

CAVIT's Program Trains Future Professionals

The [Medical Science Program](#) is one of Central Arizona Valley of Technology's (CAVIT) most successful student pathways. The program prepares students for future careers in the medical field and gives them a head start by providing them with a strong foundation of applicable skills that are easily transferable to many career choices. These skills are useful to students, preparing them with necessary knowledge for success in the professional world, even if they decide to go into another industry.

The students at CAVIT vouch for the program's success and education. Chelsea, a first-year medical student, states, "The medical program opened up a ton of pathways for me. It's a great way to start my life in the medical field and get certifications." The students are big fans of hands-on learning in the classroom. This allows them to put away the textbooks and practice what they have learned in an environment that reflects daily work activities in a medical office.

Emma-Rae, a second-year student in the program, states, "The pace of the class is fast, but the teachers still give sufficient one-on-one time with each student." Because the teachers take time with each student, it ensures that no one falls behind on the work, keeping all the students confident in their knowledge and abilities.

Jamie, a second-year student, emphasizes how the program has prepared her for work in the field, "The program develops communication skills. If students are shy or nervous, the teachers help them work through it and overcome their fears." The students also learn medical skills. She adds, "I have learned how to take blood pressure, and also a lot of anatomy." The students in the medical assistant program are excited to achieve their phlebotomy and medical assistant certifications during their time enrolled.

The students are not the only ones excited about the medical science program. The medical teachers are passionate about getting the students involved with the community and spreading the word about what the program offers. Belinda Long has been teaching Medical Science at CAVIT for three years. This year she is teaching the first-year students in the medical program. Ms. Long states, "I want to give the students a strong base. I want them to understand the foundations and medical terminology. This will ensure their success in their next year in the program." Long explains that first-year students will certify in phlebotomy, which gives them the drive to achieve something they can put on their resume and professional credentials. Long wants to get her students involved with the community by setting up a first aid tent at events for the students to practice the skills and knowledge they acquire during class hours.

Wendy Puffer has been teaching the advanced medical science course for three years at CAVIT, and similarly to Long, she wants to get the students as involved with the community as possible this year. "I want to get the students involved in community service and community events and also get the community involved in our clinic days at CAVIT." Puffer is passionate about her students' success in the program. She wants to reach out to physicians on the advisory board to invite them to talk to students about what every day work in the medical field is like. She mentions encouraging more public speakers to come in and explain the importance of the medical assistant's role in the office space, what they do, and the skills they will need to succeed.

At the end of the program, the students will leave with six completed college credits from Central Arizona College, and have nationally recognized certifications. Puffer notes that because they are nationally recognized, students can move to another state and still be able to use their certifications. The students will also get a chance to extern in a traditional office setting in order to get them well prepared for joining the workforce after graduation. Puffer and Long both encourage students to join the program if they are interested in any form of a medical career, as the program will set students up for success in any medical field.

CAVIT has led many students straight into the workforce after graduation, this includes Evelyn Villegas and Sara Salas. Evelyn Villegas chose to attend CAVIT because she knew that it would give her a headstart in the field that she was passionate about. She notes, "I loved CAVIT because it was very hands-on, I learned how to do venipuncture, electrocardiograms (EKGs), and how to take vitals." She graduated in May of 2022, and shortly after was hired as a Patient Care Coordinator. This position requires Villegas to take care of referrals for ultrasounds, scheduling, attaching orders, and calling or faxing insurances. Villegas is grateful for the knowledge she learned at CAVIT, stating that the terminology she learned has been a tremendous help to excelling in her workplace.

Sara Salas knew she wanted to be a medical assistant, and CAVIT was the perfect path for her. Salas remarks, "CAVIT takes care of you, they push you to your limits, they make sure the students are learning something, it is a very positive environment." Salas graduated in 2016 and now works as a Diabetes Program Coordinator. Her job responsibilities include coordinating schedules, organizing meetings, tracking how many patients are seen, and working with patients on their nutrition. Salas says that CAVIT helped her to get out of her comfort zone, which was important in achieving her goals and reaching the position that she has now. She mentions, "CAVIT pushes students to succeed, they teach you life skills, as well as, technical skills needed for the field."

The medical science program at CAVIT has proven its success with its previous students. With the support of Puffer and Long, the current students see the countless advantages of being in the program, and they feel confident they are on the right track to becoming medical professionals. We encourage [any future students](#) who are interested in starting a career in a medical pathway to explore the engaging medical science program we have here at CAVIT!