

**NOTICE OF INTENT**

**Form No. BAAC 01**

Section 1007.33(5)(d), Florida Statutes (F.S.), and Rule 6A-14.095, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), outline the requirements for Florida College System baccalaureate program proposals. The completed Notice of Intent form, incorporated in Rule 6A-14.095, F.A.C., Site Determined Baccalaureate Access, shall be submitted by the college president to the chancellor of the Florida College System at [ChancellorFCS@fldoe.org](mailto:ChancellorFCS@fldoe.org).

**CHECKLIST**

The notice of intent requires completion of the following components:

- Program summary
- Program description
- Workforce demand, supply, and unmet need
- Planning process

**FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM INSTITUTION INFORMATION**

Institution Name:	St. Petersburg College
Institution President:	Tonjua Williams, Ph.D.

## PROGRAM SUMMARY

1.1	Program name.	Bachelor of Applied Science Cardiopulmonary Sciences
1.2	Degree type.	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor of Science <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bachelor of Applied Science
1.3	How will the proposed degree program be delivered? (Check all that apply).	<input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-face (F2F) (Entire degree program delivered via F2F courses only) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completely online (Entire degree program delivered via online courses only) <input type="checkbox"/> Combination of face-to-face/online (Entire degree program delivered via a combination of F2F and online courses)
1.4	Degree Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code (6-Digit).	51.0908
1.5	Anticipated program implementation date.	Fall 2024
1.6	What are the primary pathways for admission to the program? Check all that apply.	<input type="checkbox"/> Associate in Arts (AA) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Associate in Science (AS) <input type="checkbox"/> Associate in Applied Science (AAS)  If you selected AS/AAS, please specify the program: <b>Associate of Science in Respiratory Care</b>
1.7	Is the degree program a STEM focus area?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
1.8	List program concentration(s) or track(s) (if applicable).	N/A

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

2.1 This section is the **executive summary** of this notice of intent. We recommend providing an abbreviated program description including but not limited to: the program demand, current supply, and unmet need in the college's service district; primary pathways to program admission; overview of program curriculum; career path and potential employment opportunities; and average starting salary. We encourage approximately 300 words for a sufficient description.

The scope of practice for Registered Respiratory Therapists (RRTs) is growing rapidly, especially in the state of Florida. The COVID 19 pandemic has accelerated that growth. There is an expanding body of research that suggests that this growing scope of practice, combined with the greater critical thinking skills required to effectively operate increasing sophisticated life support equipment, requires additional education beyond a 76-credit hour associate degree.

A Baccalaureate degree in Cardiopulmonary Sciences (BSCS) will provide the Registered Respiratory Therapist, who has completed the Associate of Science (AS) in Respiratory Care, the opportunity to keep pace with the advancement and requirements of the profession. This program will provide a broader-based curriculum that will lead to advanced credentials, as well as professional growth and development in leadership, management, education, and research. This proposed degree has evolved from the Baccalaureate in Applied Science in Health Services Administration for Respiratory Therapists (BAS HAS RT Sub plan) currently offered at St. Petersburg College. This proposed degree would include additional courses in the natural sciences, patient education, and advanced capstone experiences more specifically tailored to the needs of practicing Registered Respiratory Therapists. These additional courses included in the proposed degree would help practicing RRTs meet the more stringent requirements of the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA).

There is currently no Baccalaureate in Cardiopulmonary Sciences program in the Tampa Bay area, including Hillsborough, Pinellas, Manatee, and Sarasota Counties. Therefore St. Petersburg College has worked closely with Hillsborough Community College to develop a BSCS degree that meets the needs of both Colleges. Hillsborough Community College has been included in the planning process for this degree and has provided invaluable input on the degree's structure and curriculum.

The proposed curriculum would include a strong foundation in leadership, management, and health care delivery systems. It would also include an emphasis on public health fundamentals, a strong basis in the natural sciences, evidence-based research and practice, and a variety of technical aspects of the profession, including but not limited to Advanced Neonatal and Pediatric Respiratory Care, Advanced Cardiopulmonary Medicine, and Advanced Cardiopulmonary Physiology. All of the courses have already been developed using Quality Matters standards.

## WORKFORCE DEMAND, SUPPLY, AND UNMET NEED

3.1 Describe the workforce demand, supply, and unmet need for graduates of the program that incorporates, at a minimum, the shaded information from Sections 3.1.1 to 3.1.4. For proposed programs without a listed Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) linkage, provide a rationale for the identified SOC code(s). If using a SOC that is not on the CIP to SOC crosswalk, please justify why the SOC aligns with the baccalaureate program.

