

Exploring Health Careers

There are many career opportunities for health professionals. The following information includes brief descriptions of the types of careers that pre-health students may consider. To learn more about these careers, go to www.okhealthcareers.com.

Clinic and Laboratory

Cytotechnologist: Cytology is the study of the structure and the function of cells. Performs technical and analytical tests consisting of microscopic examination of body tissue directed at early detection of cancer cells and other diseases.

Histotechnologist: Prepares microscope slides of human tissue for pathological examination.

Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT): Conducts routine tests in clinical laboratories for use in treatment and diagnosis of disease and performs related duties; urinalysis, complete blood counts, prepares media, some microbiology, prepares formulas and processes; may also perform venipuncture on patients of all ages. Requires certification by ASCP or AMT.

Medical Technologist: Performs skilled, specialized work in the conduct of all phases of clinical laboratory technology, including hematology, chemistry, bacteriology and blood banking. Makes analytical diagnoses and prepares reports to aid in the treatment of disease. Requires technologist designation by ASCP, AMT, HHS or ISCLT.

Phlebotomist: Collects blood specimens and body fluids according to assignment and requisition. Performs some technical and clerical duties as assigned. High school graduate with formal technical training.

Diagnostic Care

Cardiac Monitor Technician: Primary duty is the cardiac monitoring of patients on a telemetry unit. Works under the direction of an RN.

Ultrasound Technologist: (Diagnostic Medical Sonographer) Performs ultrasound procedures at a technical level not requiring constant supervision. Performs a variety of examinations to produce ultrasound tracings; applies prescribed methods of ultrasound energy. Training as a registered technologist or a registered diagnostic medical sonographer.

EKG Technician: (Electrocardiographic Technician, ECG Technician) Performs technical work in the operation of electrocardiography equipment. Takes tracing, cleans equipment, and mounts and files reports.

Electroencephalographic Technician: (EEG Technician) Measures differences in electrical potential between various areas of the brain by means of an electroencephalograph impulse frequency.

Nuclear Medicine Technologist: Performs technical work in diagnostic test involving radioisotope material. Assists physicians in preparing therapeutic dosage; and instructs medical radiological students. Requirements: A.R.R.T. registered and completion of one-year course in Nuclear Medicine Technology.

Radiographer: Operates and maintains equipment and takes radiographs of various portions of the body to assist radiologist in detection of foreign bodies and diagnosis of disease and injuries. Positions patients under machine and regulates controls. May perform x-ray examinations under sterile, surgical conditions. May also process exposed film by automatic developer or hand tank solution.

CT Technologist: (C.T. Scanner, Radiologic Special Procedures Technologist, MRI Technician) Performs computerized tomographic procedures for the diagnosis of disease and injury using a CT scanning device according to protocols established by radiologists. Must be registered by the American Registry of Radiological Technologists (ARRT).

Dietetic Care

Dietitian: Directs, supervises and coordinates the functions and activities of the dietary office. Responsible for coordinating diet adaptations with house menus and conducts diet consultations with patients, nursing and medical personnel. Requires completion of ADA dietetics internship. Bachelor's degree from an accredited school with a major in nutrition preferred.

Dietetic Technician: Provides services in assigned areas of food service management, teaches principles of food and nutrition, and provides dietary consultation, under the direction of the dietitian.

Food Service Supervisor: Supervises and coordinates activities of kitchen workers who prepare and cook foods for patients, staff, and visitors.

Direct Care

Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) – Basic: Assists professional emergency room personnel in the administration of emergency room treatment. Administers first aid treatment and transports patients.

Emergency Medical Technician – Paramedic: Administers initial emergency treatment at emergency scene. Takes and records patient's vital signs. Transports sick or injured patients to the emergency room. Observes and records patient's condition and reactions to drugs and/or treatment while on route to the emergency room. Requirements: Certified after passing the National Registry Exam or E.M.T. Paramedic.

Licensed Practical Nurse: Under the direction of a registered nurse or team leader, provides general nursing care to patients. Attends to the general health care and comfort of the patient;

observes and records treatment and patient progress and reports to supervisor patient's condition or reaction. Administers prescribed medications. Requirements: Licensed Practical Nurse in the State of Oklahoma.

Nurse Assistant - Advanced Unlicensed Assistant: (Created by Oklahoma Law in 2000.) Under the supervision of the registered nurse, performs direct patient care to include activities of daily living. Conducts basic diagnostic testing. Performs selected sterile collection and procedures.

