NEW RIVER COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE CELEBRATES NATIONAL LABORATORY PROFESSIONALS WEEK

[Bluefield, WV] National Medical Laboratory Professionals Week, April 19-15, is a time to honor more than 280,000 medical laboratory professionals across the nation who perform and interpret laboratory tests that save lives and keep people healthy. Faculty and students from the Clinical Medical Laboratory Program of New River Community and Technical College and Bluefield Regional Medical Center are among the many unsung heroes of medical healthcare.

Using state-of-the-art technology and instrumentation, laboratory professionals help to prevent disease by detecting unknown health problems and by aiding in the diagnosis and treatment of existing conditions by giving accurate, timely test results.

To celebrate National Medical Laboratory Professionals Week, laboratories across the country will host events to help acquaint the public and other health care professionals with the workings of the medical laboratory. New River Community and Technical College students at Bluefield Regional Medical Center plan to celebrate Lab Week by distributing information about the profession and the increasing demand for this career in southeast West Virginia. Students will be engaged in special projects and learning activities to heighten their own skills and abilities during this special week.

“We are proud of the work we do,” said Mary Boysaw, program director. “We have to be painstakingly meticulous in performing our jobs to provide dependable answers to your family physicians.”
Doctors rely heavily on lab tests to make diagnoses, thus laboratory professionals are critical components of the health care system. Results of laboratory tests often identify the presence of disease in its earliest stages, when the possibilities of a cure are greatest and when treatment is least costly.

Yet, despite the important roles laboratory professionals play, and increasing demands for laboratory services, the profession is undergoing stress. In its most recent survey of laboratory wages and vacancies, ASCP reported that nearly 44 percent of laboratories report they are currently experiencing difficulties recruiting or hiring medical laboratory personnel. There are several reasons for the lab worker shortage, including rising retirement numbers among laboratory technicians, fewer schools of laboratory technology and the corollary decrease in the number of graduates.

“That’s where the New River and BRMC partnership comes into play,” says Boysaw. “We understand the critical shortage for employees in West Virginia and beyond. By partnering together, we are able to prepare the next generation of laboratory professionals for rewarding careers right here at home.”

These professionals can be found in hospitals, doctors’ offices, clinics, research facilities, blood banks, public health centers, the Armed Forces, universities, and industry. New River Community and Technical College is proud to be the premier institution educating these professionals in southeastern West Virginia.

New River offers degrees and certificates in a number of allied health fields including laboratory technology, practical nursing, medical assisting, phlebotomy, certified nurse assisting and medical billing and coding. For more information about the Laboratory Technology program at New River Community and Technical College, contact Rita Griffith at (304) 327-4109 or visit us on the web at www.newriver.edu.

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