

# **Metropolitan Community College Health and Wellness Coaching Program Proposal**

## **Proposal for New Instructional Program**

**Approved by Metropolitan Community College Board on February 25, 2025**

### **METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM PROPOSAL**

#### **I. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION**

- Institution Name: Metropolitan Community College (MCC)
- Proposed Program Name: Health and Wellness Coaching Program
- Degrees/credentials to be awarded to graduates of the program:
  - Career Certificate x
  - Certificate of Achievement
  - Associate of Applied Science-Professional Health Studies
- Other programs offered in this field by this institution: None
- CIP Code: 51.2208
- Administrative units for the program: Health Professions
- Proposed delivery sites/types of delivery: MCC – Online/Hybrid
- Proposed date (term/year) the program will be initiated: Fall 2026

#### **Description and purpose of the proposed program:**

Health and Wellness Coaches partner with clients looking to enhance their well-being through self-directed lasting changes, aligned with their values. Health coaches display unconditional positive regard for their clients and a belief in their ability to change, honoring the fact that each client is an expert on their own life while ensuring that all interactions are respectful and non-judgmental (nbhwc.org). Pending Board approval, MCC's Health and Wellness Coaching program will prepare students to become credentialed health and wellness coaches. The intent is to become an approved training program through the NBHWC (National Board of Health and Wellness Coaches) and later an endorsement from the AHNA (American Holistic Nurses Association). The only identified NBHWC program in Nebraska is at Creighton University and is offered at the Master's level.

In this program, students will gain knowledge and skills in

- Behavior change theories
- Motivational strategies
- Health education and promotion theories

Health and Wellness Coaches work in the following types of settings:

- Alongside physicians and other health professionals to deliver integrative care
- For-Profit Digital Health Companies
- Corporate
- Medical
- Veterans Affairs
- Insurance Companies
- Non-Profits
- Community-based programs
- Entrepreneurial capacities (including private practice)

### **Project Summary:**

MCC is developing a Health and Wellness Coaching program that will prepare students for entry-level health and wellness careers. It will be offered as a career certificate and will also fulfill requirements for the Professional Health Studies Associate in Applied Science (PHAAS). In that the NBHWC requires credential holders to at least have an Associate's degree it will be attractive to new students as part of the PHAAS and to alumni and other degree holders looking for a career transition through the career certificate. Students will complete their study in an online/hybrid format and conclude the program with supervised health coaching experiences under a credentialed professional. It, along with two other career certificates that could be stacked to fulfill degree requirements, will provide students a more definitive career path compared to the current PHAAS degree. It is also an alternative to students studying nursing as we typically turn away 40-50 students each cycle for LPN admissions. We also plan to increase awareness of the industry through career fairs and other program awareness activities that the division is currently engaged in.

### **Project Need:**

Given the trajectory of chronic health conditions in the US and the impact of a recent pandemic there is ample evidence of a need for professionals working in the preventative health space which is currently lacking in MCC offerings. Health and Wellness Coaching was identified in a 2021 report as a \$7-billion industry (businesswire.com) and has an estimated \$29-billion global market by 2032 (lumia.com). There are currently an estimated 128,000 coaches that are typically found in private practice or corporate wellness programs. Many insurance companies (AETNA, Cigna, Humana, United) offer health and wellness coaches to their clients to address chronic health problems such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity and with physician shortages and an aging population the need for these services has intensified. Health and Wellness Coaches can make as much as \$127,000/year (mindbodygreen.com). This project is also attractive because of its ability to attract alumni and individuals with degrees and training from other institutions. This is also a shortcoming of the current offerings in the health professions division. According to the NBHWC, 77% of health and wellness coaches are white. The diversity of MCC's student population can contribute to an increase in the diversity of health and wellness coaches. Also, only 6.3% possess associate's degrees so the MCC program can contribute to more diversification in degree holders. The only college in the Omaha area with such a program is Creighton and it is offered at the master's degree level. Given our price point and the ability to deliver online/hybrid instruction it is anticipated to be very popular.

### **Project Objectives:**

- 1) Provide a robust, short-term credential meeting the "H3" criteria (high wage, high demand, high skill).
- 2) Strengthen career opportunities within the PHAAS. Students must complete at least an Associate's degree so the link from the career certificate to the PHAAS is noteworthy.
- 3) Adds 24 credits (five new courses) of course offerings utilizing the HLTH prefix within the PHAAS degree
- 4) Provides options for alumni and students in other Health Professions programs to expand their scope and employability. This will position MCC to capture alumni as a student recruitment base in the Health Professions which has previously been very limited if not absent entirely.
- 5) Serve as an alternative to students that are not admitted to nursing and other programs. This gives us a retention tool that previously did not exist.
- 6) Prepare students for the NBHWC (National Board of Health and Wellness Coaches) exam.

