

Clark College lands \$542K health IT grant

It's part of nine-school consortium working to develop programs

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Clark College has received a \$542,000 grant as part of a nine-school consortium that will develop programs in health-related information technology.

Clark could become the national model in its chosen area, bringing information technology into its pharmacy tech program.

"Each community college had to have a specialty focus that could be nationally replicated," said Blake Bowers, the college's dean of health sciences.

The goal is to find ways to embed health informatics — the study of resources and methods for the management of health information — into existing programs, Bowers said.

Clark will have two other areas of emphasis:

■ The college will bring health informatics into its nursing program. There are already some established models around the coun-

try, and Clark College will look for best practices.

■ Once health informatics has been infused into pharmacy tech, the grant will help returning military veterans receive priority status in the program.

Since the grant has just been announced, Clark's initial focus will be on planning during fall and winter quarters. In both the nursing and pharmacy tech programs, the college could see results as early as spring quarter, but no later than fall 2013.

The consortium received a total of \$11.8 million; about 1,700 Wash-

ington students will participate over the first three years.

The seven other Washington community college members are Bellevue College, Bellingham Technical College, Clover Park Technical College, Pierce College, Renton Technical College, Spokane Community College and Whatcom Community College.

The ninth member is Northern Virginia Community College.

The consortium will create online materials to help other colleges across the nation develop similar programs.

The colleges also will work close-

Did you know?

■ Fall quarter started today at Clark College.

ly with companies in the health IT industry and regional workforce development boards, according to a news release from U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of health IT jobs in the country will increase by 21 percent between 2010 and 2020, Cantwell's news release said.