**Respiratory Care Program Earns Prestigious Award for Excellence**

The [West Chester University/Bryn Mawr Hospital Respiratory Care Program](https://www.wcupa.edu/healthSciences/health/respCare/default.aspx) has been named a recipient of the 2021-2022 Apex Recognition Award by the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC). The program is among an elite group of only eight Respiratory Care educational programs from across the U.S. to receive this award.

In conjunction with Bryn Mawr Hospital, WCU offers a Bachelor of Science degree in Respiratory Care. Students train to become Respiratory Care professionals through the unique partnership of an institution of higher learning and a well-respected teaching hospital.

Respiratory Care professionals, who work to evaluate, treat, educate and care for patients with breathing disorders, have become particularly crucial in the care and treatment of Covid patients. As Covid primarily affects the lungs, Respiratory Therapists provide vital critical care to the patients through ventilator management and with helping to maintain adequate oxygenation and ventilation. In addition to the vital part they play in the Covid Pandemic, Respiratory Therapists also work with infants, as young as 23 weeks old, who suffer from incomplete lung development, to adults who have been diagnosed with chronic obstructive lung disease (COPD) such as emphysema or pulmonary fibrosis.

In her award letter, Shawna Strickland, Associate Executive Director of AARC, said, “This Respiratory Care Program has demonstrated best practices in educating our future practitioners and promotes patient safety by providing access to respiratory therapists to deliver their care. It is outstanding work like this that inspired the AARC Board of Directors to develop this award.”

“I am grateful to be surrounded by such talented faculty who are dedicated to providing a superior educational experience to our students,” said Brian Kellar, Respiratory Care Program Director.

Although *all* program faculty played a significant role in the process, it is worthy of acknowledging Professor Alexa **Moran** ’16 for her untiring efforts in orchestrating the process and ultimately submitting the application and Dr. [David S.] Prince for assisting us with meeting requirements, while also caring for his Covid patients in the ICU.”

As many current Respiratory Therapists are approaching retirement age, there will be a noticeable decrease in the number of Respiratory Therapists in the profession, while the demand, as a result of Covid and many other factors, continues to increase. The time is ideal for individual interested in working in healthcare to enter a profession that inevitably results in an extremely rewarding career.

The Apex Recognition Award recognizes facilities for their commitment to excellence in professional development, evidence-based care, patient safety, patient satisfaction and quality improvement in five categories: acute care hospitals, long-term care facilities, home medical equipment (HME) companies, educational programs, and dedicated transport teams. The full list of Apex recipients [can be found on the AARC website](https://www.aarc.org/an21-24-organizations-achieve-excellence-in-respiratory-care/).