VOCA TIONAL NURSING PROGRAM HANDBOOK
National University System Administration
Jerry C. Lee, Ed.D., Chancellor of the National University System
Virginia E. Beneke, M.B.A., Vice Chancellor, Marketing and Communications
Randy C. Frish, Esq., Vice Chancellor, Business and Administration
Nancy Rohland-Heinrich, M.B.A., Vice Chancellor, Pre-College Programs
Julie Lanthier Bandy, M.P.A., Associate Vice Chancellor, Marketing
Carol A. Tiernan, B.A., Associate Vice Chancellor, Marketing
Beth Schechter, B.A., Associate Vice Chancellor, Communications

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Spectrum Pacific Learning
WestMed College
Vocational Nursing Program Handbook

Affiliation, Licensure, and Accreditation
WestMed College is an affiliate of the National University System.
WestMed College is licensed by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education, California Department of Consumer Affairs.
WestMed College, San Jose is approved by the Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians (BVNPT).
WestMed College, Merced is provisionally approved by the Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians (BVNPT).
The San Jose Main Campus and Merced Branch Campus of WestMed College are accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges.

Campus Locations
WestMed College (San Jose) – Main Campus
3031 Tisch Way, Suite 8PW
San Jose, CA 95128-2541
Phone: (408) 236-1170
Fax: (408) 236-1180

WestMed College (Merced) – Branch Campus
330 East Yosemite Avenue, Suite 201
Merced, CA 95340-9165
Phone: (209) 386-6300
Fax: (209) 386-6335

This handbook was last reviewed in August 2013.
This handbook is not a contract, and the institution reserves the right to change policies without notice to students.
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The Vocational Nursing Program at WestMed College adheres to the following beliefs:

a) Person
Persons are holistic, individual human beings possessing beliefs and values about life and health, which influence their behavior and adaptation to varying environments. They are capable of assuming responsibilities and expressing behavior in the process of self-actualization.

b) Society
Society is composed of individuals, families, and communities comprised of individuals of both genders, with varying needs, ages, cultures, attributes and capabilities for learning, coping, and adapting. The basic unit of society is the family. The purpose of a family is to meet the needs of its members for loving, caring, protecting, nurturing, and teaching that enable people to successfully participate in life and in the larger units of society. Families join together to form communities based on similar factors such as geography, ethnic background, interests, and common goals. Social systems are organized for the protection, education, culturalization, and welfare of society members.

c) Health
Health is a dynamic state of human functioning whereby the person continually adapts to internal and external stressors in an attempt to achieve maximum potential for daily living. Health is ever changing and is described as existing on an illness-wellness continuum.

d) Wellness
Wellness is the consequence of an adaptive response, physically, intellectually, psychologically, socio-culturally, and spiritually, to internal and external stimuli in order to maintain equilibrium and comfort. Wellness is a self-perceived matter for each person or group, and is the extent to which the client can optimally function in all aspects of living and growing.

e) Illness
Illness is the absence of an adaptive response to internal or external stressors which results in a lack of equilibrium and/or comfort.

f) Education
Education is a goal-directed process that changes behavior through the acquisition of cognitive, psychomotor, and affective learning. Education is an active rather than a passive process. Education consists of teaching and learning.

g) Teaching
Teaching is a cooperative and collaborative venture in which the teacher serves as guide, role model, facilitator, coach, and resource person for learners engaged in the leaning process.

h) Learning
Learning occurs in which there is a change in the cognitive, psychomotor skills, or affective domains. Learning is a life-long process which requires active participation on the part of the learner and interaction with the teacher.

i) Nursing
Nursing is the art and science of assisting clients in the promotion and maintenance of health, the prevention of illness, and the promotion of recovery, or to a peaceful death, for clients along the entire birth-death continuum. The essence of nursing is caring. Caring actions include communication, positive regard, support and physical interventions on the part of the nurse.
Conceptual Framework

Based on the philosophy of the Vocational Nursing Program, the conceptual framework for the curriculum includes the following threads that provide the framework for the curriculum.

