Are you interested in unraveling medical mysteries and, in the process, helping people? A career as a medical lab technician (MLT) may be right for you. MLT professionals fill critical roles collecting and processing data and information needed to provide care to patients and/or perform research in the larger medical, pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries.

Did you know College of the Canyons has one of only three approved and functioning MLT programs in Southern California? This specialized training is helping meet a continuing demand in the healthcare field.

“Medical lab technicians, once licensed, have a scope of practice which allows them to perform 90 percent of the services and activities a clinical lab scientist (CLS) can do,” said Cynthia Dorroh, division dean of Allied Health & Public Safety. “In California, clinical labs can staff four MLTs for every CLS, providing a cost-effective solution to this workforce shortage and generating job opportunities for MLTs.”

The MLT program at COC prepares students for the national licensing exam for MLTs, making them eligible for state licensure and employment in clinical laboratories, academia and industry. Students attend classroom lectures, laboratories and hundreds of hours of clinical training in state-of-the-art clinical laboratories in our region.

Halfway through COC’s MLT program, Jeffrey Donovan has been a lab assistant and phlebotomist for nearly 20 years. He said he came to the program in response to changes in the industry, with more certifications and training being required of professionals in his field. He also said the MLT program is helping him in his longer-term quest to become a clinical lab scientist.

“COC’s MLT professors are amazing. All their professors are working clinical lab scientists, so their knowledge base is far above that of an MLT,” he said. “They have really raised the bar. I mean, they have a doctor (Hencelyn Chu, PhD) as their director.”

This new licensure in the state of California allows MLTs to function in a scope of practice filling many roles and positions of increasing demand in hospitals, specialty labs, outpatient settings and research.

Dorroh said there will be increases in the volume of laboratory testing in the coming years related to healthcare advances, people living longer, and access to care. This, coupled with a workforce shortage in clinical laboratories, will generate many job opportunities. With that, healthcare is predicted to remain the largest source of job growth in the coming years.

Further fueling demand is the fact that COC’s program is one of only seven approved and functioning MLT programs in the entire state of California.

One of the many cool things COC’s MLT students got to experience recently was creating a video about their program, which earned them third place in a video contest for this year’s Medical Lab Professionals Week.

With such a bright future in the medical field, training to become a Medical Lab Technician presents an amazing opportunity.

“Several of our first MLT graduates were the first in their families to ever go to college,” Dorroh said. “The affordability of this degree option, coupled with the opportunity for gainful employment, is a win-win situation which can transform lives, and this inspires and ripples out into their family when siblings and cousins see that college and this program can be achieved.”

For more information about this program, please contact Hencelyn Chu, PhD, MLS (ASCP), program director, MLT, at hencelyn.chu@canyons.edu.
An educator at heart, Cynthia Dorroh comes from a nursing background, having worked in a variety of patient care and leadership roles in acute care hospital settings for many years. While working as an infection control coordinator, she was the primary contact with multiple public health agencies and departments. This broadened her focus and she returned to school for a higher degree.

While completing her master’s in nursing with a focus on education, she was involved with a nursing education program and fell in love with teaching. She advanced quickly to become an adjunct faculty member, then full-time faculty, and eventually became tenured. Consistent with her early years, she enjoyed working with many disciplines and was involved in student success initiatives on the campus. She then became an assistant nursing program director, and moved up the ladder to nursing program director, associate dean, and eventually dean.

She said the best part of her job is working with a variety of people.

“I get to work with an incredible team who are very talented and dedicated to both student success and meeting our community’s needs,” she said. “I enjoy working in an ever-expanding role due to advances in my career, as well as participating in activities designed to better serve student needs.”