The proposed degree would also offer two technical certificates that correspond to specialty credentials currently offered by the National Board of Respiratory Care (NBRC). The advanced Neonatal/Pediatric Certificate would correspond to the NBRC's Neonatal Pediatric Specialty (NPS) credential, the Adult Critical Care credential would correspond to the NBRC's Adult Critical Care Specialist Credential.

As figure 3.1.1 indicates, there is strong demand for such a program in the Tampa Bay area. Since this program is offered entirely online, with no face-to-face requirements, it could also be attended by RRTs outside of its immediate service area.

The primary pathway for program admission would be graduates of Associate of Sciences Respiratory Care programs who have earned and maintained the Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT) credential from the National Board of Respiratory Care (NBRC). It is likely that a majority of those seeking program admission would be RRTs who are currently employed and have tuition reimbursement through their employers. The current average salary for an RRT in our service area is \$60,923.

RRTs would seek enrollment to expand their clinical skill set to advance up their employer's "clinical ladder", which provides additional pay and benefits to those RRTs who have stronger clinical skill sets and higher levels of education. This degree could also be used to help RRTs advance into more lucrative positions in management, marketing, research, or education. In addition, this program has support from national and state respiratory care organizations.

There is ample evidence there is a need for a BSCS program in the Tampa Bay area, and this proposal for St. Petersburg College to convert its existing Baccalaureate in Applied Science in Health Services Administration for Respiratory Therapists (BAS HAS RT Sub plan) to a BSCS degree would be an excellent way to meet this need.

There is currently a shortage of qualified Registered Respiratory Therapists in the St. Petersburg College Service area, which includes Manatee and Sarasota Counties. It is estimated that there will be an average of 38 additional openings each year for Registered Respiratory Therapists in our service area, with an average annual salary of \$60,923. This data does not reflect the aging of the Respiratory Care workforce, which will lead to substantial numbers of retirements of currently practicing therapists. In a study conducted

with Boston Scientific, the American Association of Respiratory Care predicts that over 90,000 credentialed Respiratory Care Practitioners (RCPs) will retire by 2030. In addition to this shortage, there is considerable workforce demand for practicing therapists with the baccalaureate credential to more advanced clinical positions in neonatal intensive care units, adult critical and cardiac care, case management, patient navigator positions, respiratory education and management, and marketing.

The BSRT Working Group has categorized the requirements for the BSCS degree in the field in three categories as follows:

Category 1 Areas in RT that are already limited to BS level practitioners by existing regulation from a regulatory or accrediting body, such as CLIA, CoARC, or SACS

Blood Gas lab managers (CLIA) and complete check offs for CAP requirements  
Full time educators (Committee on Accreditation in Respiratory Care and SACS). Currently in some institutions faculty and lab adjuncts need a Bachelors, and didactic faculty, including adjuncts, need a master's degree, [preferably in respiratory care

Category 2. Areas in which the market already gives a strong preference to BS level practitioners, and where a majority of practitioners filling that role have a BS degree of higher.

Hospital educators

Department managers and directors, excluding management of blood gas labs

Clinical managers, including supervisors and leads, on some clinical ladders

Case managers

Risk Managers

Infection Control Personnel

Admission to Advanced Practice Respiratory Therapy (APRT) educational programs (It is likely admission to APRT educational programs will require the BSRT or its equivalent)

Category 3. Areas in which coursework in BS level programs would provide additional technical knowledge

Clinical Researchers

Care navigators

Advanced Credentials (ACCS, NPS, AC-E, Pulmonary Disease Educator (in future), PFT, Sleep)

Advanced Therapies & Diagnostics (lung ultrasound, Cath Lab, Bronchoscopy), Ethics,

Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation expanded on, Advanced Pharmacology, Advanced Life Support,

Insertion of (Mid-lines, PICC lines, and Central lines), Trauma Management, Advanced PFTs,

Pathophysiology, Sleep studies in depth, Cardiac Testing in depth, etc.

**DEMAND: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY (DEO) EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS**

3.1.1 The Excel spreadsheet below is set up with predefined formulas. To activate the spreadsheet, right click within the spreadsheet, go to “Worksheet Object”, and then “Open”. To exit, save any changes and exit out of the spreadsheet. Alternatively, double click anywhere on the table. To exit the spreadsheet, single click anywhere outside of the table.

