Stepful Acquires 45-Year-Old Nursing School to Scale Healthcare Talent Development through Accredited Degrees Programs

Stepful will leverage the Missouri-based college to strengthen "School as Service" offering, enabling employers to build their own healthcare talent pipelines



Stepful College, formerly known as St. Louis College of Health Careers, offers accredited nursing and respiratory therapy programs designed to help students build clinical skills and advance their careers

NEW YORK CITY, NY, UNITED STATES, September 15, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Stepful, a workforce training platform that is redefining how America's largest health systems build, train, and retain their talent, today announced the acquisition of St. Louis College of Health Careers (SLCHC), a 45-year-old ABHES accredited institution with campuses in downtown St. Louis and Fenton, Missouri.

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>
> *Carl Madi, CEO and Co-Founder of Stepful*

SLCHC will continue to operate under its new name, Stepful College, effective August 25, 2026.

Stepful's acquisition of SLCHC is another transformative step in the company's work to reshape the landscape of healthcare jobs, cultivating the next generation of the workforce and new career pathways.

The acquisition comes as healthcare systems across the country continue to face labor shortages and a broken talent pipeline for badly needed roles ranging from rad techs and surgical technology professionals to nurses. Even as demand for these jobs grows, the number of accredited programs training the next generation of healthcare workers continues to shrink.

The number of accredited surgical technology programs, for example, fell more than 500 to about 430 in recent years, a 14% decline. Radiologic technology (rad tech) programs are in a similar squeeze, with enrollment dropping another 8% in 2025–2026 alone. And nursing

programs face a parallel bottleneck, with U.S. nursing schools turning away a record 93,000 qualified applicants in 2025 alone, not because of a lack of interest, but for lack of faculty, clinical sites, and classroom capacity to teach them.

"Health systems don't just need more medical assistants and patient care techs. They need nurses, respiratory therapists, and other healthcare professionals in roles that require graduates from degree programs," said Carl Madi, CEO and Co-Founder of Stepful. "Stepful College lets us build that pathway end to end, from a student's first day with zero medical experience to a bachelor's degree from an ABHES accredited institution, while continuing to work. By doing this, and working tightly with employers we can fill badly needed roles and create pathways to six figure jobs within six years."

Founded in 1981 by Steve Barsam and Rush Robinson, SLCHC has spent 45 years building a pathway into healthcare careers for working adults, graduating more than 3,000 students who now work across the St. Louis metro area as nurses, respiratory therapists, and allied health professionals.

The college acquisition closed in December 2025, bringing an ABHES accredited, degree-granting institution into the Stepful ecosystem for the first time, expanding the company's reach into nursing, respiratory therapy, and other roles that require formal degrees rather than certification alone.

Stepful plans to scale Stepful College's existing nursing and respiratory therapy degree programs nationally, and to launch new programs. The student experience will be enhanced by Stepful's proprietary learning technology and student support model, designed to support working adult learners. Stepful's employer partners include health systems like Providence and Mount Sinai. Partners will now have the option to embed Stepful College's degree programs alongside Stepful's existing training portfolio, which includes Medical Assistant, Surgical Tech, Patient Care Tech, Pharmacy Tech, and Sterile Processing programs .

The acquisition builds on the foundation of the career advancement pathways Stepful has built for its non-degree programs, now allowing a student to move from zero medical experience through a frontline role and into a nursing or bachelor's degree program while continuing to work.

"We built this school in 1981 to give working adults in St. Louis a real path into healthcare," said Steve Barsam, co-founder of SLCHC. "Stepful can take that same mission and put it in front of working adults across the country."

Stepful has now graduated more than 40,000 students across its full portfolio of programs.

About Stepful

Stepful offers accelerated, affordable training for healthcare careers, and recently announced a Series C series to scale its AI-powered "School-as-a-Service" healthcare training platform. Stepful is building the next generation of allied health professionals. For more information, visit www.stepful.com.

About St. Louis College of Health Careers / Stepful College
Founded in 1981, St. Louis College of Health Careers has trained working adults for careers in nursing, respiratory therapy, and allied health for more than four decades. Following its acquisition by Stepful, the college will operate as Stepful College, extending its mission with Stepful's technology and national platform.

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This press release can be viewed online at: https://www.einpresswire.com/article/942265986

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