Clinical problem solving (Nursing Process). The nursing process is used by the nurse to identify and treat patients in a variety of settings, from diverse cultures, and all ages across the lifespan. The nursing process includes data collection, planning, implementation and evaluation.

Client-centered Holistic Nursing. Client-centered care is focused on goals designed to reflect the client’s highest possible level of wellness and independent function. Holistic nursing is comprehensive total nursing care that considers the physical, emotional, social, economic, spiritual, and sexual needs of the client as well as the response to the illness and the effect of the illness on the person’s ability to meet self-care needs in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. This includes the protection of client and healthcare personnel. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs is used as a framework to guide in providing prioritized care.

Communication. Communication includes verbal, non-verbal, and written. Therapeutic communication is used with clients and professional communication is used with members of the health care team. Communication is the giving, receiving, and interpreting of information through any of the senses.

Nutrition. Nutrition is a vital component of the care for clients of all ages.

Pharmacology. Pharmacology is the science that deals with the origin, nature, chemistry, effects, and uses of medication. Nurses administer medications to clients of all ages.

Legal and Ethical. The nurse must be aware of the legal and ethical implications of nursing practice. The Nurse Practice Act regulates nursing practice. The Board of Nursing and the Professional organizations develop standards of practice and ethical codes of practice.

Life cycle development. Nurses work with clients from birth through death.

Cultural awareness and sensitivity. Nurses must have an understanding and tolerance of all cultures and lifestyles. Transcultural nursing is providing care for clients while taking into consideration their religious and socio-cultural backgrounds. The nurse interacts with many clients from diverse cultural backgrounds and across a variety of environments. Cultural awareness is developing sensitivity and understanding of another ethnic group. This usually involves changes in attitudes and values. Awareness and sensitivity also refer to the qualities of openness and flexibility that people develop in relation to others.

Health Teaching. The nurse has an important role in educating clients to assist in promoting a change in behavior. Health promotion and maintenance are included.

Vocational Nurse (VN) Certificate Program

Program Description

Upon completion of this entry level healthcare provider certificate, a graduate can render basic nursing care to a population needing healthcare primarily in the skilled nursing facility and ambulatory setting. Individuals who complete this program should work under the supervision of a physician or registered nurse and not as independent practitioners. The program will focus on nursing outcomes and evidence-based practice. It will promote a holistic vocational nurse who is client-centered, professional, and compassionate. Upon completion of the program, student must successfully pass the National Council Licensing Examination for Vocational Nurses to practice. Target population for this program will include professionals with backgrounds in medical assisting, certified nursing assistants, individuals seeking second careers, and anyone interested in allied health.

Program Learning Outcomes

Graduates of this program will be able to:

