



Triton College (District #504)

Sterile Processing Technician Advisory Committee Meeting – Agenda

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

4:30 – 6:00 PM

- I. Call to Order
- II. Welcome and Introductions
- III. National Sterile Processing Technician Week
- IV. Drug Policy
- V. Current Program Status (including impact of COVID-19)
- VI. Program Resources
- VII. Questions, Comments, and Suggestions
- VIII. Next Meeting
- IX. Adjournment

**MINUTES
STERILE PROCESSING TECHNICIAN PROGRAM
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
October 14, 2020 (via Blackboard Collaborate)**

CALL TO ORDER

The virtual meeting was called to order by Teri Junge at 4:30 p.m.

**WELCOME AND
INTRODUCTIONS**

Advisory committee members introduced themselves and stated their affiliation. The committee is constantly seeking new members and would welcome referrals.

In attendance:

- Pamela Harmon, Dean of Health Careers and Public Service Programs
- Mary Casey-Incardone, Triton College Counselor
- Barbara Lino, Current Student
- Meghan Joost, Graduate
- Kayla Gagliardi, Triton College Academic Advisor
- Jen Barnickel, Production Manager at Vested Medical
- Dawn Marcotte, Adjunct Faculty
- Teri Junge, CSPDT, Program Coordinator

**NATIONAL SURGICAL
TECHNOLOGIST WEEK**

Dr. Junge wished the committee a Happy Sterile Processing Week.

DRUG POLICY

Since Illinois legalized the use of marijuana, the program has had a few students test positive for marijuana when they had their pre-clinical drug screening. Dr. Junge recommended student drug education so they clearly understand program expectations. Students should also be reminded that while marijuana and alcohol are legal, an individual may not be impaired while in class or on duty at the clinical site and that they may be randomly tested during the program for suspicion of drug use as well.

Dr. Junge proposed the following drug policy to be added to the Sterile Processing Technician Handbook and asked the committee for their input:

A student with a positive drug test should immediately eliminate all sources of exposure (ingestion and/or inhalation including second-hand smoke). Metabolites can remain in the body for 30 days or more.

- Student should wait 4-6 weeks and retest (the updated test is due no later than May 15th); and the student will reregister via CastleBranch and is responsible for the retesting fee
- If the second test is negative, student may remain in the program; and if positive, student will be terminated
- Student may be randomly retested at any future time while in the program

The committee added the following for consideration:

Ms. Barnickel stated that Vested Medical does have a drug policy. While they will not disqualify anyone, it would bear further scrutiny and discussion. They have not experienced it yet but realize they cannot deny employment since it is legal now.

Dr. Junge explained that students complete a background check with CastleBranch prior to starting the program and then their clinical requirements are done approximately 6-8 weeks before the clinical assignment. Students participate at the clinical setting only after they pass the drug test.

Ms. Marcotte added that students will have been in the program for at least 2-3 months during which time the educators have clearly communicated the program expectations to them and having a positive drug test at this point should be a disqualification from the program. It is one's responsibility as a health care professional to be clean; and many hospital facilities would have at least disciplined, if not terminated an employee, had they failed a drug test. She stressed that education should begin at orientation emphasizing that if marijuana is part of the student's life, whether for medical or recreational purposes, then this may not be the proper career path for them.

Given the newness of the legalization, Ms. Casey-Incardone suggested we do more research to know our hospital affiliates' policies regarding marijuana and possibly getting input from the campus lawyers. They may be able to clarify whether you are considered marijuana or cannabis positive or negative, if there is a level of measurement such as with blood alcohol content that would be considered acceptable vs not acceptable, and what users' rights of having a medical prescription are.

Dean Harmon said that hospitals were non-committal in identifying their policy when asked and kept it at a case-by-case basis. Most hospitals don't have anything specific for marijuana; it is just drug testing. If an employee fails, they may be terminated immediately or allowed to re-test and be suspended without pay.

Dr. Junge recently learned that drug testing was part of a clinical site's protocol after a student's needle stick incident. The student was going to refuse testing but then reconsidered since the refusal may signal a problem. She added that an employee's ability to get workman's comp or ongoing health care can be impacted if it is found that the stick was their fault and they were impaired.

Dean Harmon mentioned that the Radiology Program students sign off that they may or may not be drug tested by the clinical affiliate depending on the circumstances. If the student refuses testing, they have to know that there will be a consequence for the refusal. She

said it may be a good idea to add this to the policy as well. The health programs' policy is that no student may be impaired because with impairment, comes injury.

While an individual may have a marijuana prescription, they would still be considered impaired. It was also noted that marijuana was still illegal by federal law and would not be allowed at the government hospitals where students receive their clinical experience.

