



**Tony at Edmonds Community College**  
**I-CATCH (Innovations in Creating Access to Careers in Healthcare)**  
**Lynnwood, Washington**

## **A new start is never easy, but for Tony, it was worth it.**



**Tony was living in Alaska, working as a Patient Care Technician at a regional hospital after serving four years in the US Navy as a Hospital Corpsman. At this time, his life at home became stressful.**

His teenage son developed a chemical dependency and became homeless. Soon after, his wife divorced him. Feeling powerless, he moved to Washington State to be closer to his father.

Tony hoped his move would be a fresh start, but he dealt with blow after blow. His military training was not accredited for licensure as a healthcare professional in the State of Washington. He felt locked out of healthcare and took a job at a gypsum recycling plant that was 60 miles away. That winter he was injured on the job, and his father's health quickly declined. On a snowy day, his truck went into a spin and crashed into a guardrail. With no transportation, he had to quit his job. After two months of unemployment, Tony walked into the local WorkSource office for help with his résumé. He had no intention of going back to school, but he walked out of the office excited about the Creating Access To Careers in Healthcare (CATCH) program.

In 2014, Tony applied and was accepted into the CATCH Program at Everett Community College, part of the HPOG 1.0 program at Edmonds Community College. Most of the students were 20 years his junior. He felt overwhelmed by technology, and wanted to quit, but the program provided him with structure and holistic support.

A College Success course helped Tony re-acclimate to school. Tony earned a CATCH provided laptop through satisfactory progression in his classes and a digital literacy course, giving him in-home access to the internet. CATCH staff and community navigators guided Tony, helping him identify career goals, develop an education plan, and attend employment workshops. His HPOG Employment Navigator

and personal drive to secure employment led to an entry level position at a home care agency.

In 2016, Edmonds started its 2nd generation HPOG program, [Innovations in Creating Access To Careers in Healthcare \(I-CATCH\)](#), and immediately reached out to support HPOG 1.0 participants. Tony chose to continue his studies and began an Associate's Degree in Applied Sciences in Medical Assisting. Throughout the coursework, he met regularly with I-CATCH instruction support staff who constantly told Tony, "You got this." He also says they were "good at giving a kindly boot to motivate me."

Tony completed his Medical Assistant Associate's Degree, passed the national certification exam from the American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA), and received his Medical Assistant Certified License from the State of Washington. Tony is now employed by The Everett Clinic, the largest clinic group in the county earning over \$39,500 annually.

**"The assurance, technical support and financial support removed obstacles in my path throughout the entire four-year experience. The skill of the CATCH and later I-CATCH programs at finding and removing obstacles for students was and is impressive."**

This success story was self-identified by the grantee and information contained in this document was provided by the grantee.