### **Program Learning Outcomes:**

- 1) Apply behavior change theories to address health conditions.
- 2) Devise motivational strategies to meet client needs.
- 3) Develop educational programming rooted in health education and promotion theories.
- 4) Demonstrate competence in mock patient interactions.

**Program Requirements:**

Health and Wellness Coaching Career Certificate

Awards: Career Certificate; partial fulfillment of

Program Location: MCC Online/Hybrid

**Graduation Requirements:**

- Health and Wellness Coaching: Theory to Practice (4.5 credits)
- Behavior Change and Management (4.5 credits)
- HLTH 1050 Nutrition in the Life Cycle (4.5 credits)
- Health and Wellness Coaching: Skills and Techniques (4.5 credits)
- Advanced Health and Wellness Coaching (4.5 credits)
- Health and Wellness Coaching: Practicum (6 credits)

**Health and Wellness Coaching Career Certificate— Begin in 26/27 Catalog**

**Location(s):** MCC Online/Hybrid

**Award:** Career Certificate

**Academic Focus Area:** Health Professions; Students completing the PHAAS could include the courses as part of their degree. There are currently multiple pathways to NBHWC exam eligibility which align it very well with the mission of MCC and its student demographic. Additionally, it has great potential to advance the non-credit to credit continuum that MCC is trying to leverage. Exam applicants may be eligible after a) accruing 4000 hours of work experience (non-specific), b) 60 college credits (no degree), c) completion of the HWC Career Certificate (assuming a or b apply), or d) completion of the HWC coursework within the PHAAS and attainment of the PHAAS degree. An example of a non-credit to credit pathway would be as follows:

- Attainment of Phlebotomy Tech, Pharmacy Tech, Mental Health Technician, or EKG Technician. They might go onto Basic Life Support or Certified Nursing Assistant as the first credit bearing experience. If someone came in with 4000 hours work experience and/or 60 previous college credits they could complete the program in around one year.

**Graduation Requirements**

To earn this degree, a student must complete all required courses.

**Total credit hours required: 28.5 credit hours**

- Health and Wellness Coaching: Theory to Practice (4.5 credits)
- Behavior, Lifestyle, and Stress Management (4.5 credits)
- HLTH 1050 Nutrition in the Lifecycle (4.5 credits)
- Health and Wellness Coaching: Skills and Techniques (4.5 credits)
- Advanced Health and Wellness Coaching (4.5 credits)
- Health and Wellness Coaching: Practicum (6 credits)

## **Course Descriptions:**

### **Behavior, Lifestyle, and Stress Management (4.5 credits)**

Students Learn how behavior, lifestyle, and stress affect the human body. They will learn and apply strategies for helping clients and patients achieve healthy lifestyles and manage daily hassles, life stressors, and evolving health status.

### **Health and Wellness Coaching: Theory to Practice (4.5 credits)**

Students learn and begin to apply behavior change theories, coaching structure, and the coaching process using coaching theories, concepts, and techniques. Students will be prepared with the initial skills to support and guide individuals for creating and sustaining health changes via skill development and practice.

### **HLTH 1050 Nutrition in the Life Cycle (4.5 credits)**

Nutrition represents an important health concern through the life cycle. This course includes human nutrition, nutrition in health care throughout the lifecycle, introduction to therapeutic and modified diets, nutritional assessment and analysis, and a brief introduction overview of nutrition support. This course also covers gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, respiratory, and endocrine systems as related to medical nutrition therapy. This is a transferable course.

Prerequisites: BIOS 1310 or BIOS 2310.

### **Health and Wellness: Skills and Techniques (4.5 credits)**

Students learn theoretical models, coaching processes, and practitioner methods used to accomplish health and wellness interventions. Additional topics include self-awareness and self-reflection as learners. Students will learn to structure coaching sessions, manage the client experience, and refer when needed.

### **Advanced Health and Wellness Coaching (4.5 credits)**

Students learn more specialized training using advanced techniques, cognitive-behavioral, and holistic approaches. Students learn to refine and master skills to support and guide individuals for creating and sustaining health changes through skill development and practice among their peers.

### **Health and Wellness Coaching: Practicum (6 credits)**

Students learn how to apply knowledge and skills related to health and wellness coaching in live sessions with clients. Students will demonstrate how to intake clients, assess needs, devise programming and refer when needed.

