



A student in Holyoke Community College's associate of science in nursing degree program tends to a "patient" — or nursing mannequin — during a training exercise at the college's Center for Health Education & Simulation. (SUBMITTED PHOTO)

ETC.

Nursing program gets top ranking

Holyoke Community College's associate degree program in nursing was ranked the highest in the Pioneer Valley by Nursing Schools Almanac, an organization that provides an annual overview of nursing programs across the country.

In its 2021 rankings, Nursing Schools Almanac listed HCC ahead of all other associate of science in nursing degree (ADN) programs in Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin counties. Overall, HCC's ADN program was ranked No. 7 in Massachusetts.

For the 2021 rankings of ADN programs, the research team at Nursing Schools Almanac compiled an extensive database of student performance on the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN). Aspiring registered nurses in the United States must pass the exam before they may begin to practice.

"Student performance on the NCLEX-RN exam provides an excellent benchmark for comparing the relative quality of associate degree programs," Nursing Almanac explains in a prologue to its rankings. For HCC, the Almanac reported an 87.7% NCLEX-RN pass rate among first-time test takers with data analyzed from 2011 to 2020.

HCC's nursing programs routinely earn top marks from national evaluation organizations. In 2020, Nursing Process, a national online guide to health care education, ranked HCC's ADN the best in all four counties of Western Mass.

Earlier this year, HCC's licensed practical nursing (LPN) program was ranked the No. 3 LPN program in Massachusetts for 2021 — and best in Western Massachusetts — by **Practical Nursing.org**, another college nursing guide.