



MedCerts

PARTNER SOLUTIONS 



Allina Health 

Teams Up with MedCerts Partner Solutions

For a **Successful In-House**
Surgical Tech Training
Program

Case Study

THE CHALLENGE



Allina Health is a health care system that operates 12 hospital campuses and more than 100 specialty care sites throughout Minnesota and western Wisconsin, currently with 27,865 care team members.

In 2023, Allina Health was facing a shortage of surgical technologists. This is a common problem across the state. For example, **a 2019 study by Minnesota Employment and Economic Development found there were only 114 surgical technologists (STs) to fill the state's annual demand of 510 STs, a shortage of 77.65%.**

Most surgical technology programs offered through other institutions in the area had capacity constraints in the number of students they could educate each year. Given the immediate need to fill these critical roles in the OR, exploring other options was necessary.

Allina Health sought a training solution where they could staff up more quickly, while ensuring they met their standards of delivering expert care.

Once hired, the surgical technologist trainees began their paid position learning under the supervision of two perioperative educators. For the first 16 weeks, students would spend up to three days studying at The Allina Commons in Minneapolis. The perioperative educators led learners through the in-person Allina Health-created curriculum, often communicated through PowerPoint presentations.

Colleen Leard TS-C, the MedCerts subject matter expert on perioperative education, collaborated with Allina Health on when to incorporate individual MedCerts modules into the bespoke clinical plan. The online MedCerts modules could either be completed at The Allina Commons, or on their own.

Learners were also assigned a Student Success Advisor on the MedCerts side, who checked in at least weekly to answer all coursework and support questions.

THE PARTNERSHIP SOLUTION



Allina Health decided to create their own Surgical Tech Training program in-house, using MedCerts, a leading provider for online allied healthcare certification training, for their didactic online curriculum, strategic guidance and program framework.

Allina Health worked closely with the MedCerts Partner Solutions team to build a collaborative and customized training program to help them train new surgical technologists internally. After successful completion of the program, learners would be promoted to full time surgical technologists at Allina Health.



Nearly 100 employees and non-employees applied for the surgical technologist trainee position, hearing about it almost exclusively through a word-of-mouth campaign. 30 applicants were interviewed by the patient care manager, who chose the seven candidates accepted into the initial program cohort.

Two days a week, the ST trainees would be in the OR of their home Allina Health facility, gaining clinical experience. At first, the tasks are observational – for example, shadowing the circulators. Over time, responsibilities expand to include helping with turnovers, or cleaning the ORs, gaining experience scrubbing in and learning sterile field best practices.

Surgical tech trainee Kaitlyn Welles observed, "transitioning between hands-on and in the classroom has been very smooth," and the hybrid accelerated training format proved very popular with the students.

After completing the program, logging a minimum of 125 surgical cases (including 90 as first scrub), and passing their NCCT TS-C certification, ST trainees are job-ready and promoted to surgical technologists at an Allina Health site.

ST SHORTAGE SUSTAINABLY SOLVED



So far, there have been **23 trainees who have graduated from the program and become surgical technologists at Allina Health**. The inaugural cohort graduated seven trainees, and the second cohort went on to graduate 17. With **MedCerts Partner Solutions delivering a scalable, results-driven training model**, Allina Health has the flexibility to train as many or as few STs as needed, based on proactive forecasting.

STUDENTS TRAINED OVER 50% FASTER



While it takes two years to get a surgical technologist associate degree, **Allina Health's hybrid training model, developed in collaboration with MedCerts, reduces that timeline to roughly 10 months**.

A 96% COMPLETION RATE



Of the 24 learners who enrolled in the training program, **23 completed the program and became surgical technologists at Allina Health**. 100% of program graduates still work at Allina Health as STs.

EXTREMELY ATTRACTIVE POSITION



According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of surgical technologists is projected to increase by 5% between 2024-34. Meanwhile, **U.S. News and World Report ranked surgical technologist as #11 on their non-healthcare specific list of Highest-Paying Jobs Without A Degree**.





ELIZABETH LARSEN, RN

RN, PHN, CNOR, PERIOPERATIVE EDUCATOR, ALLINA HEALTH

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If you're a hospital facing a surgical technologist shortage, partnering with MedCerts on a training program is honestly something you should look at doing. It's helped us create a lot of great surgical technologists. It is a lot of hard work, but it has been worth it.

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ELIZABETH BERGHOFF, RN

SURGICAL SERVICES MANAGER, ALLINA HEALTH

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Our partnership with Medcerts has allowed us to create a training program that is comprehensive and is an internal pipeline for Allina Health. They are able to get done much faster than a traditional school and receive important hands-on experience

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