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Aging Services

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Aging Services Management

(Formerly) Health Care Administration

The original purpose of the Health Care Administration Program, begun in 1971, was to prepare graduates for careers in the operation and management of nursing homes. The three student groups envisioned were (1) people without previous health experience who desired to enter health care management; (2) those who were in other phases of health care and desired to assume management responsibilities; and (3) persons who were employed in health care management who desired to update and extend their knowledge and management skills.

Nursing home administrators in Iowa are required to meet education requirements and pass the National Board Exam (NAB). Individuals must have a bachelors' degree and meet Iowa's educational requirements before being eligible to take the NAB exam. Educational requirements have changed over the years, and the DMACC program has continued to develop and implement curriculum to meet those requirements. The program began in response to the Iowa Board of Nursing Home Examiners for the Nursing Home Administrators' newly-established minimum educational requirements for nursing home administrators as mandated by 1970 Federal legislation.

Richard Lintner was employed as the first Program Chairperson in July 1971. His role was to develop the curriculum, consult with state agencies related to the program, recruit students, employ instructors and work with the health care industry. Joanne Westergard became a full time instructor in 1978 and chaired the program after Mr. Lintner left.

In the beginning most students enrolled in the program were already employed full-time in nursing homes. The college responded to this by offering the program courses on a part-time and evening/weekend schedule. This schedule was a very new concept at the time but later became the norm and continues with the current web-based classes. At this time DMACC is the only community college in Iowa with this program.

In addition, in recent years faculty designed a web-based study program with practice exams, offered through DMACC's Continuing Education Division to help students prepare for the NAB exams. This program is offered for students in Iowa and nationally. An advisory committee represents a cross section of the continuum of care. Members' input is vital, addressing curriculum changes in order to stay on the cutting edge of an ever-changing industry.

In 2005 the Health Care Administration program's name was changed to Aging Services Management to reflect industry changes. At that time the program was restructured to be more encompassing of careers that serve a rapidly growing aging population. Students have a choice of four tracks:

- Aging Services Management AS :The Long-Term Care Administrator
- Long-Term Care Administrator Specialist Certificate
- Long-Term Care Administrator Practicum Specialist Certificate
- Adult Services Management AS : Adult Services
- Adult Services Specialist Certificate

The Adult Services tracks were designed for individuals choosing to work in agencies that serve the aging population. With the growth of assisted living programs and the education requirements for the directors of assisted living, the DMACC program was proactive in developing an Adult Services AS degree and a Specialist Certificate under the umbrella of the Aging Services Management program. The pending educational requirements for the directors of assisted living will provide DMACC's Aging Services Management program an opportunity for growth. The Adult Services Specialist Certificate also meets the state requirements for residential care facility employees who service the mentally disadvantaged. It is the only program in Iowa that meets that requirement.

Courses are offered in a non-traditional format to meet the needs of working adults, who make up the largest portion of the student population (average age 36). The instructional formats include evening and weekend face-to-face classes, WEBCT, WEB blended and WEB enhanced. Face-to-face courses meet for longer class times and less frequently than traditional courses. Practicum and agency experience are extensive practical experiences that utilize practicum sites throughout Iowa. The program has averaged approximately 40 students each year since it was established.

This program is an excellent example of the ability of the community college to be a pioneer in developing a program that prepares students for the changing licensure requirements, provides a schedule and course format that recognizes the need for flexibility to coincide with the student's work schedule, and continues to revise and update the curriculum and instructional delivery systems as the requirements for licensure change.

Created August 2015 in celebration of DMACC's 50th Anniversary.