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New PTA Program Gains Accreditation and 100% Licensure Exam Success

Local college launches healthcare program to breakdown healthcare barriers

PALM DESERT, CA (September 16, 2024) College of the Desert is proud to announce that its newest healthcare initiative, the Physical Therapist Assistant Program, has achieved full accreditation. This program offers an affordable path for aspiring physical therapist assistants to receive a quality education while staying in the Coachella Valley.

The Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program at College of the Desert was awarded accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). This accreditation is valid until its renewal in April 2029.

Its augural cohort received a 100% pass rate on their licensure exam, allowing every participant to become fully licensed Physical Therapist Assistants with an accredited education.

The program prepares students to become licensed professionals to work alongside physical therapists in providing patient care aimed at restoring the patient's maximal function. Students engage in a well-rounded curriculum which includes:

- Functional Anatomy/Biomechanics
- Clinical Pathology
- Orthopedic Rehabilitation
- Neurologic Rehabilitation
- Clinical Internships

The PTA program is a two-year long program. The first year is dedicated to completing prerequisite courses. In the second year, also called the technical phase, students complete the dedicated PTA courses including their clinical internships at local healthcare facilities. The technical phase is completed across three semesters: summer, fall and spring.

"This program is not only helping students who want to be in healthcare, but also the whole Coachella Valley," said Dr. Matthew Wilson, Director of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program. "Once students complete the program, they will be able to work as rehabilitation professionals and help clinical partners provide a high level of care to the surrounding community."

With an active aging population in the Coachella Valley, the need for rehabilitation professions including physical therapist assistants is growing. More qualified physical therapist assistants will improve access to quality care and patients will be able to receive treatment in a timely manner.

The program accommodates up to 25 students and students complete the program in a cohort model. Graduates of the program will become healthcare professionals with the potential to earn up to \$75,000 as their starting salary.

For more information on the PTA program, visit:

<https://www.collegeofthedesert.edu/students/acad-prog/health-sciences/physical-therapy-asst/default.php>.

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