The above factors will be reviewed and considered along with the discussions at the Surgical Technology advisory meeting on the same topic; and, the committee was leaning toward termination if a student tests positive. Dr. Junge thanked the committee for their feedback and will work on a revised policy to be presented at the next meeting to approve or improve upon.

Ms. Casey-Incardone provided the following after the meeting:

Illinois has per se drugged driving law enacted for the presence of THC in blood above 5ng/ml. The law **states**:

- If there was a tetrahydrocannabinol concentration of 5 nanograms or more in whole blood or 10 nanograms or more in another bodily substance as defined in this Section, it shall be presumed that the person was under the influence of cannabis.
- If there was at that time a tetrahydrocannabinol concentration of less than 5 nanograms in whole blood or less than 10 nanograms in another bodily substance, such facts shall not give rise to any presumption that the person was or was not under the influence of cannabis, but such fact may be considered with other competent evidence in determining whether the person was under the influence of cannabis.

Information was found at this website:

<https://norml.org/laws/drugged-driving/illinois-drugged-driving/>

She will also research information from other sources so Triton's policies can reflect best current practices that protect the safety of the student, the patient, the clinical site and the college.

CURRENT PROGRAM STATUS

Program Outcomes

Cohort with Start Date August 2020

The retention rate is 76%. 13 students enrolled; 3 students dropped. 1 student was readmitted to the program for the SPT110 course only.

COVID-19 Impact:

- SPT 100 Sterile Processing Basics and SPT 110 Introduction to Medical Devices
 - Being conducted remotely via Blackboard Collaborate
- SPT 120 Principles of Sterile Processing Practice and SPT 130 Perioperative Services Lab
 - Being conducted face-to-face following best practices related to self-reporting (using an app called CampusClear) along with imposition of self-quarantine when needed, group size, and wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE)

For the spring semester, SPT 140 Sterile Processing Technician Seminar was designed as a fully online class prior to COVID-19; and for SPT 150 Experiential Learning, it is expected that students currently in the program will be assigned to clinical sites since many hospital and surgery centers are accepting students.

Cohort with Start Date January 2020

Workforce Equity Initiative (WEI) Grant

The retention rate is 58%. 12 students enrolled and 5 students dropped or did not pass.

COVID-19 Impact:

Spring 2020 – All classroom and lab classes were postponed for one week following spring break and resumed in a remote learning format on March 30, 2020.

- SPT 100 Sterile Processing Basics, SPT 110 Introduction to Medical Devices, SPT 120 Principles of Sterile Processing Practice and SPT 130 Perioperative Services Lab
 - Conducted remotely via Blackboard CollaborateThe cohort moved to the summer semester with 9 students Summer 2020.
- SPT 140 Sterile Processing Technician Seminar (7 completed). This class is an online certification exam review.
- SPT 150 Experiential Learning was cancelled – Students were instructed to find employment as a sterile processing technician as soon as possible and submit a Petition for Proficiency Exam along with proof to receive credit for the course and earn their certificate of completion
 - 4 students are employed (and now have enough hours to take CRCST exam)
 - 1 student joined the next cohort
 - Remainder of students working with career services to find employment
 - Hiring “Blitz” at Northwestern; however, our candidates require certificate

We are working with this cohort to get them working and certified. Certification can be achieved on two levels:

- Candidates can take the certification exam to show they understand the material and then submit proof of clinical or work hours afterwards. This provisional certification upgrades to full certification once the work history is submitted.
- Candidates who already have their hands-on work experience from their employers are eligible to take the CRCST exam for full certification.

Cohort with Start Date August 2019

The retention rate is 55%. 9 students enrolled, 4 students dropped or did not pass.

COVID-19 Impact:

Fall 2019 – All classroom and lab classes conducted in face-to-face format (2 drops, 1 did not pass)

The cohort moved to the Spring 2020 semester with 7 students

Spring 2020

- SPT 140 Sterile Processing Technician Seminar (6 enrolled, 1 did not pass)
 - Online class – not affected by COVID-19
- SPT 150 Experiential Learning was cancelled after spring break and received an “incomplete”
 - Students were presented with two options
 - Find employment as a sterile processing technician as soon as possible and submit a Petition for Proficiency Exam along with proof to receive credit for the course and to earn their certificate of completion
 - Join the next cohort on a space available basis
 - All students opted for the first option. Unfortunately, there has been no response from this cohort as to their status and none of the five students have submitted their petition.

CRCST Exam Results

Because there is no accreditation for sterile processing technician programs, students are asked to take the exam on their own and self-report their CRCST Exam results. So far, there have been no responses.

