



## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 5, 2019

**For more information, contact:**

Jonas Macapinlac  
Director of Integrated Marketing Communications  
University of Guam  
Tel: (671) 735-2944  
Cell: (671) 787-1010  
Email: [jmac@triton.uog.edu](mailto:jmac@triton.uog.edu)

Malory Cruz  
Special Projects Coordinator  
Guam Department of Labor  
Tel: (671) 475-4673  
Email: [malory.cruz@dol.guam.gov](mailto:malory.cruz@dol.guam.gov)

### **18 caregivers advance to Certified Nursing Assistants**

The island now has 18 more certified nursing assistants, or CNAs, following a three-month apprenticeship program provided by the University of Guam and the Guam Department of Labor. The CNAs are employees of Catholic Social Service and Health Services of the Pacific, where they worked as caregivers prior to starting the Nursing Assistant Education Program in June.

The demand for CNAs in Guam is growing with a higher vacancy rate than the U.S. mainland, said Margaret Hattori-Uchima, dean of UOG's School of Health. Based on a needs assessment the school conducted in February among Guam Memorial Hospital, Guam Regional Medical City, the Division of Senior Citizens, and Health Services of the Pacific, there was a 45% vacancy rate for nursing assistants, compared to the U.S. rate of 22%.

"Through this cohort, we have increased the number of CNAs on island, and we are glad to have helped identify a solution that addresses the certification needs and up-skilling for allied health professionals," said David Dell'Isola, director of the Guam Department of Labor.

CNAs work under the supervision of a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse preparing rooms and supplies, assisting with tests and procedures, and directly assisting patients. CNAs, unlike caregivers, must undergo a set number of classroom and clinical training hours and then pass both a written and skills exam. The apprentices received 160 hours of training after work and on weekends and were then certified by the Guam Board of Nurse Examiners after passing the national certification exam.

“We are thrilled to announce that the class had a 100% pass rate, which we attribute to the strong partnership among our faculty and staff, the Guam Department of Labor, and the employers,” Hattori-Uchima said. “These 18 CNAs will now return to their employers with enhanced skills they can begin using right away in caring for patients.”

The program reached a less common segment of the population when it comes to nursing education — with the average age of the class being 43 and nearly half being Pacific Islanders of CHamoru or Micronesian descent.

The training program was funded through the State Apprenticeship Expansion grant, a \$1.7 million grant to increase registered apprentices in Guam by 300 workers within allied health, telecommunications, construction, and hospitality. The funding covered the students’ tuition, uniforms, books, clearances, and physical exams to be part of the program.

“We look forward to working with more community partners to implement additional programs similar to the CNA Registered Apprenticeship program that help develop our workforce,” Dell’Isola said.

###



Eighteen caregivers employed with Catholic Social Service and Health Services of the Pacific became certified nursing assistants last month after a three-month apprenticeship program through University of Guam and the Guam Department of Labor.

*Photo courtesy of University of Guams*