

KENT STATE ASHTABULA'S CLOSE PARTNERSHIP WITH CLEVELAND CLINIC

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—Yvonne George, RRT, MEd, director for respiratory therapy at Kent State Ashtabula

Kent State University at Ashtabula offers degree programs in nursing, respiratory therapy and a variety of other medical fields that provide a constant supply of well-trained employees for one of its closest neighbors: Cleveland Clinic's Ashtabula County Medical Center (ACMC), which is two miles from campus.

“That close proximity is a significant benefit to us,” says Leonard Stepp Jr., ACMC Healthcare System president and CEO. “The students who complete their clinical rotations here are well-educated and well-trained. Many of them join our team of caregivers after graduation. The nurses, occupational/physical therapy assistants, radiology technologists, respiratory therapists and medical assistants who graduate from Kent State Ashtabula and choose to work at ACMC are integral to our ability to provide high-quality care to our patients and our community.”

MEETING THE DEMAND FOR RESPIRATORY CARE

The two institutions are always looking for ways to collaborate. A collaboration announced in 2022 allows Kent State Ashtabula to offer an associate degree program in respiratory therapy at the clinic's main campus in Cleveland.

Participants train for the in-demand profession of respiratory care. The program also supports career growth for graduates and practicing respiratory therapists by providing a path to admission for the online Bachelor of Science degree in respiratory care Kent State Ashtabula offers.

“We are excited for this opportunity to partner with Cleveland Clinic to offer our program on

its main campus,” says Yvonne George, RRT, MEd, academic program director for respiratory therapy at Kent State Ashtabula. “The pandemic emphasized the already existing need for more respiratory therapists—the ‘ventilator experts.’ We hope this partnership will provide easier access to education for individuals looking to start their professional life or who have decided to make a career change.”

Courses in the respiratory therapy program are delivered live and remotely through online instruction by Kent State Ashtabula faculty. Laboratory instruction and clinical rotations are completed at Cleveland Clinic, where students learn alongside experienced respiratory therapists. Prerequisite coursework can be completed through a combination of online and in-person classes through the Kent State system or credits can be transferred from another institution.

“We are pleased to collaborate with Kent State University at Ashtabula to offer a respiratory therapy training program at our Cleveland Clinic main campus location,” says Umur Hatipoğlu, MD, MBA, enterprise director of Respiratory Therapy at Cleveland Clinic. “This program will contribute to our mission of educating those who serve by providing our local community with an opportunity to enter a high-demand licensed healthcare profession after completing two years of training.” ⚡

—Lisa Abraham and Jason Tirotta

Learn more about the respiratory therapy program at www.kent.edu/ashtabula/rt.



The first cohort of students enrolled in the Ashtabula Respiratory Therapy Associate Degree Program at Cleveland Clinic, which was first offered in spring 2023. Pictured (left to right): Victoria Smith (adjunct faculty), Jeanine Ng, Jaclyn Burdette, Cassidy Pescatrice, Angela Mathews, Diane Rozier, Umur Hatipoglu, MD (program medical director and Enterprise Medical Director of Respiratory Therapy at Cleveland Clinic), Tasoni Burgess, Crystal Lavelle, Akira Caldwell and Karla Balasko (senior director for Enterprise Respiratory Therapy at Cleveland Clinic)