There has been some movement toward accreditation which will help with accountability as far as exam results. It is expected that students would take the exam as a group and the instructor will have access to the results.

As a possible solution to obtain some data, Ms. Barnickel shared that an IAHCMM’s publication called Process lists candidates who took and passed the exam.

Program Resources

Dr. Junge provided an assessment of the program's resources:

- Budget – adequate. The program budget has been supplemented with Perkin's grant funds. Since the inception of the sterile processing technician program in the fall of 2018, the surgical technology and sterile processing technician budgets have been combined. This is the first year (2020-2021) that each program has a separate budget.
- Classroom facilities and equipment – adequate.
- Student and faculty computer resources – adequate.
- Instructional reference materials – adequate.
 - Upon recommendation of the program advisory committee, the ANSI/AAMI ST 59 Sterilization of Health Care Products and ST 91 Flexible and Semi-Rigid Endoscope Processing in Health Care Facilities Standards have been purchased.
- Laboratory facilities – adequate.
- Laboratory equipment and instrumentation – adequate; the most recent purchases include a Steris Endoscope Reprocessor, an O'Sullivan-O'Connor retractor, a laryngeal mirror, and a Judd-Mason bladder retractor. We will continue to expand our inventory of specialty surgical instruments. The committee endorses purchase of the items listed above with budget money and grant funds. All instruments and equipment are shared with the surgical technology program.

Ms. Marcotte suggested putting together a few more minor sets for students to work with during tray assembly. This would be beneficial as it would allow students to be comfortably socially distance while practicing skills.

- Laboratory supplies, including disposables – adequate. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the program donated PPE to local medical facilities. Some lab supplies (such as PPE) are in short supply. Reusable gowns and hair covers are on order.

Ms. Joost added that she found the temperature in the decontamination area in full PPE during her clinical experience was difficult. Communicating to students that they may be uncomfortable in a real situation would be helpful.

Ms. Barnickel finds new techs struggled with blue wrap, not only to properly wrap trays but oddly-shaped items. It was stated that students are taught the square fold and envelope fold and wrap oddly-shaped items as well. Students would benefit practicing on triangles, knee positioners, basins or simulation of any oddly-shaped item.

- Library reference resources – adequate.

- Dr. Junge has been working with the librarians to enhance the sterile processing technician program Subject Guides.
- The library is currently open and providing as many resources to our students as possible while following the COVID-19 best practices.
- Ancillary student facilities – adequate (all services available virtually and/or face-to-face).
 - Library
 - Counseling department
 - Student with special needs department
 - Tutoring
 - Computer labs
 - Academic success department
 - Career services department
 - Job fairs
 - Health resource lab
- Clerical/support staff – adequate.
- Funds for faculty development including professional development opportunities – adequate.
- Clinical affiliation sites and slots – adequate. Recently added Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago and Swedish Covenant Hospital. Clinical site development is ongoing so any contacts, networking, or referrals would be welcomed.

**QUESTIONS,
COMMENTS, AND
SUGGESTIONS**

Having a high school diploma or GED is a program requirement; however, it may be possible to modify this in order to offer the program to high school students as a dual credit option. Dr. Junge will verify actual certification requirements and advise the committee at the next meeting.

Dean Harmon added a few things to consider for a dual credit class: will there be enough students for a daytime cohort and instructors' schedule availability. She also stated that the sterile processing technician program is under consideration for another WEI grant. Given these factors, dual credit may be an option in the future.

If the program is opened up to high school students, Ms. Barnickel added that the program will have to factor in age requirements because a clinical site will not allow anybody to be hands-on under the age of 18.

A student folding demonstration was requested for a future meeting.

Ms. Barnickel provided her email address for candidates interested in submitting a resume. Applications can also be sent to the Vested Medical website.

NEXT MEETING

The next sterile processing technician program advisory committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, April 21, 2021 from 4:30-6:00. Location TBA.

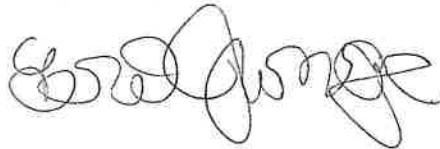
Proposed topics for the next meeting:

- Finalize program handbook, including drug policy
- Consider making SPT 100 and SPT 110 online courses
- Readmission Policy

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Junge thanked the committee for their time and input and appreciated the diverse perspectives and contributions. The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Teri Junge, EdD, CSFA, CST, FAST, CSPDT
Sterile Processing Technician Program Instructional Area
Coordinator

TJ/db