

## Warren Woods Tower launches early college program in medical assisting

By Autumn Okuszka  
WWT Senior

Beginning this year, Warren Woods Tower (WWT) is providing students with the opportunity to begin their college education early, without the worry of having to pay for it, in Medical Assisting through the Early College Baker (ECB) program. Teacher and adjunct Faculty Instructor at Baker College of Clinton Township, Mrs. Marie VanHuyse, has taught Health Science classes at WWT since 2001. Eighteen students from the Southwest Technical Macomb Education Consortium (SMTEC) are taking this big step to further their education.

SMTEC, under the leadership of Dr. Kathleen Szuminski, in collaboration with WWT educators and Baker College staff made the ECB-MA program possible. SMTEC is comprised of four high schools, Centerline, Fitzgerald, Lincoln, and Warren Woods Tower, who work together to promote and share Career Technical courses that provide students with the opportunity to choose from a wider range of course selections. These classes are a first step for many into their careers, as the various programs involved may offer industry certification and paid externships that results in continued employment after graduation. The ECB-MA program is the first formal program in Macomb County that gives students the option to begin their college education early in a Career Technical area.

SMTEC students who are interested in the ECB-MA program apply in the second semester of their 10th grade year. Students and parents are given the opportunity to attend informational meetings and to visit the Baker College Health Science classrooms. Under the direction of Mrs. VanHuyse, students may opt toward earning MA National Certification as well as earning an associate's degree in Health Science Technology. There is no cost to the student through the ECB-MA program.

MAs assist the physician in caring for a patient.

They are the people who take the patient's weight, height, vital signs, and other information regarding the patient's health. They may also give medication, draw blood, take x-rays, and perform electrocardiograms (ECGs). They can be found working in doctor's offices or clinic settings. Having the ability to perform these skills also makes a MA desirable for employment in other areas such as hospitals, research centers, insurance companies, and schools. According to 2017 NurseJournal.org, MAs in Michigan earn an average of \$39,000 a year.

"Students in the program



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

ECB-MA students on their first visit to Baker College. Front row: Dariyanah McCray, Ruth Yang, Farjana Islam, Olivia Fucinari, Estephaan Shamoan. 2nd row: Mrs. Julie Geyman, Ayrelle Delbridge, Erin Curtis, India Idleburg, Arian Haygood, Victor Quantrell, Pamela Cory, Alyah Hayes, Mrs. Marie VanHuyse. Back row: Dr. Kathleen Szuminski, Andre Vance, Brian Campbell.

are enrolled as Baker College students and take their first orientation course which all Baker students are required to take when they begin their college career." Mrs. VanHuyse said. "During their 1st year of ECB-MA students will take three Baker courses and Anatomy and Physiology (A&P), which are all offered at WWT." A&P is an articulated course, which means Baker has reviewed the course and feel that it holds the same importance as their course, awarding college credit for it.

"During their 2nd year of the program, students will take another ECB-MA course at WWT, and will take two college courses at the Baker College campus as well," Mrs. VanHuyse said. After their 2nd year, students will transition into their 3rd year where they can either complete one semester to become certified in Medical Assisting after taking and passing the exam for National Certification for MAs or complete a full year where they will receive an associate's degree in Health Science Technology along with their already completed certification in Medical Assisting.

On the journey to earning their certification/associate's degree, students will also complete the required internship hours needed to become certified which will be completed at local clinics and doctor's offices. Per Mrs. VanHuyse, quite often, these internships may result in permanent employment for the student. Even if the student's internship site does not work out for employment, there are numerous opportunities for certified MAs to find a place of work. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment for MAs will continue to rise through 2024.

Many students who decided to take part in the ECB-MA program have had a direct interest in Medical Assisting, or the medical field as a whole. Some students are planning to use the program as a stepping stone into higher edu-



Farjana Islam checking classmate's Dariyanah McCray's blood pressure.

cation. Students in the program with long-term goals to become a doctor may not be able to afford college directly after high school. The ECB-MA program benefits these students as after they earn their certification/associate's degree they are able to be employed in a related area where they can gain valuable experience in their field of work and earn money to help them with the cost of furthering their education.

