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BC nursing program students answer the call for support during COVID-19

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Bakersfield College registered nursing students have answered the call to help during the coronavirus pandemic by lending a hand to Kern Medical, Dignity Health Systems and Bakersfield Heart Hospital.

On Monday, BC and its community partners for health care clinicals coordinated to help meet pressing local health care needs. Kern Medical, Dignity Healthcare Systems and Bakersfield Heart Hospital will onboard all 69 Level 4 registered nursing students — senior students in their final semester. The nursing students will work in a nurse extern capacity alongside a registered nurse and provide direct care to a team of patients.

"I absolutely love seeing how our nursing faculty and students have responded to this call for help from our hospitals," said BC President Sonya Christian in a news release. "This is a time when we should all pause and say a big 'thank you' to every nurse, doctor, and every other healthcare provider as they work on the front lines to care for our community."

The local announcement comes at a time when across the nation, many nursing students have had their education put on hold. California requires registered nursing students to complete at least 75 percent of their clinical hours in a "face-to-face" setting, providing bedside care to patients. BC students will be able to complete their required clinical hours and lectures concurrently, be eligible to sit for their national exam and enter the workforce.

Weeks prior, while BC transitioned approximately 2,500 courses to a virtual learning environment, Associate Dean of Nursing Carla Gard was already seeking creative partnerships to assist students in meeting their clinical requirements during the shutdown. It was only natural for her to reach out to the practice partners for collaboration.

Russell Judd, chief executive officer of Kern Medical, did not hesitate to collaborate with Bakersfield College to implement a solution.

"This action affirms the strong ties and mutual commitment Kern Medical and Bakersfield College have in meeting our community needs," said Judd.



A part of The Californian's ongoing coverage of the worldwide coronavirus outbreak.