• Know the scope of the maximum utilization of the licensed vocational nurse as specified by the Nursing Practice Act.
• Utilize the nursing process in assessing, evaluating, planning, and implementing nursing care for the individual client or group.
• Identify the client’s status on the wellness-illness continuum and its impact on well-being.
• Collaborate with the healthcare team in promoting and maintaining health, preventing disease and disability, caring for and rehabilitating individuals who are experiencing an altered health state and contributing to the ultimate quality of life until death.
• Provide safe, effective and individualized care for clients and considers diversity in all aspects of client care, including: gender, age, ethnicity, income level, sexual orientation, health status, religion, spirituality, political beliefs, national origin and lifestyle.
• Use therapeutic communication for client care and education.
• Act in a professional manner, upholding ethical and legal standards and safeguard confidential information in providing evidence based care.
• Function as a committed life-long learner.
### Alignment of Terminal and Level Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terminal Objectives</th>
<th>Term I Objectives</th>
<th>Term II Objectives</th>
<th>Term III Objectives</th>
<th>Term IV Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know the scope of the maximum utilization of the vocational nurse as specified by the Nursing Practice Act.</td>
<td>Identify the scope of the role of the licensed vocational nurse as defined by law in California.</td>
<td>Describe the role of the vocational nurse in care of adults (including geriatric) with common medical and surgical and communicable disease problems.</td>
<td>Describe the role of the vocational nurse in care of maternal, pediatric, rehabilitation, and mental health clients.</td>
<td>Demonstrate the ability to function within the scope of vocational nursing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the client’s status on the wellness-illness continuum and its impact on well-being.</td>
<td>Describe the use of the wellness-illness continuum with clients.</td>
<td>Identify the adult (including geriatric) client’s status on the wellness-illness continuum when they have medical, surgical, or communicable diseases.</td>
<td>Identify the maternal, pediatric, rehabilitative, and mental health client’s status on the wellness-illness continuum and its impact on well-being.</td>
<td>Demonstrate the ability to identify the client’s status on the wellness-illness continuum and its impact on well-being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilize the nursing process in assessing, evaluating, planning, and implementing nursing care for the individual client or group.</td>
<td>Demonstrate fundamental nursing skills.</td>
<td>Apply the nursing process to provide nursing care for adults (including geriatric) with medical, surgical, and communicable diseases.</td>
<td>Apply the nursing process in the care of maternal, pediatric, rehabilitation, and mental health clients.</td>
<td>Utilize the nursing process to collect data, diagnose, plan, implement, and evaluate care for clients.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide safe, effective, and individualized care for clients and consider diversity in all aspects of client care, including: gender, age, ethnicity, income level, sexual orientation, health status, religion, spirituality, political beliefs, national origin, and lifestyle.</td>
<td>Identify the components for safe, client-centered, culturally sensitive, holistic care.</td>
<td>Provide safe, caring, client-centered, culturally sensitive, holistic care to adults (including geriatric) with medical or surgical problems based on nursing, biological, behavioral, and humanistic principles.</td>
<td>Provide safe, caring, client-centered, holistic care to maternal, pediatric, rehabilitation, and mental health clients based on nursing, biological, behavioral, and humanistic principles.</td>
<td>Provide safe, caring, client-centered, holistic care for clients experiencing more complex medical, surgical, or psychosocial problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use therapeutic communication for client care and education.</td>
<td>Demonstrate how to assess pain and teach the client to manage chronic pain.</td>
<td>Describe and apply therapeutic communication and client teaching skills with adults (including geriatric).</td>
<td>Apply therapeutic communication and client teaching skills with maternal, pediatric, rehabilitation, and mental health clients.</td>
<td>Apply communication and teaching skills in nursing practice, leadership, and management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborate with the healthcare team in promoting and maintaining health, preventing disease and disability, caring for and rehabilitating individuals who are experiencing an altered health state and contributing to the ultimate quality of life until death.</td>
<td>Identify the health care team and role of the vocational nurse within the team.</td>
<td>Interact with members of the health care team.</td>
<td>Participate as a team member to achieve the goals of clients in specialty areas.</td>
<td>Demonstrate the ability to function as an effective manager and team leader within the scope of vocational nursing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Act in a professional manner upholding ethical and legal standards and safeguarding confidential information in providing evidence-based care.</td>
<td>Identify the ethical and legal standards that safeguard clients including confidential information.</td>
<td>Apply ethical and legal standards including confidentiality in care of adults (including geriatric).</td>
<td>Apply ethical and legal standards including confidentiality in the care of maternal, pediatric, rehabilitation, and mental health clients.</td>
<td>Demonstrate the ability to apply ethical and legal standards in providing nursing care and in leadership and management within the scope of vocational nursing practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function as a committed life-long learner.</td>
<td>Describe a committed life-long learner.</td>
<td>Use resources in addition to text and lecture in planning client care.</td>
<td>Begin to demonstrate the ability to function as a life-long learner.</td>
<td>Demonstrate the ability to function as a life-long learner.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Curriculum Threads and Term Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum Thread</th>
<th>Term I</th>
<th>Term II</th>
<th>Term III</th>
<th>Term IV</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Client-Centered, Holistic Nursing</td>
<td>Holistic nursing care, basic human needs, Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, concepts of health, illness, wellness-illness continuum, health promotion and disease prevention, client safety, first aid, and basic nursing procedures.</td>
<td>Care of the adult (including geriatric) client with medical and surgical health problems.</td>
<td>Care of the rehabilitation, mental health, maternity, and pediatric clients.</td>
<td>Client-centered, holistic care of clients throughout the life cycle. Concepts of rehabilitation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>Concepts of basic nutrition needs for individuals throughout the lifespan.</td>
<td>Fluid and electrolyte balance and nutritional needs of the adult (including geriatric) with disease processes.</td>
<td>Nutritional needs for rehabilitation, mental health, maternity, and pediatric clients.</td>
<td>Apply nutrition concepts in the care of clients. Demonstrate the ability to work with dieticians and nutritionists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal and Ethical</td>
<td>Ethical and legal aspects of vocational nursing, Nurse Practice Act, role and responsibility of health care team members, and client rights and responsibilities.</td>
<td>Care of the terminally ill. Standard precautions. Legal aspects of communicable diseases.</td>
<td>Advanced directives, health care power of attorney, and end of life care. Practice within legal and ethical standards.</td>
<td>Role of the vocational nurse in leadership and management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity</td>
<td>Concepts of culture, diversity, transcultural nursing care, and spirituality.</td>
<td>Culture, race, ethnic and religious issues related to hospitalized adult (including geriatric) clients.</td>
<td>Cultural aspects of maternal, pediatric, rehabilitation, and mental health client care.</td>
<td>Provide culturally sensitive nursing care to diverse clients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Teaching</td>
<td>Areas for health teaching related to nutrition across the lifespan and management of chronic pain. Preoperative teaching.</td>
<td>Teaching and learning theories the vocational nurse can use in a variety of settings. Health teaching with adult (including geriatric) clients.</td>
<td>Health teaching with rehabilitation, mental health, maternal, and pediatric clients.</td>
<td>Provide client and family teaching in a variety of clinical settings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clinical Objectives
The VN program will prepare the student to:
• Research patient charts in preparation for becoming an active member of the health care team.
• Lead and supervise other members of the health care team.
• Evaluate the effectiveness of nursing care.
• Update nursing care plans.
• Provide safe, effective, individualized care for patients considering diversity at all levels of health care.
• Act in a professional manner upholding ethical and medical legal issues and contributing towards a high standard of patient care.

