**For immediate release**

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**Media contact:**

**Kirstin Olmstead, 907-786-1435, 907-748-1682 (cell), kbolmstead@alaska.edu**

**UAA to launch Surgical Technology program in response to industry need**

The University of Alaska Anchorage will launch a new Surgical Technology program this fall, responding to a need identified by local health care providers who find it difficult to fill vacant positions.

Surgical technologists assist surgeons by preparing the operating room, maintaining a sterile environment, and caring for surgical equipment and supplies. Surgical case management, wound care and closure, and patient care and safety are part of a surgical technologist’s responsibilities.

“Surgical technologists are a valuable part of the operating room team, and we face a severe shortage in Alaska,” said Jeff Sedlack, medical director of surgical services at Providence Alaska Medical Center. “This means we have to recruit staff from out of state. UAA’s program will help increase the pool of qualified applicants here, filling a vital staffing need.”

In 2015, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development surveyed health care providers likely to have employed surgical technologists. Ninety-three percent of respondents reported difficulty filling openings for these positions during the previous year. The department also reported that from 2014-2024 the number of new surgical technologist positions in Alaska is expected to grow by nearly 13 percent.

Leaders at Providence Alaska Medical Center first approached the UAA College of Health about the possibility of developing a program to train entry-level surgical technologists. In response, UAA conducted a feasibility study revealing Alaska’s ongoing need for the program, which the University of Alaska Board of Regents approved in March.

“The new Surgical Technology program is a win for our students and our state,” said Bill Hogan, dean of the College of Health. “It trains students for a career with strong job placement, while simultaneously meeting the needs of Alaska’s health care sector.”

UAA’s Associate of Applied Science degree in surgical technology is a 63-credit-hour program that requires a combination of classroom learning and a 600-hour clinical practicum. The College of Health is seeking program-specific accreditation for the new degree through the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs. Once the program is accredited, graduates will be eligible to take the certified surgical technician exam.

(MORE)

UAA SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM, 2 OF 2

Donations from Providence Alaska Medical Center, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Alaska Regional Hospital, Alaska Trauma and Acute Care Surgery LLC, and Mat-Su Regional Medical Center provided funding for the program.

For more information about the Surgical Technology program, contact Robin Wahto, director of the School of Allied Health, at 907-786-6932.

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