Health Information Management

Head of Health Information Management: Supervises departmental personnel involved in maintaining permanent medical records of all provider organization patients. Primarily responsible for coding and abstracting diagnoses, treatments and other information from patient records. Ensures that the provider organization's medical records are maintained in compliance with all accreditation and governmental regulatory agencies. Assists provider organization staff by providing

Home Health Aide: Provides personal care, observation and reporting of health condition. Assists patients in all activities of daily living/personal care under the supervision of a Registered Nurse.

Nursing Assistant: Responsible for performing simple specified nursing duties related to patient care, such as bathing, vital signs, enemas, non-sterile surgical dressings, and patient observation. Assists in preparation of supplies and helps maintain cleanliness and order on the nursing unit. Entry level job requiring some formal training or related experience.

Registered Nurse: Provides professional nursing care by utilizing the nursing process to care for patients within an assigned unit. Coordinates care planning with other disciplines. Requirements: Registered Nurse in the State of Oklahoma.

Surgical Technician, Certified: (Operating Room Technician, Scrub Technician) Under supervision of the operating room staff nurse: works with the surgeon, in preparing the operating room, sterilizing supplies and equipment, preparing the operative site and draping the patient. Handles instruments, sponges, sutures, catheters, drains and dressings to insure asepsis and safety to the patient. Requirements: Certified as a Surgical Technologist by the Association of Surgical Technologists, Inc.

recorded medical information upon request. Typically reports to President/CEO or VP level.

Medical Librarian: Performs professional reference services through on-line computer software and manual searches. Ensures that multiple medical databases are correct and operational. Requires a Master's Degree in Library Science.

Coder: Using ICD-9-CM standards, codes and abstracts medical records for reimbursement purposes.

Registered Health Information Technician: Assists in the supervision of the medical records office and participates in the compilation and maintenance of hospital medical records; assists in

preparing statistical reports; codes diseases and operations; maintains indices and takes records to court; prepares reports and correspondence.

Medical Transcriptionist: Using transcribing machine and keyboard, transcribes medical, technical, and personal patient information, including admitting notes, history and physical examinations, operative notes, cystoscopic reports, discharge summaries and consultation reports. Checks and distributes reports to physicians and patient records.

Medical Secretarial

Admitting Clerk: Interviews incoming patients; types information on admitting forms; may prepare identification bracelets for patients; explains hospital regulations; and assigns patients to rooms based on the nature of the illness and the type of accommodations available. May assist in insurance matters.

Medical Assistant: Provides a basic level of care and treatment to patients. Assists with vitals, patient history, charting and simple patient procedures.

Medical Staff Coordinator: Serves as the liaison between the medical staff and all hospital departments to coordinate and provide overall continuity of medical staff activities. Also responsible for the process of medical staff credentialing, and maintenance of all records related to credentialing.

Unit Secretary: Contributes to patient care through the coordination of clerical and hospital functions on each patient care unit. Receives admitted patients, initiates patient files, takes action on doctors' orders, processes discharges, transfers and expirations, and prepares hospital statistical reports. Maintains supply levels for unit and reports unit needs to Housekeeping, Maintenance, etc.

Mental Health

Mental Health Technician: Observes, assesses, counsels, and cares for patients with mental problems. Provides therapeutic intervention when indicated. Provides individual, family and group therapy. Position does not require formal education.

Other Professional Positions

Health Care Facility Administrator: Plans, organizes, directs, and coordinates administrative activities for a hospital, medical facility, or major medical service.

Head of MIS: Responsible for all provider organization information systems activities, including: systems analysis, programming, and computer and auxiliary operations. Sets policies and procedures, technical standards and methods, and priorities. Acts as liaison between information systems and other functions in the provider organization. This is the top information systems officer. Typically reports to the President/CEO or VP level.

Community/School Health Educator: Teaches positive development of one's knowledge, attitude, and practice concerning personal, family, and community health.

Supportive Care

Biomedical Engineer: Performs engineering work in a hospital or health care setting. Makes inspections, performs surveys, compiles and studies data and systems. Requires an engineering degree with a medical emphasis.

Biomedical Electronics Technician: Responsible for the maintenance and repair of a variety of diagnostic, analytic, and patient monitoring equipment such as x-ray equipment and patient vital signs or cardiac monitors, auto-analyzers, external pacemakers, electrosurgical cauterizers, EKG and EEG machines. Tests all equipment for calibration and electrical safety prior to patient's use. Requires training in electronics with major emphasis on biomedical electronics. AAMI certification preferred but not required.