**CLICK [HERE](#) FOR INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE DEMAND SECTION**

Occupation			Number of Jobs				Salary		Education	
Name/Title	SOC Code	County/ Region	2021	2029	**Level Change	***Total Job Openings	Average Hourly Wage	Annualized Salary	FL	BLS
Respiratory Therapists	29-1126	14	457	558	22.10	279	29.29	\$ 60,923	A	A
								\$ -		
								\$ -		
								\$ -		
						<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 29.29</b>	<b>\$ 60,923</b>	

\*Please replace the “Base Year” and “Projected Year” headers with the years reflected in the projections portal (e.g., Base Year is 2019, Projected Year is 2027).

\*\*Please note that the “Level Change” column in Table 3.1.1 corresponds to the “Percent Growth” employment projections data produced by the DEO.







**ESTIMATES OF UNMET NEED**

3.1.4 The Excel spreadsheet below is set up with predefined formulas. To activate the spreadsheet, right click within the spreadsheet, go to “Worksheet Object”, and then “Open”. To exit, save any changes and exit out of the spreadsheet. Alternatively, double click anywhere on the table. To exit the spreadsheet, single click anywhere outside of the table.

**CLICK [HERE](#) FOR INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE ESTIMATES OF UNMET NEED SECTION:** If institutions do not have data available for completers in the service district, please report statewide data. You may note these are statewide figures.

	Demand	Supply		Range of Estimated Unmet Need							
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(A-B)	(A-C)						
	Total Job Openings	Most Recent Year	5-year average or average of years available if less than 5 years	Difference	Difference						
DEO Total	35	22	16	13	19						
Other Totals				0	0						

3.2 Describe any other evidence of workforce demand and unmet need for graduates as selected by the institution, which may include qualitative or quantitative data and information not reflected in the data presented in Sections 3.1.1 to 3.1.4, such as local economic development initiatives, emerging industries in the area, or evidence of rapid growth.

There is a growing body of evidence, as documented in Appendix A, that the body of knowledge and scope of practice of respiratory care has grown so dramatically that it now requires a baccalaureate degree to practice at the highest level of practice. Therefore, the American Association of Respiratory Care (AARC) has issued a position statement that the baccalaureate should become the minimum entry to practice in the future and calling for its members to obtain baccalaureate degrees.

<http://www.aarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/issue-paper-entry-to-respiratory-therapy-practice-2030.pdf>

The Florida Society of Respiratory Care (FSRC) has also issued a position statement in favor of the baccalaureate.

A large group of respiratory care managers, educators, practitioners, and physicians have formed the BSRT Florida Working Group. This group have met during the past year to discuss issues related to advancing the baccalaureate here in Florida and have issued an executive summary of their findings. These documents can be reviewed at <https://www.fsrc.org/bsrt-florida>.

The Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) now requires therapists to hold a baccalaureate degree such as proposed here before they can manage an accredited blood gas lab.

Previously proposed legislation, such as the Breathe Act, that dealt with the role of Respiratory Care Practitioners (RCP) in telehealth, only allowed baccalaureate level therapists to participate in telehealth. (<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/hr2508/text/ih>).

In addition, there has been a bill placed before the New York State Assembly (S8484) proposing that the bachelor's degree as the entry level degree for the profession. <https://www.nyssrc.org/?p=1840>

3.3 If the education level for the occupation identified by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) or the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) presented in Tables 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 is

below or above the level of a baccalaureate degree, justify the inclusion of that occupation in the analysis.

The profession of Respiratory Care is moving toward the baccalaureate. The agencies representing the profession: The American Association of Respiratory Care (AARC), the Committee on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) and the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC) have issued a tripartite statement supporting the move to the baccalaureate as essential to continued growth to the profession

([https://www.aarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/issuepaper\\_baccalaureate\\_graduate\\_degrees.pdf](https://www.aarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/issuepaper_baccalaureate_graduate_degrees.pdf)).

The AARC has issued a position statement calling for the baccalaureate degree to be the entry to practice degree by 2030.

<http://www.aarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/issue-paper-entry-to-respiratory-therapy-practice-2030.pdf>.

