

A passion for nursing



Kevin Mertz/Standard Journal

From left, Central Susquehanna LPN Career Center student **Nicole Martinez** practiced resuscitation on a baby mannequin while receiving instruction from **Kim Delbo**, the center's new director.

Kim Delbo named LPN Career Center director

BY KEVIN MERTZ
Staff writer

LEWISBURG — Kim Delbo has great pride in the accomplishments students attain after graduating from the Central Susquehanna LPN Career Center.

As she stood beside student Nicole Martinez, practicing resuscitation on a baby mannequin, Delbo spoke about the success the school's graduates have attained recently.

Students who graduate from the school are eligible to take the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Li-

censing Exam for Practical Nurses (NCLEX-PN).

All 15 members of the school's December class recently passed the exam. The national passing rate, according to Delbo, is 82 percent.

"We are very proud of the students and the faculty," Delbo said. "It reflects our culture of excellence. We are very, very proud of the accomplishment."

On July 1, Delbo became the career center's new director. She replaces Carol Barbarich, who retired after about a decade in the position.

The center opened in 1967 under the auspices of the

Danville Area School District. It was acquired by the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU) in 1997 and moved to its current location in Lewisburg in 2009.

Delbo is the school's fifth director.

"I feel honored and excited (to serve as director)," she said. "I see great things in store for both the program and the community."

While handling her directorship responsibilities, Delbo will also teach some classes at the school. Her career at the center started in 2013, when she was hired as a

◆ See LPN on Page 6

faculty member.

Currently, 88 students are enrolled in the school, including 47 full-time students.

The full-time class, Delbo said, is a 12-month program, running from August to August. The part-time course is 24 months in length and begins each December.

Since an early age, Delbo has had a desire to help people in their most vulnerable moments.

“I wasn’t 100 percent sure which area to pursue in health care,” she said. “At one point, I was pre-med.”

Eventually, she realized her true calling in the field.

“Nursing was the way to go and I’m so glad I did,” Delbo said. “It was one of the best choices I made.”

Delbo, who grew up in Kulpmont and now lives in Elysburg with her husband and three children, received an associate degree in nursing through Thomas Jefferson University.

She received a bachelor’s degree in nursing and a school nurse certification through Slippery Rock University, and earned a master’s degree from Bloomsburg University.

Delbo specializes in teaching maternal-child nursing at the center.

“I’m a very passionate person,” Delbo said. “I have a strong commitment to excellence... We’re not just training nurses. We are investing in their lives. We want them to be the best in every area of their lives.”

She said the school’s 12-member staff truly cares about the students.

“(Staff) are approachable and they will help the students in any way they see fit,” Delbo said.

As a faculty member, Delbo had an open-door policy where she was always available during school hours to assist her students.

“I take that into this role as I assimilate into the director position,” she said. “We have had a legacy of leadership at the school that I would like to continue.”

Delbo said the center maintains strong partnerships with a number of area health care providers, including Geisinger Medical Center, Evangelical Community Hospital, Nottingham Village, Buffalo Valley Lutheran Village, HCR Manor Care, RiverWoods and a number of area school districts where students can observe nurses in action.

When the full-time students first enter the program in August, they hone their skills in a state-of-the-art lab at the school, which features mannequins which can simulate various health conditions.

From October through December, the nursing students spend one day per week receiving hands-on experience in a health care setting.

That experience intensifies January through April, as they spend two days per week in a clinical setting. In April through August, the students are in a professional environment three days per week.

The students rotate through the health areas they work in order to receive the maximum amount of training in the most settings.

In addition to the class which earned a 100 percent pass rate on the NCLEX-PN exam, Delbo said 98 percent of students in the prior class passed on their first attempt to take the test. Previously, three other classes had a 100 percent pass rate.

“The community needs more practical nurses,” Delbo said.

By 2022, Delbo said the U.S. Department of Labor is projecting there will be a 22 percent increase in the need for practical nurses, due to the aging population.

“We need to supply that demand,” she said.

According to Delbo, an LPN entering their career field may earn an average starting salary of \$37,000 to \$47,000 per year.

Applications for the school’s next part-time class, which starts in January, will be open until Aug. 15. Applications for the next full-time program will be accepted Aug. 2 through March 3.

For more information on the school, call 570-768-4960 or visit csiu.org/lpn.

Staff writer Kevin Mertz be reached at 570-742-9671 or email kevin@standard-journal.com.



From left, **Kim Delbo**, the new director of the Central Susquehanna LPN Career Center, and student **Samantha Switzer** use stethoscopes to examine a 'patient' at the school. Kevin Mertz/Standard Journal