



Adventist Health and COPE Health Solutions Add Pathways to Health Care Careers in Mendocino County

Ukiah Valley, California (February 16, 2022) — [Adventist Health Ukiah Valley](#) and [COPE Health Solutions](#) recently launched the [COPE Health Scholars](#) program, an innovative, hands-on educational course that gives Mendocino County residents a pathway to careers in health care. Designed for high school graduates, college students and career changers, participants combine online coursework with a minimum of 280 hours of in-person experience at Ukiah Valley Hospital, delivering valuable support to patients and clinicians.

“The COPE Health Scholars program reflects our deep commitment to the community by expanding local health care opportunities while increasing access to quality health care,” said Judson Howe, President of Adventist Health Ukiah Valley hospital. “We are thankful for our Scholars who are making immediate and important contributions to patient care, especially at a time when there is such a critical need for healthcare workers.”

The first 13 COPE Health Scholars at Ukiah Valley hospital have completed the program coursework and now are taking clinical and non-clinical rotations at the hospital. To accommodate participants’ work, education and other commitments, the flexible Health Scholars program can be finished in three to 15 months, based on the number of four-hour shifts attended per week. Graduates of the Health Scholars program receive a certificate of completion from the Keck Graduate Institute, a member of the Claremont Colleges.

A proven path to health care careers

Darian Gavazza is the first Scholar to complete the entire program, doing so in just three months, and has been hired by Adventist Health Ukiah Valley as a patient care technician. The 26-year-old Willits native and mother of two also recently graduated from Mendocino College in Allied Health and plans to continue her studies there to become a nurse.

“I am grateful for all of the opportunities COPE Health Scholars has given me. The hands-on experience convinced me that nursing is the right career for me and led to my current job with Adventist Health caring for patients,” said Gavazza.

Like Gavazza, Health Scholars often continue on for more education or are hired by Adventist Health. Ukiah Valley is the seventh Adventist Health facility to offer the Scholars program. Since 2008, more than 4,500 students have participated in COPE Health Scholars programs at Adventist Health facilities, with more than 260 program graduates hired into non-provider roles.

“Adventist Health is pioneering a new approach to caring for its communities by both creating workforce pipelines for essential roles and prioritizing local residents for these educational

opportunities, employment and career development,” said Elizabeth DuBois, DNP, FNP-BC, AAHIVS, the COPE Health Solutions’ senior vice president who is leading the partnership with Adventist Health and is a practicing provider at Adventist Health.

Caring for local communities

There is a nationwide shortage for many medical professionals, including physicians, nurses, medical assistants, and laboratory technicians. A poll shows one in three Californians says their community does not have enough caregivers, and in rural areas that number jumps to 50%.

To address these challenges, Adventist Health is collaborating with healthcare consulting and workforce development leader COPE Health Solutions, based in Los Angeles and New York, to build and operate a series of specialized educational programs that offer employment opportunities to residents in its communities.

In Mendocino County, in addition to the COPE Health Scholars program, Adventist Health created the COPE Health Scholars Medical Assistant Program in 2021. This seven-month educational program includes virtual courses and 200 hours of clinic-based learning and training with patients and clinician mentors. The first cohort of Medical Assistant Scholars is training at Adventist Health Ukiah Valley and Adventist Health Howard Memorial Hospital in Willits. They are all guaranteed job interviews after graduating and passing certification tests for medical assistants.

For more information about the COPE Health Scholars program at Ukiah Valley Hospital, please visit copehealthscholars.org/locations/mendocino-county or contact Ukiah Valley’s COPE Health Scholars program manager Kristina Lamb at klamb@copehealthsolutions.com. For information about the COPE Health Scholars Medical Assistant Program in Mendocino County, please visit copehealthscholars.org/programs/medicalassistantschool.

About COPE Health Scholars

The COPE Health Scholars programs provide virtual courses and hands-on clinical experience in health care facilities for aspiring health professionals. After completing training and written and practical tests, Health Scholars support a variety of care teams, including helping patients eat, walk, bathe and check vitals. To explore a variety of health care careers, the Scholars also serve rotations in non-clinical departments. A division of health care consulting and workforce development leader COPE Health Solutions, the innovative program began in 2000 and has graduated more than 45,000 Health Scholars.

About COPE Health Solutions

[COPE Health Solutions](https://www.copehealthsolutions.com) is a national healthcare consulting leader in population health management, value-based care and payments, workforce development and data analytics. Our multidisciplinary team of healthcare experts brings payers and providers the experience, capabilities and tools needed to plan for, design, implement and support strategy development and execution. We are driven by our passion to help transform healthcare delivery, align

financial incentives to support population health management and build the workforce needed for value-based care.

About Adventist Health

Adventist Health is a faith-based, nonprofit integrated health system serving more than 80 communities on the West Coast and Hawaii as well as others across the U.S. through its Blue Zones company, a pioneer in taking a systemic and environmental approach to improving the health of entire cities and communities. Through this work, Adventist Health is leading a 21st century well-being transformation movement. Founded on Seventh-day Adventist heritage and values, Adventist Health provides care in hospitals, clinics, its innovative Adventist Health Hospital@Home program that provides virtual in-patient care at home, home care agencies, hospice agencies and joint-venture retirement centers in both rural and urban communities. Our compassionate and talented team of 37,000 includes associates, medical staff physicians, allied health professionals and volunteers driven in pursuit of one mission: living God's love by inspiring health, wholeness and hope. Together, we are transforming the American healthcare experience with an innovative, yet timeless, whole-person focus on physical, mental, spiritual and social healing to support community well-being.

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