

Sleeping in class?

*It's required for Collin's **Polysomnographic Technology***

HOW NICE WOULD IT be to take a class in college that allows you to sleep—during class? For students at Collin College, the Polysomnographic Technology (sleep study) program allows just that. Every student that enrolls in either the 22-month or the 9-month program is required to be a participant in a sleep study so they can gain real-world experience on what happens during a sleep study.

Getting enough sleep is essential for a person's well being, but many do not get the amount of sleep needed. To understand why, Collin College launched the Polysomnographic Technology (sleep study) program in Fall 2012. In May, Collin College will graduate its first class of 10 students who will have earned an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree.

Michael Monk, an upcoming graduate of the Polysomnographic Technology program, is excited to already have a job lined up before he graduates. "I had not heard about this program and happened to walk into an information session hosted by the program coordinator. Her presentation was so intriguing that I decided to start my healthcare profession in this field."

There are more than 80 different sleep disorders that have been identified, including sleep eating disorders, sleep apnea and insomnia. While the sleep medicine field

is relatively new, more than 60 million Americans struggle with a sleep disorder and the demand for Polysomnographic technologists continues to grow. Doctors may prescribe a sleep study for patients who experience trouble sleeping. These sleep studies are an important and measureable indicator to doctors of how severe a sleep disorder is and the best ways to treat it. Left untreated, sleep disorders could raise a person's risk for heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and other medical conditions.

According to Amber Allen, coordinator of the sleep study program, "The study of sleep

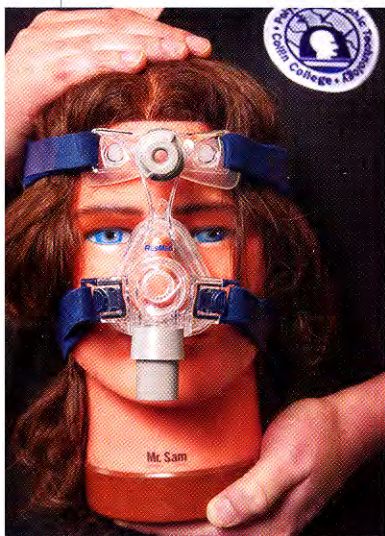
medicine is on the rise as an up and coming career field and the program at Collin College prepares our students for the growing and challenging field of sleep medicine."

Polysomnographic technologists conduct the sleep studies



Vivian Daily and Michael Monk.

✎ X 2 Nick Young / Collin College



A nasal CPAP mask is used in the sleep study program at Collin College.

that allow physicians to diagnose and treat patients that suffer from sleep disorders. Through this program, Collin College graduates are equipped with the skills and fundamental knowledge to effectively monitor, manage and treat sleep disorders under medical supervision.

"Currently, we are the only accredited program in North Texas and are seeing more and more sleep labs interested in hiring our students, some even before they graduate," said Allen. "To me, this speaks highly of Collin College and the caliber of students and professors that are a part of this program."

Polysomnographic technologists perform sleep studies for physicians to make a sleep disorder diagnosis. A sleep study monitors a patient's sleep habits including brain activity,

heart rhythm, eye movements, as well as breathing and muscle movement. The technologist usually conducts sleep studies at night; however, many labs offer sleep study tests during the day. While most sleep studies are performed on adults, they can be performed on children as young as premature babies in order to help pediatric doctors determine sleep disorders.

The Polysomnographic Technology program offers two degree tracks depending on the student's healthcare background. The 22-month Associate of Applied Science degree track is for those without a healthcare background and totals 60 credit hours. This program allows students to begin a career in allied health in the clinical care and management of sleep disorders. Collin College's program is one of two accredited associate-level programs in Texas.

To help gain the field experience required, students work in the two bed sleep study lab on campus with volunteers. These sleep study tests are screenings that allow students the opportunity to work with the equipment and see how patients react during the test.


The Certificate in Polysomnographic Technology will be offered starting in the 2014 fall semester. It is a two-semester track, with a full-time and a part-time option for those who are already working in the healthcare field. This track is geared towards those who already have an Associate degree and are board certified in a healthcare field by allowing them to pick up an additional certification. This includes, but is not limited, to respiratory therapists, nurses or physician assistants.

The program also allows those who are board certified and have on the job training in polysomnography (RPSGT) or electroencephalography (REEGT) to enroll without an Associate degree. The lecture component of the certificate track is online while labs and clinicals are completed in person. Currently, both programs are accepting up to 15 students every fall semester.

The program at Collin College offers

students a non-traditional career path in healthcare. For many students seeking a career in healthcare, polysomnography is a growing field with many opportunities. Some of these opportunities include working at hospitals or private sleep labs and could include administrative options as well as the ability to move into a clinical educator position.

"This program has allowed me the opportunity to enter the healthcare field after I raised my children," said student Vivian Dailey. "The sleep study program is exciting and I have found a rewarding career that allows me to make a difference in the life of a patient in one night."

Visit www.collin.edu/sleep for more information about the Polysomnographic Technology Program at Collin College. 

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