Clinical Requirements
WestMed College requires that VN Program students complete the following no later than the end of the first month of the program start:
• Physical exam within 6 months of the start of the program indicating the student is able to perform the duties expected in the clinical setting.
• Immunizations* as indicated by the clinical facilities including:
  TDAP (Diptheria, Tetanus within 10 years)
  MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
  Hepatitis B series (or waiver)
  Varicella
• TB test within six months of the start of the program OR chest x-ray report within two years of the program start if positive TB test.
• Background check (Merced only)
• Drug screen (Merced only)
• Maintain a Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certificate (BLS-Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers with American Heart Association curriculum).
• Livescan may be required for some clinical sites.

*In lieu of immunizations, titer may be obtained but must show immunity. History of the disease is not satisfactory to show immunity.

Role of the Student Vocational Nurse in Clinical
The VN student may provide nursing services under the supervision and assignment of a qualified clinical nurse instructor when these services are part of his or her course of study.

The VN student is required to:
• Safeguard patient/client health and safety;
• Act in a professional manner;
• Perform and document patient/client care in accordance with standards of the profession;
• Adhere to standards of the profession and shall incorporate ethical and behavioral standards of professional practice, which include but are not limited to the following:
  • maintain current knowledge and skills for safe and competent practice;
  • maintain patient/client confidentiality;
  • maintain professional boundaries with patient/client; and
  • abstain from chemical and substance abuse.

