

HCC delivers \$3.77M in relief aid to students

HOLYOKE – Just when they might need it most, students at Holyoke Community College are getting a holiday gift from the college totaling \$3.77 million.

The money is part of CARES Act pandemic relief funds provided by the federal government.

More than 3,500 eligible HCC students have each received, or will soon receive, block grants of \$600 to \$2,500, depending on their enrollment status and Expected Family Contribution as deter-

mined by their financial aid eligibility. The average grant is about \$1,000.

The cash grants are unrestricted, meaning students can use them however they want, and the money does not need to be repaid. Accepting the money also will not reduce a student's financial aid award.

"I received my CARES Act money transfer late last week," said HCC student Jennifer Lagoy, a Foundations of Health major from Russell. "It was a great surprise, very much appreciated

with the holidays upon us and needing to buy some last-minute gifts and a pay my home heating bill."

This is the fourth semester in a row that HCC has provided pandemic relief funds directly to students. The federal CARES Act (Conavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act) provides funding to students to offset the expenses they might have incurred when colleges switched from face-to-face to remote learning. That could mean having to buy a computer, buying or upgrading

internet access, or paying increased utility costs from being home, among other expenses.

"HCC has received a total of about \$10.6 million from federal and state allocations designated directly for student relief during the pandemic," said Narayan Sampath, HCC vice president of Administration and Finance. "With the holidays around the corner, we wanted to provide some more relief to students who continue to face numerous challenges because of the pandemic."