

# Proposal for New Respiratory Therapy Program

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## Background

During the initial discussion and planning phase of the Mont Belvieu Branch Campus, a Programmatic Planning Committee was formed. The committee consisted of a combination of Lee College and Barbers Hill ISD employees who participated in a series of meetings to discuss the best program offerings for a potential Mont Belvieu Campus.

During that process, the group toured facilities at San Jacinto College, reviewed common career pathways for Barbers Hill ISD students, and examined labor market data in order to come to the best possible options for the campus. Additionally, we wanted to ensure we were offering both associate degree options and short term credential opportunities.

The committee ultimately decided on the following programs:

- Respiratory Therapy (AAS) – new program
- Sonography (AAS) – new program
- Sterile Processing Technician (certificate) – new program
- Cybersecurity (certificate & AAS) – will move locations
- Cloud Computing (certificate) – will move locations
- Computer Networking (certificate & AAS) – will move locations
- Computer Maintenance (certificate & AAS) – will move locations

Since those initial conversations, the college has hired a Director for Respiratory Therapy and program planning has begun; we are currently hiring a Director for Sonography and will begin that planning soon; and Sterile Processing, which is a non-credit offering, also has planning underway.

## Labor Market Data

A degree in Respiratory Therapy provides a family sustaining wage. Labor market data for Chambers, Liberty, and Harris counties show a median annual wage for Respiratory Therapists at \$79,512. There were approximately 2,900 jobs in 2025 and continued growth is expected.

| MEDIAN SALARY | 2025 JOBS | 2030 JOBS | PREDICTED JOB GROWTH 2025 TO 2030 | APPROX JOB POSTINGS IN PAST YEAR |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| \$79,512      | 2,899     | 3,197     | 299                               | 871                              |

Texas Career Check, a career exploration tool created by the Texas Workforce Commission, indicates there are approximately 3,500 Respiratory Therapists currently employed in the Gulf Coast region with a 2034 projection of approximately 4,400. The approximate annual job growth is 2.31%, and there are approximately 300 annual job openings across the Gulf Coast region.

The Texas statewide outlook is even stronger. Texas currently has approximately 11,930 Respiratory Therapists, with employment projected to reach approximately 14,780 by 2034—a 24% increase. The state is projected to have approximately 930 openings per year from growth and replacement needs.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 9% employment growth nationally from 2025–2035, with approximately 8,600 openings per year.

## Curriculum Plan

The Respiratory Therapy curriculum is a five-semester program (two years plus the summer in the middle). It consists of 66 SCH. While the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has a 60-credit hour limit on associate degrees, there is a statewide exemption for Respiratory Therapy programs to have up to 66 credit hours.

| PRE-REQUISITE COURSES |                                     |           |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Course                | Course Name                         | SCH       |
| BIOL 2401             | Anatomy and Physiology I            | 4         |
| BIOL 2402             | Anatomy and Physiology II           | 4         |
| BIOL 2420             | Microbiology for Non-Science Majors | 4         |
| ENGL 1301             | Composition I                       | 3         |
| MATH 1314             | College Algebra                     | 3         |
| PSYC 2301             | General Psychology                  | 3         |
|                       | <b>TOTAL SCH</b>                    | <b>21</b> |

| SEMESTER 1 |                                                 |           |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Course     | Course Name                                     | SCH       |
| RSPT 1201  | Introduction to Respiratory Care                | 2         |
| RSPT 1227  | Applied Physics for Respiratory Care            | 2         |
| RSPT 1240  | Advanced Cardiopulmonary Anatomy and Physiology | 2         |
| RSPT 1310  | Respiratory Care Procedures I                   | 3         |
| RSPT 1260  | Clinical — Respiratory Care I                   | 2         |
|            | <b>TOTAL SCH</b>                                | <b>11</b> |

| SEMESTER 2 |                                |           |
|------------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Course     | Course Name                    | SCH       |
| RSPT 2210  | Cardiopulmonary Disease        | 2         |
| RSPT 2314  | Mechanical Ventilation         | 3         |
| RSPT 1411  | Respiratory Care Procedures II | 4         |
| RSPT 1261  | Clinical — Respiratory Care II | 2         |
|            | <b>TOTAL SCH</b>               | <b>11</b> |

| SEMESTER 3 |                                         |          |
|------------|-----------------------------------------|----------|
| Course     | Course Name                             | SCH      |
| RSPT 2217  | Cardiopulmonary Pharmacology            | 2        |
| RSPT 2353  | Neonatal/Pediatric Cardiopulmonary Care | 3        |
| RSPT 2260  | Clinical — Respiratory Care III         | 2        |
|            | <b>TOTAL SCH</b>                        | <b>7</b> |

| SEMESTER 4 |                                |          |
|------------|--------------------------------|----------|
| Course     | Course Name                    | SCH      |
| RSPT 2255  | Critical Care Monitoring       | 2        |
| RSPT 2325  | Cardiopulmonary Diagnostics    | 3        |
| RSPT 2261  | Clinical — Respiratory Care IV | 2        |
|            | <b>TOTAL SCH</b>               | <b>7</b> |

| SEMESTER 5 |                                          |          |
|------------|------------------------------------------|----------|
| Course     | Course Name                              | SCH      |
| RSPT 2231  | Simulations in Respiratory Care          | 2        |
| RSPT 2230  | Respiratory Care Examination Preparation | 2        |
| RSPT 2262  | Clinical — Respiratory Care V            | 2        |
| XXXX 13XX  | Creative Arts Core Elective              | 3        |
|            | <b>TOTAL SCH</b>                         | <b>9</b> |

## Timeline

Pending a smooth approval process by THECB, SACSCOC, and the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC), we are aiming for a Fall 2027 start. However, this depends on the timeliness of approvals of all entities.

## Summary

After careful research and discussion, a programmatic planning committee chose Respiratory Therapy as a key program to offer at the Lee College - Mont Belvieu Campus. The labor market data shows strong wages and growth in job opportunities for our area, the state of Texas, and nationally. We request formal approval by the Board of Regents to add Respiratory Therapy to our program offerings.