3.4 Describe the career path and potential employment opportunities for graduates of the program.

Graduates of this program would be practicing Registered Respiratory Therapists with an Associate of Science (AS) degree in Respiratory Care. This program allows them to upgrade this AS in Respiratory Care to a BS degree in Cardiopulmonary Sciences. Many Respiratory Care employers state a preference for Respiratory Therapists with a baccalaureate degree, so obtaining this degree may increase their opportunities for employment. In addition, many clinical sites, such as hospitals, have clinical ladders that require that a therapist obtain a baccalaureate before they can advance to the top positions of the clinical ladder. Many positions in respiratory care education, management, marketing, and case management require a minimum of a baccalaureate degree, so graduates of this program would be eligible to apply for such positions that they cannot with just the AS.

## PLANNING PROCESS

4.1 Summarize the internal planning process. In timeline format, please describe the steps your institution took in completing the internal review and approval of the baccalaureate program. For example, summarize actions taken by the academic department proposing the degree, any non-academic departments, the college-wide curriculum committee, the college president, the Board of Trustees, and any other areas.

St. Petersburg College has been planning for and working toward offering a baccalaureate degree for Respiratory Therapists since 2009. St. Petersburg College approved the development of four upper division courses: RET 3050 Evidence Based Medicine in Respiratory Care, RET 4285 Advanced Cardiopulmonary Medicine, RET 4494 Advanced Cardiopulmonary Physiology, and RET 4715 Advanced Neonatal and Pediatric Respiratory Care in 2013-2014 and has offered a Baccalaureate of Applied Sciences in Health Services Administration for Respiratory Therapists since 2014. As the profession of Respiratory Care continued moving toward the Baccalaureate degree in cardiopulmonary services, SPC planned, developed, and reviewed additional upper division courses in Respiratory Care, and authorized the development of RET 4524 Patient Education and Disease and RET 4910 Respiratory Care Capstone in 2018, and these courses are currently completing the final review process. The development of these courses and this sub plan resulted from the ongoing efforts of SPC leaders within the discipline of Respiratory Care, faculty and leadership within the College of Health Services Administration, Curriculum, and Senior management.

The following internal planning meetings were held:

8-26-2014 Meeting with Drs. Ludwig, Trede and Steve Hardt to discuss the possibility of the baccalaureate becoming the entry level degree for the profession, and the impact that would have on the existing RT sub plan.

09-05-2016 SPC Respiratory Care Program Advisory Committee Meeting. Discussion regarding baccalaureate program. Committee in unanimous support.

05-31-2017 Meeting with Dean Rebecca Ludwig and SPC General Counsel regarding collaboration with HCC on baccalaureate RT program.

11-03-2017 Meeting with Drs. Ludwig, Cooper, Crawford and Steve Hardt regarding collaboration with HCC baccalaureate RT program. Discussion held regarding SPC developing the required new RT courses as HCC cannot offer upper division curriculum per their SACS charter.

01-10-2018 Meeting with Drs. Woods and Trede to discuss, amongst other things, a possible transition in the RT Baccalaureate program.

1-23-2018 Steve Hardt and Cara Sebastian met to discuss a potential marketing plan for an RT baccalaureate.

1-30-2018 Steve Hardt and Cara Sebastian met to further discuss a potential marketing plan for an RT baccalaureate.

08-23-2018 Meeting with Steve Hardt and Dean Stentiford regarding the structure and promotion on an upper division baccalaureate RT program

09-9-2018 Meeting with Angela Ashe to discuss a specific curriculum plan for a proposed baccalaureate degree in respiratory care.

09-13-2018 Meeting with Angela Ashe to discuss a specific curriculum plan for a proposed baccalaureate degree in respiratory care.

09-17-2018 Meeting with Steve Hardt and Dean Stentiford regarding the structure and promotion of an upper division baccalaureate RT program.

10-5-2018 Meeting with Steve Hardt and Dean Stentiford regarding the structure and promotion of an upper division baccalaureate RT program.

10-31-2018 SPC Respiratory Care Advisory Committee Meeting.

01-31-2019 Meeting with Dr. Cooper, Deanna Stentiford, Angela Ashe and Steve Hardt regarding the structure of an upper division baccalaureate RT program.

10-8-2019 Meeting with Deanna Stentiford and Steve Hardt to discuss transitioning the existing RT sub plan to a BS degree in Cardiopulmonary Sciences.

10-21-2019 Meeting with Sabrina Crawford and Djuan Fox regarding logistics for advanced or alternative pathways programs for RTs with degrees in disciplines other than Respiratory Care.

4.2 Summarize the external planning process with the business and industry community. In timeline format, please describe your institution's interactions and engagements with external stakeholders, including but not limited to industry advisory board meetings, discussions with advisory committees, briefings from local businesses, consultations with employers, and conducting paper and online surveys.