## **II. REVIEW CRITERIA**

### **A. Centrality to Role and Mission**

The MCC Mission Statement is "Metropolitan Community College delivers relevant, student-centered education to a diverse community of learners." By partnering with local industry partners and seeking national recognition through the National Board of Health and Wellness Coaching, MCC will provide a curriculum that will give students an opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to address chronic health conditions through education and behavior change techniques. Additionally, the Health and Wellness Coach Certificate is consistent with the CCPE stated priorities for community colleges to provide relevant occupational education to meet industry demands.

### **B. Evidence of Need and Demand**

#### **1. Need for the program:**

There is an increasing need for health and wellness coaches in the greater Omaha region and beyond. There is currently only one other institution addressing this need and its program is offered at the Master's degree level (Creighton). Nebraska is currently ranked 25<sup>th</sup> in health care and 51.8% of adults in the United States is suffering from one or more chronic health conditions.

#### **Employment:**

Health and Wellness Coaching is an estimated \$7-billion market in the US and an anticipated \$32 billion dollar global market by 2032. There are currently an estimated 128,000 health and wellness coaches nationally and the need

continues to grow given the impact of chronic disease as previously cited, a growing shortage of physicians, and a growing need for practitioners in the behavioral health space. Health and Wellness Coaches make anywhere from \$62,000 to \$102,000 with potential to grow even more. According to data from the NBHWC 81.2% make \$50,000 or more and 54% make \$65,000 or more. The average hourly wage is \$45.51 while the part-time hourly wage is \$52.82. Companies that employ health and wellness coaches include companies such as Aetna, Anthem, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Health Advocate, Humana, United Health Care, and the YMCA. As much of the work often occurs virtually there is potential for individuals in the Omaha metro region and Nebraska to work for entities throughout all 50 states. Two-thirds of health and wellness coaches work with clients outside of their primary state of residence. Data from the four-county MCC service region revealed 51 postings for “Community Health Workers” with posted salaries ranging from \$40-60,000 between 2022-2024. Additionally, there were 1049 jobs for “Health Education Specialists” in Nebraska with an average salary \$53, 788 during the same period.

Practitioners in other health care fields (medicine, nursing, etc.) often seek training in Health and Wellness Coaching to enhance their ability to address preventative health and help patients manage chronic health conditions.

## 2. Demand for the program:

Healthcare agencies throughout the Omaha Metro area and the state of Nebraska experience staffing challenges. Students in our other programs such as Medical Assisting, Nursing, and Respiratory Therapy are typically able to find employment relatively quickly. The Omaha Metro area has around 850,000 people and makes up about 43% of the state’s population. There are many future students in this population that could benefit from training in preventative and behavioral health with salaries starting as high as the 60K range and a competitive benefits package. When considering the socioeconomic background of the typical MCC student this program has the potential to assist students in elevating their career prospects. When considering the total cost is about \$1680 for the career certificate the potential ROI is pretty substantial. A recent search on Indeed 202 jobs with 35 miles of Omaha based on the following search terms “Health Coach” (30 jobs), “Wellness Coach” (110 jobs) and “Health and Wellness Coach” within 35 miles of Omaha (62 jobs). In Nebraska 49 jobs (Health Coach), 171 jobs (Wellness Coach), and 2679 jobs (Health and Wellness).

One main goal of the Program at Metropolitan Community College would be to fill a void by providing opportunities to alumni of MCC as well as others currently in the workforce that wish to make a career transition. There are currently little to no opportunities for individuals to return to MCC and add additional skills and training to their initial credential in a health professions discipline.

Enrollment estimates for the first five years of the program are listed below:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Career Certificate	10	30	50	60	70
Associate Degree (PHAAS)	5	10	20	25	30

We anticipate collaborating with workforce education to expand opportunities in professional and continuing education.

## **C. Adequacy of Resources**

### 1. Faculty and Staff Resources:

To sufficiently operate the Health and Wellness Coaching Career Certificate, it would require one full-time faculty member initially. It will be necessary to hire someone who is credentialed (NBC-HWC) by the National Board of Health and Wellness Coaching (NBHWC). If the program grows in popularity a second faculty might be needed. Initially, until enrollment reaches a sustainable level it might be possible to utilize adjunct(s) although this is not recommended. There is currently a vacant part-time regular staff position (Nursing Lab Coordinator) that could be converted to full-time This career certificate will be housed within the Professional Health Studies Associate in Applied Science (PHAAS)/Public Health Certificate of Achievement (PBHCE) programs which have a program director for administrative support.

