



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Back Row, Left to Right: Hannah Johnson, Diatisha Langford, Lauren Freeman, Timeka Lynch, Anne Whitby, Bridget Stell, Lamont Gary, Beth Powell, Kristen Williams (Hollowell), Ian Todaro, and Lauren Wright; Front Row Left to Right: Vanecia Huggans, Rachel Bice, Emeraldl Contee, Kaniyah Deloatch, Taylor Evans, and Amaya Pearson.

Halifax Community College Celebrates Largest Practical Nursing Graduating Class at 2026 Pinning Ceremony

WELDON, NORTH CAROLINA – Halifax Community College (HCC) honored 18 Practical Nursing graduates during its Practical Nursing Pinning Ceremony on Tuesday, July 14, at the Dr. Ervin V. Griffin, Sr. Centre. The Pinning Ceremony marks the successful completion of the College's 11-month Practical Nursing Diploma Program and symbolizes each graduate's transition from nursing student to nursing professional. While they have completed the requirements of the Practical Nursing program, the graduates will be invited to return to campus to participate in Halifax Community College's 2027 Commencement exercises alongside other graduating students.

This year's graduating class represents the largest Practical Nursing cohort to complete the program since 2017, a milestone that reflects both the continued growth of HCC's nursing programs and the extraordinary dedication of its students. Graduates traveled from communities throughout eastern North Carolina, including





Henderson, Warrenton, Aulander, Rocky Mount, Elm City, Jackson, and Halifax County, to pursue their nursing education at HCC.

The program requires more than 800 hours of classroom instruction, laboratory training, and clinical experiences, preparing graduates with the knowledge, technical skills, and clinical judgment needed to provide safe, compassionate, and competent patient care. Throughout the program, students gained hands-on experience in health assessment, pharmacology, adult and medical-surgical nursing, maternal-child nursing, mental health, community-based care, and professional nursing practice, preparing them to sit for the NCLEX-PN licensure examination and begin their careers as Licensed Practical Nurses.

Many of the graduates balanced demanding schedules while completing the program. Day cohort students often began clinical experiences at 7 a.m., requiring lengthy commutes before completing 12-hour clinical shifts. Night cohort students dedicated nearly every Saturday to clinical training while maintaining full-time employment throughout the week for 11 consecutive months.

"The commitment demonstrated by these students has been nothing short of remarkable," said Sarah Harris, MSN, RN, Director of Nursing at Halifax Community College. "They have overcome challenges, made sacrifices, and remained focused on their goal of becoming nurses. Their resilience and determination have been inspiring, and I could not be prouder of what they have accomplished."

During the ceremony, faculty recognized the graduates' families, friends, and loved ones for their encouragement and support throughout the program, acknowledging the important role they played in each student's success. Special recognition was also given to the Practical Nursing faculty and clinical partners whose mentorship and expertise helped prepare students for the profession. HCC expressed appreciation to Lead Practical Nursing Instructor Ms. Tia Alfonso for her unwavering commitment to student success, as well as the nursing faculty whose dedication helped develop graduates' confidence, competence, and clinical excellence.

The College also recognized its valued clinical partners, including ECU Health North, UNC Nash, Bryan Health and Rehabilitation of Scotland Neck, IntelliChoice Home Care, Fresenius Dialysis Center, Signature Healthcare, and Granville Medical Center, for providing invaluable clinical learning experiences that helped prepare students for practice.

Several students were recognized for outstanding academic achievement and clinical excellence during the ceremony.

Academic Excellence Awards

- Day Cohort: Ian Todaro
- Night Cohort: Lauren Wright

Patriot Award for Clinical Excellence

- Diatisha Langford





Graduates also celebrated one another through student-selected superlative awards, recognizing classmates for their unique personalities, strengths, and memorable contributions throughout the program. Awards included honors such as Patient Whisperer, Florence Nightingale, Most Resilient, Best Therapeutic Communicator, and Most Likely to Have a Smile, highlighting the camaraderie and lasting friendships formed during their nursing journey.

As graduates received their nursing pins, flowers, and lamps before reciting the Nursing Pledge, they officially joined a proud tradition of nursing professionals committed to serving others with compassion, integrity, and excellence. The ceremony also featured remarks from student speakers Amaya Pearson and Portia Gadson, keynote speaker Quinlan Morgan, BSN, RN, and presentations by HCC nursing faculty.

"The future of healthcare depends on compassionate, skilled professionals who are committed to serving others," Harris said. "These graduates embody those qualities, and we know they will represent Halifax Community College with excellence as they begin their nursing careers."

The 2026 Practical Nursing graduates are Rachel Bice, Emerald Contee, Kaniyah Deloatch, Taylor Evans, Lauren Freeman, Portia Gadson, Lamont Gary, Kristen Hollowell, Vanecia Huggans, Hannah Johnson, Diatisha Langford, Timeka Lynch, Amaya Pearson, Harriet (Beth) Powell, Bridget Stell, Ian Todaro, Anne Whitby, and Lauren Wright.

For more information about the Nursing program please visit: www.halifaxcc.edu/what-we-offer/programs-training/nursing-adn-lpn-nurse-aid-nfp/.

Halifax Community College's Mission

Halifax Community College strives to meet the diverse needs of our community by providing high-quality, accessible and affordable education and services for a rapidly changing and globally competitive marketplace.

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