Orientation to the Unit Checklist
Orientation should include a tour of the facility, nursing unit, the cafeteria, meeting areas for pre- and/or post-conference meetings, location of patient records, supplies, equipment, medications, restroom, refrigerator, and location of report. An empty room should be located that will allow students to observe operation of the call system, bed, television, lights, patient equipment such as oxygen, and other items. At each location, the student is expected to complete an orientation checklist.

Evaluation of Clinical Progress
Each week while in clinical facilities, students receive weekly feedback on performance based on objectives. If the instructor decides additional time in the lab is indicated to prepare the student for the following week, a skills lab referral is made. The student is expected to complete the activity in the skills lab before the next scheduled clinical day. If at any point the clinical instructor feels the student is unsafe or unprepared for clinical, he or she will be sent home for the rest of the day and expected to make up the time. Unsafe practice may result in dismissal from the program.

Academic Policies and Procedures
Policies and procedures here are offered in addition to those contained within the Course Catalog. Please refer to the General Catalog for detailed descriptions of academic policies.

The Student's Role
Students are required to demonstrate the professional behavior, knowledge, and skills learned during all portions of training.

Students must observe and perform skills and procedures as directed by the instructor during lab and clinical training. If the student observes a technique or procedure performed differently from the way it was demonstrated in the classroom, the student may request an explanation from the instructor about the differences in techniques.
Techniques presented during classroom/lab and clinical instructions may not be the only appropriate way to perform procedures. Policies, procedures, and practices differ by facility.

During the clinical externship, if a student is not sure how to complete any activity or skill, the student should seek assistance from the instructor.

Students are required to attend pre- and post-conference meetings. This is a vital learning opportunity and will provide students a means to ask questions of the clinical nurse instructor.

Students should be prepared to report early to clinical sites and stay late at times in order to complete documentation and required tasks. Students must immediately contact the instructor if any problems develop during the performance of the clinical internship. Students must keep a copy of this handbook during their clinical experience for the student’s reference and as a reference for supervisors.

**Schedule Changes**

Although the school tries to accommodate student schedule requests, the clinical schedule is subject to change. The school will notify the student as soon as possible when changes occur.

**Working with the clinical site staff**

At all times the student should present an eager-to-learn attitude. It may be assumed that a student's clinical experience may be related to the amount of enthusiasm shown. Asking questions about patient care is an important part of the clinical experience. Perception and insight should guide the student at the times when questioning may not be possible. Never argue with clinical site staff. Should discord develop at the clinical site that is not easily resolved, the instructor should be notified immediately. The instructor, at his/her discretion, will contact the program director. All issues should be reported the next working day to the program director in writing.

**Other Policies**

Cell phones, pagers, and electronic communication devices must be turned off or put in vibrate mode and are not allowed to be used in the classroom, computer lab, or clinical sites at any time except as they relate to the use of electronic materials for class, lab, or clinical and with the approval of the instructor.

Students must be courteous during all aspects of the program. Talking during any type of lecture is not permitted as it is disruptive to the learning process. The instructor can dismiss any student who is causing a disruption for the remainder of the day of occurrence.

At the end of class students are required to return the facilities to their original arrangement and clean up any debris around their area. Eating is not permitted in the classroom, skills lab, or clinical.

**General Safety Guidelines for Clinical Experiences**

In all clinical experiences students must follow the clinical guidelines presented during each orientation.

**SHARPS:** All syringes must be disposed of in red sharps receptacles provided for that purpose. Syringes should not be recapped after use. If impaled by a sharp, students should notify their clinical instructor as soon as possible. Students will be referred for medical treatment as outlined for the injury. It is highly recommended that all students receive the complete Hepatitis B immunization series and produce a positive titer prior to beginning their nursing education program. In addition, many of the clinical agencies require Hepatitis B vaccination (or signature of waiver).

**EXPOSURE TO SECRETIONS:** Prior to every procedure, every student/faculty member is required to wash their hands with soap and water, rubbing the hands together vigorously for 15 seconds. Universal precautions should always be followed.

