Distributed by UW News Service, March 3, 2025

Link to original story: <https://www.uwp.edu/explore/news/ascensionpartnership25.cfm>

**Ascension Wisconsin, UW-Parkside partnership provides $1.5 million over five years to support healthcare professionals**

Story by UW-Parkside

The University of Wisconsin-Parkside and Ascension Wisconsin are proud to announce the expansion of the Ascension Scholar Program, now in its second year. This transformative initiative has grown to provide vital financial assistance and mentorship to 20 students pursuing critical careers in healthcare in 2024.

The Ascension Scholar Program, supported by a $1.5 million commitment over five years, offers scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students in key healthcare disciplines, including nursing, clinical mental health, radiologic sciences, and the upcoming Physician Assistant program. Scholars receive full tuition coverage during their third and fourth years of study, along with mentorship and success coaching.

”As one of Wisconsin’s largest healthcare providers, we view our workforce as our greatest, most precious resource, and are committed to supporting our people today, preparing them for tomorrow, and building a robust pipeline of skilled healthcare professionals for the future," said Kristin McManmon, Ascension All Saints Hospital president. “Our partnership with UW-Parkside underscores our commitment to our workforce development efforts that are essential to meeting the healthcare demands of our community.”

“The Ascension Scholar Program is a significant advancement in our mission to serve as a true partner to both our students and the healthcare community,” said Dr. Lynn D. Akey, Chancellor of UW-Parkside. “Through our collaboration with Ascension Wisconsin, we are committed to equipping the next generation of healthcare leaders with the education and support they need to thrive in their careers and positively impact our communities.”

One of the program's scholarship recipients, Brittany Light, who is studying part-time for a Graduate Certificate in Mental Health, shared her experience.

“My educational pursuits here at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside would not be possible without the generous support from the Ascension Scholar Program,” she said. “I have so much gratitude for this program because it has given me the opportunity to pursue my dreams of becoming a counselor. The Ascension Scholar Program has allowed me to complete my courses at a high level because of the mentorship they offer. The focus I have on my academics is possible because I no longer have the financial strain of paying for graduate school out of pocket.”

UW-Parkside's College of Natural and Health Sciences has a proven record of preparing healthcare professionals, with a 90% medical school acceptance rate, far exceeding the national average of 43%. The need for well-trained healthcare professionals is more pressing than ever, particularly in Wisconsin, where a nursing shortage of 20,000 is anticipated in the next year, according to the American Nurses Association (ANA).

As part of the program, Ascension Scholars also commit to working at Ascension for two years post-graduation, further strengthening the connection between UW-Parkside and Ascension Healthcare in developing a robust healthcare workforce for the region.