Numerous external stakeholders were involved in the planning process Hillsborough Community College (HCC) has been a partner in this process since the beginning, and offered input on the format of the program, the courses to be taught, and the major learning objectives of the courses. Several of the upper division RET courses were developed by HCC faculty. The associate level Respiratory Care program's Advisory Committee, which includes the medical director, numerous respiratory care managers from local hospitals, and other stakeholders in the Respiratory Care community have been extensively involved in the planning and development of this program. Their efforts include, but are not limited to, delivery format, course selection, and course content. This plans for this program were also discussed with the Florida Society of Respiratory Care (FSRC), the Florida Respiratory Leadership Network (FRLN) and some members of the Florida Respiratory Educator's Network (FREN).

The following external planning meetings were held:

09-01-2016 Meeting with Dean Ludwig from HCC, Dean Leif Penrose from HCC, Gina Ricard and Steve Hardt regarding collaboration on baccalaureate RT program.

11-18-2016 Meeting with HCC Respiratory Care Program Advisory Committee regarding collaboration on baccalaureate RT program. Committee votes unanimously to support collaboration.

8-3-2018 Florida Respiratory Leadership Network group to discuss the RRT as entry level. Discussion regarding specific requirements for the baccalaureate was also discussed.

3-22-2019 Florida Respiratory Educators Network via Skype. Discussed the future of the RT baccalaureate in Florida.

05-3-2019 Florida respiratory Leadership working group teleconference to discuss the RRT as the entry level for licensure in Florida and possible steps to advance the RT baccalaureate in Florida.

06-06-2019 Florida Respiratory Leadership working group teleconference to discuss the future of the RT baccalaureate in Florida.

06-14-2019 Florida Respiratory Leadership Group workgroup meeting to discuss the RT baccalaureate in Florida.

07-12-2019 Committee on Baccalaureate and Graduate Respiratory Therapy Education (COBGRTE) via Skype. Discussed the process for assisting programs in offering the RT Baccalaureate.

11-22-2019 Florida Society of Respiratory Care Board of Directors meeting. A position statement supporting a transition to the baccalaureate was discussed and approved.

4-29-2022 Initial BSRT Florida Working Group meeting. Steve Hardt serves as informal chair

9-9-2022 BSRT Florida Working Group meeting. Steve Hardt serves as informal chair

3-15-2023 BSRT Florida Working Group issues executive summary on the Respiratory baccalaureate in Florida

03-29-2023 Steve Hardt presents the BSRT Working Group executive summary to the Florida Society of Respiratory Care (FSRC), the Florida Respiratory Leadership Network (FRLN) and the Florida Respiratory Educator's Network (FREN)

4.3 List external engagement activities with public and nonpublic postsecondary institutions. This list shall include meetings and other forms of communication among external postsecondary institutions regarding evidence of need, demand, and economic impact.

4.3.1 Public Universities in College's Service District

Institution(s): University of South Florida

Activity Descriptions and Outcomes:

Letter of Support obtained from the former President of the University of South Florida

4.3.2 Regionally Accredited Institutions in College's Service District

Institution(s): Eckerd College

Activity Descriptions and Outcomes:

Eckerd does not offer a competing program in this area.

4.3.3 Institutions outside of College's Service District (If applicable)



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA  
Office of the President

January 18, 2023

Dr. Tonjua Williams  
President, St. Petersburg College  
PO Box 13489  
St. Petersburg, FL 33733

Dear President Williams,

Thank you for your support regarding additional areas of workforce needs in Pinellas County and how St. Petersburg College (SPC) and the University of South Florida (USF) can work together to support the educational opportunities of the Tampa Bay region. At USF, we are thrilled to have SPC as our partner as we work with local business and industry to improve the lives of those we serve.

I am pleased to give you USF's approval and continued support, as SPC begins the process for new and expanded baccalaureate program development in the areas of Human Services, Cardiopulmonary Science, Digital Media Technology, English Education, and Social Science Education. USF is supportive of SPC and your efforts to expand in these directions.

I look forward to continuing our strong relationship and thank you President Williams for your continued leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rhea F. Law".

Rhea F. Law  
President





A Preeminent Research University

February 6, 2019

Dr. Tonjua Williams  
President, St Petersburg College  
PO Box 13489  
St. Petersburg, FL 33733-3489

Dear President Williams,

Thank you for your letter dated January 25, 2019 regarding additional areas of workforce needs in Pinellas County and how SPC and USF can work together to support the educational opportunities of the Tampa Bay region. At USF, we are thrilled to have SPC as our partner as we work with local business and industry to improve the lives of those we serve.

