



News Release

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More Public University Students Attracted to Health Care Fields

PIERRE, S.D. – A growing number of students are interested in health care careers, confirmed by Board of Regents’ data showing more than 4,800 students were enrolled last spring in health-related academic programs in the South Dakota public university system.

Similar data compiled a year ago identified 4,370 students enrolled in studies leading to health care careers. “The popularity of these careers is on the rise. We will need all of those students and many more to meet critical workforce needs facing the health care industry,” said Robert T. Tad Perry, the Board of Regents’ executive director. “All of our public universities deliver programs to meet the state’s growing demand for health care professionals, and students may begin their pre-professional studies at any of the six universities.”

Nursing remains the most popular health care-related program with 2,463 students enrolled in nursing, pre-nursing, accelerated, or upward mobility programs. Pharmacy or pre-pharmacy programs attracted another 540 students, while 457 were enrolled in the medicine, physician scientist, or pre-medicine programs. There were 222 students enrolled in physical therapy or pre-physical therapy programs.

Agencies involved in planning for the health care workforce needs of the state, including the departments of Health, Education, and Labor and the Board of Regents, will host a statewide summit Tuesday, July 24, in Pierre. Participants will discuss strategies for addressing the projected health care workforce shortages in South Dakota. For links to health care degree programs at South Dakota public universities, see <http://www.sdbor.edu/health/programs.htm>.

Board of Regents Health Care Program Enrollments – Spring 2007

Medicine, Physician Scientist, Pre-Medicine	457
Pharmacy, Pre-Pharmacy	540
Pre-Dentistry	66
Pre-Optometry	22
Pre-Chiropractic	43
Physical Therapy, Pre-Physical Therapy	222
Physician Assistant Studies, Pre-Physician Assistant Studies	81
Occupational Therapy, Pre-Occupational Therapy	68
Audiology, Speech-Language Pathology, Communication Disorders	135

Nursing, Accelerated Nursing, RN Upward Mobility, Pre-Nursing	2,463
Medical Technology, Clinical & Lab Sciences, Pre-Medical Technology	99
Athletic Training	104
Dental Hygiene, Pre-Dental Hygiene	164
Respiratory Care, Pre-Respiratory Therapy	72
Health Services Administration, Health Information Administration, Health Information Technology	133
Dietetics Specialization	62
Clinical Psychology	71
TOTAL	4,802