program and we look forward to a long future where we can best prepare students for careers working in the Ottawa Valley,” she said.

Mr. Lumsden said the program offers a great career opportunity for those from the area who want to find work in an in-demand field, or those who would like to return to school and gain more skills in order to be able to take on more complex roles – individuals such as Tyler Neville who will soon complete the new program.

“It was not until I was working at PRH as a clerk in Diagnostic Imaging that I found my calling in Diagnostic Cardiac Sonography,” Mr. Neville said. “I chose this path based on my knowledge of and passion for health sciences, the new program being offered in Ottawa via Algonquin College and the fact that it would provide me with a great career opportunity in a field that is forever adapting.”

He adds that he has enjoyed the structure of the course with a good mix of theory and hands-on learning and has appreciated the experience gained through clinical rotations at PRH.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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