Andre Vance (LHS) is in his 1st year of ECB-MA, joining the program under similar conditions. "I had asked my counselor if there were any classes I could take that would satisfy my interest in becoming a doctor," Andre said. "This program changed my schooling as it gave me a great opportunity to experience free learning and understanding the career I would like to go into further."

The ECB-MA program has reconfirmed Vhyness Austero's (WWT) career aspiration of working in the medical field. She has enhanced her knowledge with volunteering experiences. Since enrolling in the ECB-MA program she volunteers at two local hospitals, The Children's Hospital of Michigan and St. John's Hospital. "My CTE classes opened up this opportunity for me," she said. "I am able to see a wider range of the medical field and how it works, utilizing hands-on activities to further my knowledge and wit-

ness what MAs do in real life."

Beyond formal education, the class has also benefited Vhyness in another way. "I get to meet new people and make new friends from different schools that have the same interest as me." Vhyness was also able to attend an Early College conference in Lansing. "I was able to meet students from all over the state of Michigan," she said.

Along with Mrs. VanHuyse's exceptional leadership and teaching, there are a wide range of people who helped shape this program into what it is today.

"Baker College is a great partner. Dr. Peni Aldrich is our coordinator with Baker's Running Start Program, which works with many schools interested in Early College programs. Dr. Patty Kaufman, president of the Clinton Township campus, has been very



Andre Vance listens to Vhyness Austero's lung sounds with a stethoscope.



Ayrelle Delbridge determines if Alyah Hayes has a fever.

instrumental and supportive in making this opportunity available. Amy Ensign, director of the MA program for Baker College, has offered her classroom, instructors, and enormous amount of time and effort in order to help our students be successful in this program," Mrs. VanHuyse said.

If students are interested

in the Early College Baker Medical Assisting program, they are required to be in 10th grade, transitioning into 11th grade in the fall with a GPA of 2.5 or higher attending one of the following high schools: Centerline, Fitzgerald, Lincoln, and Warren Woods Tower. For more information, you can visit the SMTEC website at [smteccte.org](http://smteccte.org).

### SMTEC Pathways



SMTEC (Southwest Macomb Technical Education Consortium) offers the following courses in career & technical pathways:

- ARTS & COMMUNICATIONS: Visual Imaging/Graphic Communications, Radio & TV Broadcasting Technology
- BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT, MARKETING & TECHNOLOGY: Accounting/Finance, Business Management, Culinary Services, Marketing
- ENGINEERING, MANUFACTURING AND INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY: Automotive Technology, Mechan-

ical Drafting/CAD, Manufacturing Technology

- HEALTH SCIENCES: Anatomy & Physiology for Health Careers, Introduction to Careers in Health, Dental Assistant, Emergency Medical Technician, Medical Assistant, Medical First Responder, Nursing Assistant, Pharmacy Technician, Physical Therapy Aide
- HUMAN SERVICES: Cosmetology, Education/Teacher Cadet, Firefighting, Law Enforcement, JROTC
- EARLY COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY: Medical Assisting

Anchor Bay Schools  
Armada Area Schools  
Center Line Public Schools  
Chippewa Valley Schools  
Clintondale Community Schools  
Eastpointe Community Schools  
Fitzgerald Public Schools  
Fraser Public Schools  
Lake Shore Public Schools  
Lakeview Public Schools  
L'Anse Creuse Public Schools  
M'ouss Cremins Community Schools  
New Haven Community Schools

For more information about CTE, contact Shannon Williams at 586.228.3488 or [swilliams@misd.net](mailto:swilliams@misd.net)



Macomb Intermediate School District  
44001 Garfield Road  
Clinton Township, MI 48038  
586.228.3300

For more information about the MISD and the 21 school districts, go to [www.misd.net](http://www.misd.net)

Richmond Community Schools  
Romeo Community Schools  
Roseville Community Schools  
South Lake Schools  
Utica Community Schools  
Van Dyke Public Schools  
Warren Consolidated Schools  
Warren Woods Public Schools

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