



Worksheet: Introduction to Healthcare Careers

Healthcare Values

- Compassion
- Professionalism
- Vulnerability
- Curiosity
- Trustworthiness
- By no means is this a comprehensive list!

Healthcare Professions

Doctor

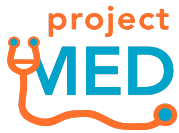
- Education
 - Bachelor's Degree (4 years)
 - MCAT
 - Clinical hours/volunteering, research, leadership
 - Doctor of Allopathic Medicine Degree (M.D.; 4 years)
 - Emphasis on curative care and treatment
 - Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine Degree (D.O.; 4 years)
 - Emphasis on preventive and holistic care of the body
 - Residency (3-8 years)
 - Internal medicine → general physician
 - Non-surgical specialties
 - Surgical specialties
 - Fellowship
 - Specialize even further— mainly for surgical residency graduates
 - E.g.: a neurosurgeon can complete a 2-year fellowship after residency to specialize in pediatric neurosurgery
- General Responsibilities
 - Assess and diagnose symptoms using exams and tests
 - Prescribe and administer treatments and medications
 - Collaborate with teams of nurses, physician assistants, etc.

Physician Assistant (PA)

- Education
 - Bachelor's Degree (4 years)
 - Healthcare Experience (1-3 years)
 - GRE
 - PA Master of Science in Medicine Program (3 years)
- Responsibilities
 - Diagnose illness, develop and manage treatment plans, and prescribe medications
 - Broad general knowledge enables treatment of the “whole patient”
 - Typically collaborate with a physician

Nurse

- Education
 - Associate's Degree in Nursing (ADN) or Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) (3-4 years)
 - Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) (2-5 years) → Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN)
 - National nursing licensure examination (NCLEX)



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- Responsibilities
 - Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA): Helps patients with daily needs
 - Measures vitals, serves meals, transports patients
 - Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN): Works under doctors and RNs
 - Checks blood pressure, prepares injections, collects test samples
 - Registered Nurses (RN): Coordinates patient care and supervises other nurses
 - Provides medicine, monitors treatment, offers emotional support to patients and families

Pharmacist

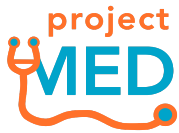
- Education
 - Undergrad (~4 years) → Take Pharmacy College Admission Test (PCAT) → Pharmacy School (4 years) → Formal internship/residency program in pharmacy practice settings (time/hours needed depend on state) → Licensure exams
 - Accelerated programs: direct admission into a six-year program
- Responsibilities
 - Will give the drugs prescribed by physicians and other health practitioners to patients and provide information to patients about medications and their use
 - Provide information and advice regarding drug interactions, side effects, dosage, and proper storage. They often collaborate with physicians to prevent harmful use and drug interactions in the patient
 - Assess the identity, strength, or purity of medication when dispensing medications as prescribed by doctors or dentists.
 - Can perform research, work in a hospital/clinic setting, and at local pharmacies!

Researcher

- Education
 - Undergrad (~4 years) → Master's Degree (2-3 years) OR Doctoral Degrees (Ph. D) (~4-5 years)
 - Options:
 - Postdoctoral fellowship (fellow) or researcher
 - Associate research scientist (don't run their own lab)
 - Principal Investigator (PI) (run their own lab)
 - Industry
 - Teaching (Professors)

Important Notes

- The above pathways are “traditional” routes— that means that they aren't the only ones!
- Many individuals will pursue other careers (e.g.: serve in the army or air force, work in industry)— they then complete a “post-baccalaureate” program (a 2-4 year program you can enroll in at any point in your life) to finish pre-medical requirements before applying to medical school, PA school, etc.
- Many students will also transfer from a community college to a 4-year institution before deciding to pursue graduate medical education
- Fun fact: the average medical student is 24 years old, but it is not uncommon to have peers who are between 35-40 y/o!



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More Healthcare Careers

- Nurse Practitioner
- Physical Therapist
- Cardiac Perfusionist
- Respiratory Therapist
- Genetic Counselor
- Phlebotomist
- Speech Pathologist
- Diagnostic Medical Sonographer
- Child Life Specialist
- ... and many more!

Resources

- [Mayo Clinic Explore Healthcare Careers](#)
- [Association of American Medical Colleges Map to Medical School](#)