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United Hospital District Completes First College Course Partnership *Plans to offer High Step Health Science Academy again*

Blue Earth, MN – July 24, 2023 – United Hospital District (UHD) is pleased to announce the successful completion of their first-ever college-level healthcare careers class, hosted at UHD Hospital during the 2022-2023 academic year.

Developed in partnership with Blue Earth Area High School (BEAHS) and South Central Service Cooperative (SCC), the newly formed High Step Health Science Academy offered fall and spring courses to qualified juniors and seniors at BEAHS for the 2022-2023 academic year. The fall semester saw 30 students complete the Healthcare Core Foundations course for four college credits from SCC, and the spring semester saw 26 students complete the Medical Terminology course for three college credits from SCC.

UHD Human Resources Manager Shanna Gudahl is credited with bringing the course to life at UHD. Her efforts spanned several years of discussion and development, including an interruption by the COVID-19 pandemic. She commented, “This was an excellent opportunity for us to educate and engage local students in healthcare careers. We also think it has potential to be a very successful recruiting tactic for UHD.”

While the majority of classes were completed online, UHD hosted weekly in-person sessions from September 2022 through May 2023. Nearly 20 UHD professionals, including administrators, providers, managers, and support staff, gave presentations about their fields, which included training requirements and day to day expectations. Hands-on demonstrations allowed students to explore equipment and tools related to patient care. Course topics included Healthcare Career Exploration; Healthcare Communications; Employability Skills; Safety Practices; and Teamwork and Leadership in Healthcare. Students also explored medical specialties and the various systems within the human body, including respiratory, cardiovascular, digestive, endocrine, nervous, and reproductive. All classes were

led by SCC Regional Health Science Educator and Coordinator Dustin Julius, a professional educator for more than 15 years.

Reflecting on the effort, UHD's Chief Nursing Officer Melissa Storbeck, RN, who helped develop the course syllabus, stated, "Working collaboratively with BEA and SCC has been an exciting partnership. Sharing our passion for rural medicine with young students is a joy and we hope to entice a few to come back to join our team at UHD when they have completed their college education. We look forward to offering this class next year and continuing our relationship with BEA and SCC."

United Hospital District (www.uhd.org), based in Blue Earth, MN, is an independent system of care comprised of a 25-bed acute care hospital, comprehensive outpatient services, ambulance service, and a home health/hospice care program, all supported by a 25-plus multi-specialty provider group with three clinic locations across two counties. UHD was recognized as a 2023 Best Small Hospital Under 25 Beds and a 2022 Top 200 Workplace in Minnesota.

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