

CSN Students, Faculty Build COVID-19 Specimen Collection Kits

The college's Medical Laboratory program partners with public health officials

June 22, 2020 – In the ongoing effort to help the community, future laboratory scientists at the College of Southern Nevada are lending their skills to the fight against COVID-19 by preparing specimen collection kits for front-line public health officials.

Students from the Medical Laboratory program, along with their instructors, are volunteering their time and expertise and working in CSN's lab spaces to put the specimen collection kits together. Approximately 2,000 kits are then delivered each week to the Southern Nevada Public Health Laboratory, a division of the Southern Nevada Health District.

"I am pleased to see our that students and faculty are stepping up to help fight this pandemic," said CSN President Dr. Federico Zaragoza. "CSN is proud to join other healthcare educators to assist our public health authorities in any way we can."

When a person is tested for COVID-19, a medical professional inserts a swab into the nose of the patient to extract a sample. That swab must then be placed in a transport tube until it can be tested in a laboratory, which is where CSN's team comes in. Students and faculty are preparing sample collection kits that include a pre-packaged sterile swab and a transport tube containing a sterile liquid in a sealed biohazard bag. Ensuring that the system for constructing the kits is hygienic is critical to maintaining the integrity of the testing process.

"Our students have been training for this exact kind of work," said Professor Pat Armour, who managed the Southern Nevada Public Health Laboratory before joining CSN to teach. "If there is one thing that's been a constant over the course of their education, it has been developing good clinical laboratory skills. This is a real-world training exercise for these students, many of whom will soon be working in the very labs that process collection kits like these."

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