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Gateway students get taste of work in medical offices

Mock visits simulate real life

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EDGEWOOD - Sixteen medical assisting and medical information technology students at Gateway Community and Technical College saw 15 patients within two hours on Wednesday.

But it was just for practice.

"Today we did a mock office visit," said Jackie Freeman, an assistant professor at Gateway and the program coordinator for medical assisting. "We had mock patients and we did a circular flow - check-in, vitals, seeing physicians, checkout, paperwork was processed, and billing was done."

Freeman said for the 10 medical assisting students and six medical information technology students, it was a close approximation of the student's future work environments.

"It was a true-life experience," said Freeman. "They had a chance to see what it was like in the real world. The students learned what's expected of them and how to interact with patients."

Student Debbie Frye will graduate in May. She said the mock office visit was realistic.

"It was so realistic because it was exactly how it would be if we were at a doctor's office," said Frye. "What I learned is mainly how to talk to the patients and try to treat them with respect so that they could feel comfortable in the setting - some people get nervous about going to the doctor's office."

Frye didn't have an interest in working in a pediatric office until she worked with some children during the office visit.

"When I first started in the medication assisting program I was really not leaning at all toward pediatrics," said Frye.

"I have five children of my own and those days are over and done with, but after doing the exercise with the children it made me think twice."

The mother of a diabetic, Frye has also thought about working in endocrinology.

Twenty-four high school students from area technology centers shadowed the Gateway students.

"It helped those students see what happens at Gateway to see what the program is about," Freeman said.
