TEEX to launch training program in therapeutics manufacturing

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COLLEGE STATION - The Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) is partnering with three other educational organizations to build a comprehensive training program for workers in the therapeutics manufacturing industry. The goal is to provide a trained biomedical and pharmaceutical workforce to fill positions in research and manufacturing needed to support the One Health Plus™ Biocorridor initiative in Bryan-College Station.

The project was launched by The Texas A&M University System and the Research Valley Partnership as a center for education, research, development, commercialization and the production of pharmaceuticals and vaccines. The “Biocorridor” includes hundreds of acres along Texas Highway 47 between the Texas A&M Health Science Center campus in Bryan and the A&M College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences on University Drive in College Station.

“TEEX is working with Blinn College on developing training programs for biotechnicians and other positions needed for the therapeutics manufacturing industry,” said TEEX Director and CEO Gary Sera. “This is a new initiative for the agency and a unique partnership.” In addition to Blinn College, TEEX is partnering with Texas A&M University’s College of Chemical Engineering and the Texas Engineering Experiment Station (TEES) to develop a comprehensive training program to be offered at the pilot-scale biomanufacturing facilities and large-scale process equipment of the National Center for Therapeutics Manufacturing (NCTM), located on the Texas A&M University campus.

TEEX will provide customized technical training, short courses and certificate programs designed for entry-level personnel going to work in pharmaceutical or medical device manufacturing. “We are building courses in tandem with Blinn College and submitting the curriculum to SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board so they will be approved,” said Jenny Ligon, TEEX’s Manager of External Relations.

The initial curriculum development was supported by a $588,000 Wagner-Peyser grant from the Texas Workforce Commission. A TEEX curriculum team led by Kevin Gumieny and Amy Auyer is developing five courses including Introduction to Therapeutics Manufacturing, Facility Operations and Safety, Quality Systems for Therapeutics Manufacturing, Drug Substance and Drug Product Manufacturing. This training will incorporate classroom lectures and hands-on learning opportunities at NCTM, and will be provided to current and prospective technicians and operators that comprise more than two-thirds of the biomanufacturing workforce.

TEEX is establishing articulation agreements with Blinn College, which will allow the coursework to transfer into an accredited one-year certificate program and two-year Associate of Applied Science degree in Therapeutics Manufacturing, which is currently being reviewed by SACS and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. “We hope to begin offering courses in the summer of 2012,” Ligon said.

In addition, Texas A&M University, through the Dwight Look College of Engineering, is designing certificate and degree programs in therapeutics manufacturing and biomanufacturing at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Watch One Health Plus Biocorridor Overview Video.