Courses Offered in Medical Lab Technology

Clinical Hematology Lecture (MLT 110); Clinical Hematology Lab (MLT 110L); Clinical Urinalysis Lecture (MLT 112); Clinical Urinalysis Lab (MLT 112L); Clinical Coagulation Lecture (MLT 114); Clinical Coagulation Lab (MLT 114L); Clinical Microbiology Lecture (MLT 116); Clinical Microbiology Lab (MLT 116L); Clinical Immunology-Immunohematology Lecture (MLT 118); Clinical Immunology-Immunohematology Lab (MLT 118L); Clinical Chemistry I Lecture (MLT 120); Clinical Chemistry I Lab (MLT 120L); Clinical Chemistry II Lecture (MLT 124); Clinical Chemistry II Lab (MLT 124L); Clinical Hematology-Urinalysis-Coagulation Practicum (MLT 128); Clinical Microbiology Practicum (MLT 129); Clinical Immunology-Immunohematology Practicum (MLT 130); and Clinical Chemistry Practicum (MLT 131).

For prerequisite information visit www.canyons.edu/departments/MLT
The Fast Track Institute at College of the Canyons provides fast-paced, intensive, job-preparation programs for job seekers, recent high-school graduates, mid-career professionals, and others looking for opportunities to quickly jump-start their careers. Fast Track courses do not yield college credit but provide entry-level skills in high-demand jobs with growth potential.

At the successful conclusion of training, students are invited to a focused job fair where Fast Track boasts a 70-90 percent job placement success rate.

Most Fast Track courses take only a few months to complete, and courses are typically offered as intensive day and evening classes upwards of 40 hours a week. Because of the rigorous format, students must attend an orientation prior to the start of the program to fully prepare for the commitment. Call the Fast Track office for orientation information at (661) 362-3521.

The cost of Fast Track training may be waived based on applicant eligibility.

Current Fast Track Institute Program:
CNC Machinist Training Beginning Late April 2014
The Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Machinist training program is for candidates seeking entry-level positions in CNC manufacturing operations and a long-term career path in manufacturing. The program is offered over eight weeks for a total of 280 hours. According to Employer Survey, Entry Wage: $11-$15/hr; 1-Year Wage: $13-$17/hr.

COMING THIS SUMMER AND FALL
Engineering Technician Training Program
Similar to the Draftsman, the Engineering Technician works with design engineers carrying out the design components of CAD 3D modeling using SolidWorks® 3D Modeling Software.

Manufacturing Assembler & Test Technician Training Program (MATT)
The MATT program prepares students in assembly and test procedures for biomedical, aerospace, and other high tech industries.

Find Fast Track program dates and orientation information in future editions of Career Insider or contact the Fast Track office at (661) 362-3521.

For more information visit www.canyonsecondev.org/businessunits/fasttrack

Occupational Profile: Medical Lab Technicians

Due to ongoing trends such as a growing and aging population that require more health services, new diagnoses/treatment technologies, and increased government funding for healthcare, the employment growth rate is expected to increase by 15 percent between 2010 and 2020, both locally and nationally.

Los Angeles County employs the largest volume of MLTs in the country, with average salaries of approximately $39,950 per year. With the shortage of lab practitioners, salaries are expected to increase higher than the current average. The current salary range for California is $27,600-$66,100 per year, versus $24,800-$57,700 per year nationally.

For more industry and career information, visit the following resources:
O*NET OnLine at ONetOnline.org/
The Bureau of Labor Statistics at www.BLS.gov/ooh
Accounting | Administration of Justice | Administrative Assistant | American Sign Language Interpreting
Animation Production | Architectural Drafting | Automotive Technology | Commercial Photography
Computer Applications | Computer Networking | Culinary Arts | Customer Service | Early Childhood Education
Electronic Systems Technology | Emergency Medical Technician | Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management
Filmmaking | Fire Technology | Graphic & Multimedia Design | Hotel & Restaurant Management
Human Resources Management | Interior Design | Land Surveying | Manufacturing Technology | Marketing
Medical Laboratory Technician | Medical Office Administrative Assistant | Nursing | Paralegal Studies | Real Estate
Retail Management | Solar Energy Technician | Sound Arts | Sports Medicine | Video Game Animation
Water Systems Technology | Welding Technology | Wine Studies