I am pleased give you USF's approval and continued support, as SPC begins the State of Florida's process for baccalaureate program development in the areas of:

- Cybersecurity
- Human Services
- Respiratory Care
- Digital Media Technology

I look forward to continuing our strong relationship, and thank you, President Williams, for your continued leadership.

Regards,

Judy Genshaft  
USF System President



April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to show my support for St. Petersburg Colleges conversion of their online degree in Health Service Administration in Respiratory Care to the more traditional BSRT degree, the Bachelor's in Cardiopulmonary Services. This change will provide much needed education in a field that is becoming more specialized. While other disciplines have already increased their educational standards, it is now time for our profession to do the same.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Barrett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Andrew Barrett, RRT

Manager of Respiratory and Pulmonary Services

Tampa General Hospital



April 30, 2019

St. Petersburg College  
Respiratory Care Program  
P. O. Box 13489  
St. Petersburg, FL 33733-3489

To Whom It May Concern:

In my capacity as Director of Cardiopulmonary at Bayfront Health St Petersburg, I fully support your proposal to convert your online degree in Health Service Administration in Respiratory Care to the more traditional BSRT degree, the Bachelor's in Cardiopulmonary Services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy Luba", written in a cursive style.

Timothy Luba, MHA, MS, RRT  
Director, Cardiopulmonary Services

**Respiratory Care/Pulmonary Diagnostics**  
501 6<sup>th</sup> Ave South  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701  
727-7674277  
727-767-6478 F



May 8, 2019

Steve Hardt, MA, RRT, RRT-ACCS  
Program Director  
Respiratory Care Program  
St. Petersburg College

Steve,

As the Director of Respiratory Care here at Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital I am in full support of the St. Petersburg College program converting to the Bachelor's Degree in Cardio-Pulmonary Services. I believe that this will align with our professional development goals for our current and future staff members. Additionally, this program would support the AARC's mission of transitioning away from an associate degree as an entry level to the baccalaureate degree requirement.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need anything further.

Thank you,

**Linda Semones BS, RRT-NPS**  
Director  
**Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital**  
Respiratory Care & Pulmonary Diagnostics  
501 Sixth Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701  
P 727-767-3079 | F 727-767-6478  
[lsemone1@jhmi.edu](mailto:lsemone1@jhmi.edu)  
[www.HopkinsAllChildrens.org](http://www.HopkinsAllChildrens.org)



Dear Dr. Mathew Liao-Troth,

Please permit me to introduce myself. My name is Mark Pellman, and I am the Director of Respiratory Care, Hyperbarics, and Neurophysiology at Sarasota Memorial Hospital. I am also a past president of the Florida Society of Respiratory Care, a founding member of the Florida Respiratory Leadership Network, and chair of the Respiratory Care Advisory Committee at St. Petersburg College.

I am writing to request that you allow St. Petersburg College to proceed with their application to convert their existing Bachelor's in Applied Science in Health Services Administration for Respiratory Care to a Bachelor's in Science in Cardiopulmonary Science (BSCS) degree. **Please note this proposed change would involve changing the track of an existing bachelor's program rather than ending an existing bachelor's program.**

This conversion is necessary as the respiratory care profession is moving to the Baccalaureate as the entry level degree. The American Association of Respiratory Care has established a goal of moving our profession to the Baccalaureate by 2030.

Additionally, the College of American Pathologists, per Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments regulations, has recently begun to require the Baccalaureate in Science, such as the BSCS, to maintain arterial blood gas (ABG) labs. These ABGs labs are vital to our care of patients, and more baccalaureate level therapists are required to support and provide this vital service.

Perhaps most importantly, recent advances in the science and technology involved in the practice of Respiratory Care, especially pertaining to advanced life-support equipment, require additional training and expertise outside the traditional Associate degree. The COVID 19 pandemic has also highlighted the need for respiratory therapists to have the strong background in research methodologies and evidence based practiced that the BSCS degree provides.

St. Petersburg College is uniquely positioned to offer this degree expeditiously. They have the existing coursework developed, have a well equipped ventilator lab, and have the necessary partnerships within the respiratory care community to offer a successful program.

Your consideration of St. Petersburg College's request for permission to offer this program would be greatly appreciated.

Regards,

Mark Pellman

Sarasota Memorial Hospital

Director of Respiratory Care Serves