



MedCerts

PARTNER SOLUTIONS ©



Surgical Tech Shortage **SOLVED!**

MedCerts Solves Surgical Tech Challenges
for San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center

San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center Uses MedCerts To Solve Surgical Tech Shortage



Upskilling And Training Models Offers Significant Cost Savings

While waiting for their MedCerts students to complete their training, SLV largely relied on traveling staff to fill the staffing gaps. This is a frequent solution for rural healthcare providers, but is a costly alternative.

According to tracking done by the healthcare hiring platform Vivian, Sterile Processing Technicians nationally make 139% more per week on travel assignments compared to on salary. Similarly, Travel Surgical Technologists make 39% more per week on travel assignments compared to on salary.

“The reason we chose MedCerts over another program was the ease of being able to do it all online, the speed of getting certified, and the ability to test students right here in the hospital.

The partnership has gone really well, and we're extremely proud of our surgical techs and how much they've learned.”



DEB BRALY, RN

Surgical RN Unit Based
Educator at SLV

THE CHALLENGE



San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center (SLV) is an 800-employee, 40-bed hospital in Alamosa, Colorado, that faced a staffing challenge all too common in rural communities. Hiring and retaining qualified employees is a constant struggle as staff often leave for urban areas and higher-paying jobs.

In theory, local colleges could train new allied healthcare professions to help meet demand, but similarly, those colleges have trouble retaining enough educators to make training possible. With certified Surgical Technologist and certified Sterile Processing Technician being two positions where help was most urgently needed, SLV needed to find a non-traditional training solution.



**Close the Skill
Gap**



**Industry-
Recognized
Credentials**



**Time and Cost
Effective**

THE SOLUTION



SLV teamed up with MedCerts, a leading eLearning provider, whose virtual allied health training programs provided a workaround for the lack of local classes. SLV initially offered two MedCerts training programs, to become either a certified surgical technologist or certified sterile processing technician. Program students were recruited from a pool of recent high school graduates and existing employees in non-clinical roles.

The structured program could be completed in as little as 18 weeks, and was a combination of asynchronous web-based instruction and 3X a week on-the-job clinical training at SLV. Accepted students were paid a full salary during the training period. Upon successful completion of the certification test, learners were placed in either Surgical Technologist or Sterile Processing Technician roles at the hospital.

SLV fully subsidized the cost of the training program in exchange for participants agreeing to work at the hospital for at least two years.

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Education An Effective Retention Strategy

An OR Manager Salary/Career report [found](#) 37% of leaders reported increased surgical technologists turnover.

Providing education opportunities for career advancement can reverse that trend. For example, in an ACUPOLL Precision Research study, 75% of healthcare workers [said](#) they'd stay longer if their employer offered a clear career pathway in the company.

"Coming from somewhere with zero idea how to do what I do to where I'm at now... it would have been a mistake not to do it."

The role SLV played was monumental. If they hadn't decided to go with the MedCerts program, I have no idea how far I'd be as opposed to now."



SEAN CLUTTS

Certified Surgical Technologist at SLV

THE RESULTS



1

7 Program Graduates

4 students have successfully completed the program and become certified Surgical Techs at SLV. 3 students graduated and work as Surgical/Sterile Processing technicians at SLV.

2

100% Completion Rate

7 people enrolled in the SLV training program, with all of participants passing their certification test.

3

100% Retention Rate

While the two year commitment on paper isn't always enough to keep employees in a rural community, all program participants are still working as Surgical Tech at the hospital.

CONTINUED EDUCATION KEY



SLV realized that while the MedCerts program is innovative and effective, students with no prior medical background are going to require additional upskilling to achieve full competency. For the first year after graduation, SLV's Deb Braly puts graduates in the best position to succeed by giving them supplemental resources. For example, the night before the first time assisting on a hernia operation, Braly will share a YouTube video showing the procedure.

INTERNAL BENCHMARK MET



The program's primary goal was creating a faster and more effective pipeline for training and hiring Surgical Techs, and by that metric, the MedCerts partnership has been a resounding success. The SLV training program has increased retention while enhancing community impact by providing opportunities to local talent.

SLV is considering expanding the program to include training EKG technicians and other in-demand roles.