**INJURY DURING CLINICAL EXPERIENCE:** Any student who sustains an injury during clinical laboratory experiences will be referred to the nearest hospital emergency room or urgent care clinic for immediate treatment. The student is personally responsible for the cost associated with treatment of any injury. It is highly recommended that all students carry personal health insurance.

**GUM CHEWING:** Chewing gum is prohibited during clinical experiences and while on the premises.

**SMOKING:** Smoking is prohibited during clinical experiences and while on the premises of clinical facilities. Students must make arrangements for addressing these needs before entering the premises and refrain until off the premises. It is advised that students avoid smoking prior to clinical experiences.

**Policy on Professional Appearance**

Students must adhere to the College’s policy on professional appearance in any clinical or non-clinical setting when representing WestMed College or completing nursing coursework. Students are provided with uniforms, which are the ONLY acceptable attire for students to wear in the clinical setting. Uniforms must be clean and unwrinkled.

Layers of clothing (such as t-shirts, turtlenecks, underwear) worn under the uniform must not be visible. The only
exception to this policy is appropriate, modest clothing dictated/customary by specific clinical agencies. You will be informed of such requirements at the clinical teaching facility.

Clean, all-white, closed-toe shoes and all-white socks are to be worn. Socks must cover the ankles. No sandals or flip-flops are permitted. No exposed, spring-heeled shoes are permitted.

Makeup should be applied with moderation. All tattoos must be completely covered at all times.

Artificial enhancement of any kind to the fingernails is prohibited, including polish and artificial components such as gel, acrylic, stones, etc.

No body scenting (including perfumes, splashes, lotions, colognes, etc.) of hair or skin is permitted. Patients/clients can respond negatively to any scents.

One pair of stud earrings, an engagement/wedding band, and a watch can be worn. No other jewelry is permitted. No body-piercing or jewelry/hardware is permitted at any time.

Hair must be kept clean, neat, confined (hair must not fall into face or bodies of others and be kept above the collar) and of natural coloring (no purple, blue, maroon, etc). Personal hygiene must be maintained by all students when attending. You may be dismissed from school and clinical if your appearance and personal grooming (offensive body odors, unclean hair, unkempt uniforms, etc.) falls below professional standards.

During cold or inclement weather, over-jackets or raincoats may be worn to facilities but must be stored inconspicuously during school/clinical hours.

The Student Handbook Agreement

To ensure that graduates of the WestMed nursing program are able to meet the legal requirements of the Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians (BVNPT), all newly admitted nursing students must enter into a student agreement. A copy of the Student Handbook Agreement is distributed at the WestMed student orientation, which is mandatory. The Student Handbook Agreement gives WestMed College the right to suspend or terminate a student's participation in the nursing program upon a showing that the student has:

- Committed acts or engaged in conduct that could constitute grounds for denial of an LVN license;
- Failed to demonstrate the requisite skills and qualifications to satisfy the requirements for an LVN license;
- Demonstrated other qualities or behaviors enumerated in the student agreement inconsistent with a recommendation for an LVN license from WestMed College.

The student agreement also authorizes WestMed to release to the BVNPT all pertinent information pertaining to the student's qualifications or fitness for a VN license.

List of Current Clinical Sites by Location

San Jose:
- Crestwood Behavioral Health Center, San Jose
- HCR Manor, Sunnyvale
- Mission Skilled, San Jose
- Mountain View Health Care Center, Mountain View
- Our Lady of Fatima Villa, Saratoga
- Subacute Saratoga, Saratoga
- Sunnyside Garden Assisted Living, Sunnyvale
- Valley House, Santa Clara
- White Blossom Care Center, San Jose
- Willow Glen Center, San Jose
- Woodlands Health Care Center, Los Gatos

Merced:
- Castle Family Health Centers, Atwater
- Dol Palos Memorial Hospital, Dos Palos
- Franciscan Alzheimer and Healthcare Center, Merced
- Hyland Health Care, Merced
- Madera Community Hospital, Madera
- UC Merced Health Services Clinic, Merced
- Mercy Medical Center, Merced