Social Service Worker, MSW: Secures background information from patient and his family for social evaluation of his environment and family relationships. Discusses information obtained in patient and family interviews with physicians, nursing staff and other hospital and community personnel. Assists patient in finding resources he will need in his home following discharge. Acts in a liaison role between hospital and family when patient is transferred to other hospital facilities. Requires masters degree in social work (MSW).

Therapeutic Care

Audiologist: Develops and administers programs for the evaluation and treatment of persons with communication disorders directly associated with hearing loss.

Occupational Therapist (Registered): Evaluates patients and selects appropriate adaptive equipment and assistive devices. Works with physicians, social service, nursing and others to coordinate patients' treatment plans. Requirements: Registered by the American Occupational Therapy Association and licensed by the Oklahoma State Board of Examiners.

Occupational Therapy Assistant (Certified): Uses selected therapeutic occupational therapy activities to instruct patients in the activities of daily living. Requirements: Graduate of a two-year occupational therapy program and licensed or eligible for licensure in the State of Oklahoma.

Orthotist, Prosthetist: Works from physician's prescription to provide devices for the orthopedically disabled; takes measurements for, designs and fits artificial limbs and braces; a bench technician fabricates and repairs the devices. Orthotists make and fit orthopedic braces. Prosthetists make and fit artificial limbs.

Pharmacist (Registered): Performs those duties associated with the manufacture, preparation, inspection and distribution of drugs, chemicals, antibiotics, biological and pharmaceutical preparations used in the treatment of patients. Prepares and maintains those records, reports, etc., required in the preparation, dispensing and storage of medications. Requires state licensure.

Pharmacy Technician: Assists Pharmacist in processing prescriptions and other drug orders. Enters information on patient drug profiles, pulls prescribed medication from shelf, enters medication charges into the computer, restocks shelves, and handles telephone inquiries. Requires

one year of comparable experience in a hospital pharmacy or commercial drug store. Requirements: Pharmacy Technician Permit issued by the Oklahoma State Board of Pharmacy.

Physical Therapist (Registered): Treats patients by administration of physical therapy procedures and modalities such as exercise, heat, electrical devices and massage. Follows prescription by a physician. Evaluates and recommends additional modification of treatment, and is responsible for safety of patients. Designs and uses adaptive exercise equipment. Registration and state license required.

Physical Therapy Aide: Assists physical therapist and physical therapy assistant in preparing patients and equipment for treatment; transports patients to and from physical therapy department.

Physical Therapist Assistant: Administers patient treatment in accordance with physician referral and treatment plan. Provides supervision to physical therapy technicians/aides. Requires graduation from an APTA approved program.

Radiation Therapy Technologist ARRT: Performs radiation therapy and radiographic procedures involving radioactive substances using specialized X-ray equipment and hyper baric chambers. Responsible for equipment operation, maintenance, ordering, storage and use of supplies. Maintains treatment records and prepares operational reports as required.

Recreation Therapist: Establishes, evaluates and coordinates therapeutic recreation program throughout the hospital for hospitalized patients and outpatients in accordance with patients' physical, social and emotional needs. Functions as a resource person for this specialty. Develops and writes patient progress and assessment reports, and treatment plans. Consults and assists recreation therapy coordinator on designing new and therapeutic programs and projects.

Respiratory Therapist, Registered (RRT): Administers oxygen and other nonanesthetic gases to patients by various methods, including intermittent positive pressure; administers aerosol medications; may conduct pulmonary function tests, may do arterial punctures and conduct blood gas determinations. Instructs patients and others in proper use of equipment and may teach maintenance. Keeps records of treatments and patient charges. Requirements: Registered by the National Board of Respiratory Therapy. Licensed by the State of Oklahoma.

Respiratory Therapist, Certified (C.R.T.): Administers all inhalation and resuscitation procedures. Makes periodic oxygen rounds to check patients and resuscitation equipment. Performs a variety of procedures relating to the operation, maintenance and storage of resuscitation equipment. Requirements: Must be a Certified Respiratory Therapist and licensed by the State of Oklahoma.

Speech Pathologist: Diagnoses, treats, and performs research related to speech and language problems. Requirements: License in speech-language pathology from the Oklahoma State Board of Examiners.