



## COMMISSION ON ACCREDITATION FOR RESPIRATORY CARE

July 19, 2024

Heather Bigard, President  
Respiratory Care Program  
Lake Sumter State College  
9501 US Hwy 441  
Leesburg, FL 34788

RE: Program Number 200671

Dear Ms. Bigard:

At its July 2024 meeting, the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) voted to confer **Provisional Accreditation** to the AS Degree Entry into Respiratory Care Professional Practice Program at Lake Sumter State College in Leesburg, FL. It is the determination of CoARC that the Program has demonstrated sufficient evidence to initiate a Program in accordance with the CoARC Accreditation Standards. Effective July 12, 2024, under the authority of this Provisional Accreditation, the Program is allowed to admit its first class of students. The maximum enrollment is approved at **1 cohort per calendar year of up to 20 students per cohort**.

In addition to maintaining on-going compliance with the Standards, the Program must meet all administrative requirements specified in the CoARC Accreditation Policies and Procedures Manual. One of those requirements is to submit all requested and scheduled documentation to the Executive Office and Program Referee in a timely manner as stated in CoARC Policy 4.03. Accordingly, the Program must electronically file an Annual Report of Current Status each year. The first of these Reports will be due on or before **July 1, 2025**. The Executive Office will be contacting the Program at the appropriate time to provide the specifics of setting up, completing, and submitting that Annual Report of Current Status.

Under this Provisional Accreditation, the students subsequently admitted to and graduated from the Program will be recognized by the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC) as being eligible to sit for the appropriate credentialing examination(s), if all other requirements for admission to the examination(s) are met by the graduate. Students who may have been admitted to this Program prior to the above date will not be recognized by the NBRC.

A subsequent step in the Initiation of Accreditation process will be to prepare the "Continuing Accreditation Self-Study Report" (CSSR) and submit it, with appropriate fees, to CoARC within six (6) months following the deadline date of the Annual Report of Current Status showing three (3) reporting years of outcomes. The deadline date for the CSSR is dependent on the establishment of the expected graduation date of the Program's first cohort which will be determined for Lake Sumter State College with the submission of the next Annual Report of Current Status. The Program will be notified once the CSSR due date has been established. When your Referee deems that the CSSR is acceptable, the Executive Office will schedule an on-site visit, which must occur within six (6) months following Referee approval of the CSSR.

The Program must also comply with proper disclosure policies (11.01 and 11.02) which state the following:

**11.01** The CoARC requires institutions and programs to be accurate in reporting a program's accreditation status to the public.

- A. Programs must inform all current students and applicants in writing of any changes in the program's accreditation status.
- B. If an institution is seeking CoARC accreditation for a program and has submitted a Letter of Intent Application or has received an Approval of Intent, the institution must make the following disclosure:

*"[Name of sponsor] is currently in the process of seeking CoARC accreditation for a respiratory care program. However, [Name of sponsor] can provide no assurance that accreditation will be granted by the CoARC."*

- C. If accreditation has been withdrawn (Voluntary or Involuntary Withdrawal), the sponsor must no longer refer to the program as being accredited.
- D. Use of language relating to accreditation other than what is designated by the CoARC requires prior written permission from the CoARC.
- E. Any communication source that provides information to the public regarding the program must accurately reflect current accreditation status. The failure of a program to do so is a violation of *Standards 5.01 and 5.02; DA5.1 and 5.2; E1 and E2*.

**11.02** If a program holds Provisional Accreditation status, the program's sponsor must use the following language when referring to that status. The program website must state:

*"The [name of program, CoARC program number(s), degree(s) awarded, and campus location] holds Provisional Accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care ([www.coarc.com](http://www.coarc.com))."*

*This status signifies that a program with an Approval of Intent has demonstrated sufficient compliance with the Standards (through submission of an acceptable Provisional Accreditation Self-Study Report (PSSR) and any other documentation required by the CoARC, as well as satisfactory completion of an initial on-site visit), to be allowed to admit students. It is recognized as an accredited program by the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC), which provides enrolled students who complete the program with eligibility for the Respiratory Care Credentialing Examination(s). The program will remain on Provisional Accreditation until it achieves Continuing Accreditation."*

CoARC commends you and your colleagues for your commitment to quality respiratory care education, as demonstrated by your participation in programmatic accreditation. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Smalling', is displayed on a light gray rectangular background.

Thomas Smalling, PhD, RRT, RRT-SDS, RPFT, RPSGT, FAARC  
Chief Executive Officer

cc: Christine Ramos, DNP, Dean  
Catrina Lovelady, BSRT, RRT, Program Director  
National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC)  
Lindsay Fox, MEd, RRT-NPS, Referee