



# Collaborate with Community: Charleston Area RT Employment Planning

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## INTRODUCTION

A single university's initiative to publish information on the role and benefits of becoming a respiratory therapist (RT) turned into a community-wide collaborative of hospitals and schools working together to address the demand for RTs and plan for the future.

In 2022, the Medical University of South Carolina kicked off a publication called "[Roadmap to Respiratory Therapy](#)," which featured information about and links to the Trident Technical College Respiratory Care program. According to Karen Simmons, MSRC, RRT-NPS, RPFT, Program Director, Respiratory Care, Trident Technical College, "our joint promotion of the Roadmap quickly led to distributing it to every hospital in the region and encouraging the hospitals to customize it for their own recruitment purposes. It was a win-win."

## HOW IT WORKS

Throughout 2022, the MUSC and Trident team met monthly along with the Respiratory Care program's Advisory Board Committee composed of area educators and hospital managers. Christy McLean, BSRT, RRT, says of the meetings: "We routinely share information about recruitment activities, including anecdotal feedback about what works and what does not."

"At one point, we had live Tuesday morning sessions online where hospital employees and staff RTs could connect and share information, ask questions, and discuss the profession," Christy adds. "It was a trial that we are considering re-deploying because of the potential to capture the attention of care techs, transporters and others who might be looking for new career opportunities."

The collaborative found great value in targeting guidance counselors at high schools, middle schools and private schools. "We created a detailed spreadsheet of schools with contact information and then divided and conquered by county to do outreach," Karen says.

Collective efforts have been so successful, MUSC hosted the first Respiratory Care Summit in 2022 to share the Roadmap and other best practices with the South Carolina Society for Respiratory Care.



## OPPORTUNITY

Joining forces on a shared goal is a sure path to quicker progress. Start by further opening channels of communication with colleagues at area hospitals and health systems to discuss how your program can support their staffing needs. Determine their interests in joint planning and recruitment and explore how to best share resources to elevate your recruitment programs.