We will rely on local, regional, and national partnerships to ensure sufficient practicum training for students.

## 2. Physical Facilities

The program is an online program but will be administratively housed at South Omaha Campus (SOC).

## 3. Instructional Equipment and Informational Resources:

Technology needs are minimal. Faculty will use their assigned computers and leverage the Canvas LMS. Resources will be used from the National Board of Health and Wellness Coaching (NBHWC) to ensure the program meets their standards for program approval. We will also strive to align with the American Holistic Nurses Association for program endorsement which is a natural affiliation given the history and quality of our nursing programs.

## 4. Budget Projections:

Refer to attached Table 1 for Projected Expenses and Table 2 for Projected Revenue.

We will request conversion of a part-time regular staff position to a FT faculty position to fill initial needs.

### **D. Avoidance of Unnecessary Duplication**

There is currently one program within 200 miles of Omaha with National Board of Health and Wellness Coaching (NBHWC) approval. Creighton University offers a Masters of Science in Integrative Health and Wellness (Health and Wellness Coaching Concentration). Given that the MCC program will be offered at the Career Certificate/Associate's level and delivered online it will fill a pretty substantial void in the higher education landscape.

### **E. Consistency with the Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education**

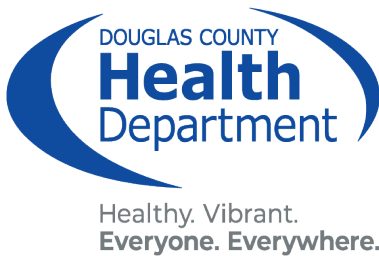
Major Statewide Goals:

The proposed MCC Health and Wellness Coaching Career Certificate Program is consistent with the statewide goals featured in Nebraska's Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education by:

- Meeting the needs of students in MCC's four-county service area. There are currently no career certificates/associate's programs in Health and Wellness Coaching in the four counties served by MCC.
- Meeting the state's needs: The proposed program would be the only career certificate/associate's level program within 200 miles of Omaha. Since it will be offered online there is a potential to fill a need beyond the four-county service area.
- Meeting educational needs through partnerships and collaboration: We have begun conversations with members of the Health Professions Advisory Board as a first step to identifying potential community partners.
- Facilities Planning to Meet Educational Needs: Previously addressed.

## Appendices

### Letters of Support



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To Protect, Promote, and Prioritize the Health of our Entire Community  
Midtown Campus, 1111 South 41<sup>st</sup> Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68105

December 9, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I am excited to hear that MCC is pursuing a career certificate in Health and Wellness Coaching. Health and Wellness Coaching is a growing and needed profession to address chronic health conditions and unhealthy behaviors. Assuring that such professionals are educated to provide sound guidance in a world of misinformation and evolving trends is vital. The COVID pandemic revealed gaps in our nation's ability to respond quickly and effectively to Public Health issues. Health and Wellness Coaches will be important in strengthening our capacity to ensure American's are healthier and addressing health care delivery given the decline in the number of physicians and other professionals. Only one University in the Omaha Metro provides formal education in Health and Wellness Coaching, but only at the graduate level. Offering this certificate at MCC will enable that this track is more broadly accessible to those seeking to succeed in this field.

Health and Wellness Coaches expand the reach of entities like my employer, the Douglas County Health Department, and others like the VA. As a member of the MCC Health Profession's Advisory Board I look forward to the addition of this and other programs. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lindsay Huse'.

Dr. Lindsay Huse  
Health Director  
Douglas County Health Department



1045 Garden of the Gods Rd.  
Suite F  
Colorado Springs, CO 80907  
<https://thewellnesseffect.org>

To whom it may concern,

This letter is to demonstrate support for the future program at the Nebraska Metropolitan Community College's Health and Wellness Coaching Program (Career Certificate). Under Dr. Hal Strough, they have formed a team and program that exceeds the NBHWC standards. They have ensured the new standards have been implemented into their curriculum. Given the student population and demographic, this opportunity helps both the college and NBHWC by increasing health coaching in vulnerable areas.

I recommend this program without hesitation and feel strongly that, if approved, they will go on to train coaches who are ready for the NBHWC exam and ready for their careers. Earlier in my career I worked in the VA system and we employed health and wellness coaches with great success.

Please reach out for any questions.

Very Respectfully,

Charles Noel, LCSW, C-IAYT, NBC-HWC  
CEO, The Wellness Effect  
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