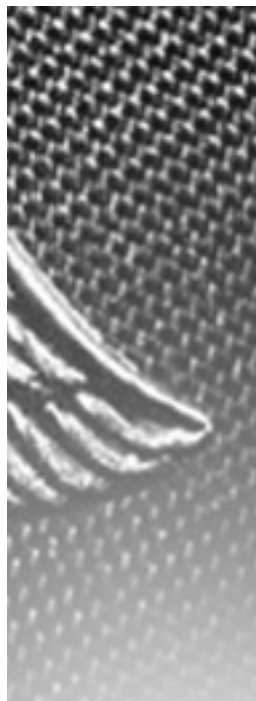


Healthcare



career exploration center
your future in focus

Career Options in Health Care

This booklet contains specific information about careers in the health care industry. Many of these careers do not require any specific undergraduate degree; instead, they may require a graduate degree and possibly prerequisite coursework. Please use this booklet as an idea generator, rather than as a comprehensive list of all career options for health care majors. The career descriptions were obtained from CEC library resources and career websites (see listing of sources on last page).

This booklet organizes health care careers into several different categories based upon the kinds of work tasks involved in the job. These include diagnostic and treatment practitioners, patient care professionals, technologists and technicians, rehabilitation therapists, administrators, and other related careers.

The CEC offers many other services and resources to help you with your career planning. These include:

- Career Counseling
- Career Testing
- Career Information Library
- Internship Information
- Graduate School Planning Assistance

Visit our website at www.utexas.edu/student/cec or call 471-1217 for more information.

For careers requiring education beyond the bachelor's degree, it is important to meet with an academic advisor to ensure that your degree plan includes all prerequisite courses. The Health Professions Office (cns.utexas.edu/hpo) has counselors and peer advisors available to help you select courses to meet professional school admission requirements, advise you on health career options and alternatives, and provide you with up-to-date information about professional schools in Texas, across the country, and around the world. It is located in PAI 5.03, and the phone number is 471-3172.

HEALTH CARE CAREERS

DIAGNOSTIC AND TREATMENT PRACTITIONERS

Chiropractor

Perform adjustments and manipulations of the spine to help patients achieve good health. May use X-rays and diagnostic imaging techniques as well as physiological therapies such as massage. Requires a professional degree from a chiropractic school.

Dentist

Examine, diagnose, and treat patients' teeth and gums. Perform surgeries on gums and bones and extract teeth. Requires a professional degree from a dental school.

Nurse Practitioner

Under supervision of a physician, examine, diagnose, and treat patients' illnesses. Interpret lab and diagnostic tests, recommend medications or adjunctive treatments, and formulate a plan of care. Requires a nursing degree plus specialized certification program for nurse practitioners.

Optometrist

Examine, diagnose, and treat patients' eyes for vision problems and eye disease. Requires a professional degree from an optometry school.

Osteopath

Examine, diagnose, and treat patients' illnesses. Perform very similar job duties as a physician but with more emphasis on the body's musculoskeletal system. Many specialties are available. Requires a professional degree from an osteopathic school.

Physician

Examine, diagnose, and treat patients' illnesses. Many specialties are available, and responsibilities vary according to specialty. Requires a professional degree from medical school.

Physician Assistant

Under supervision of a physician, examine, diagnose, and treat patients' illnesses. Interpret lab and diagnostic tests, recommend medications or adjunctive treatments, and formulate a plan of care. Often handle emergencies when doctors are unavailable. Depending on training, may assist in surgeries or write prescriptions for medications. Requires professional degree from physician assistant school.

Podiatrist

Diagnose and treat disorders, diseases, and injuries of the foot and lower leg. Prescribe drugs, order physical therapy, set fractures, and perform surgery. Requires a professional degree from a school of podiatric medicine.

Veterinarian

Diagnose animal health problems; vaccinate against diseases, such as distemper and rabies; medicate animals suffering from infections or illnesses; treat and dress wounds; set fractures; perform surgery; and advise owners about animal feeding, behavior, and breeding. Requires a professional degree from a veterinary school.

PATIENT CARE PROFESSIONALS

Acupuncturist

Diagnose and treat patients' illnesses and medical concerns by using various Chinese medical techniques to unblock the body's energy flow. May also advise patients about dietary or exercise changes to help in the healing process. Requires graduation from a school of acupuncture.

Child Life Specialist

Alleviate the stress of hospitalization for children and their families through play therapy and other kinds of counseling. Act as advocate and information source for children and collaborate with medical team.

Dental Hygienist

Provide preventative dental care by teaching patients good oral hygiene, examining patients' gums and teeth, and cleaning teeth. Requires graduation from a dental hygiene school.

Dietician

Study the relationship between diet and health. Run food service systems in hospitals, nursing homes, schools, and businesses. Promote healthy eating habits through education and research. Evaluate nutritional programs.

Genetic Counselor

Work as member of a healthcare team, providing information and support to families who have members with birth defects or genetic disorders and to families who may be at risk for a variety of inherited conditions. Identify families at risk, investigate the problem present in the family, interpret information about the disorder, analyze inheritance patterns and risks of recurrence, and review available options with the family. Provide supportive counseling to families, serve as patient advocates, and refer individuals and families to community or state support services. Requires master's degree in genetic counseling.

Medical Social Worker

Provide support for patients and their families related to chronic, acute and terminal illnesses. Organize or refer them to support groups, help them plan for their needs after discharge and address barriers that may stand in the way of recovery. Work on team with physicians and other medical workers to understand patients' case histories, prognosis, and treatment plans. Requires a master's degree in social work.

Nurse

Provide medical care for injured or ill patients and administer medications. Observe, assess, and record patients' symptoms and progress. Supervise L.P.N.s, orderlies, and nurse's aides. Many different specialties are available.

Nurse Anesthetist

Administer anesthesia, monitor patient's vital signs during surgery, and provide post-anesthesia care. Requires a nursing degree plus certification or a master's degree from a nurse anesthetist program.

Nurse-Midwife

Provide prenatal care for pregnant women, assist with labor and delivery by providing emotional support or administering pain medications, and give medical care and information to mothers after birth. Requires a nursing degree plus certification or a master's degree in nurse midwifery.

Nutritionist

Assess clients' nutritional needs and status, formulate goals, provide nutritional counseling and education relating to weight management, medical concerns, eating disorders, hormonal disruptions, or smoking cessation. Work with physicians' groups, hospitals, nursing home, schools, psychologists, dental offices, weight loss clinics, and sports facilities.

Patient Advocate

Work to represent the interests of patients/consumers in healthcare settings. Explain medical procedures, services, and policies, help troubleshoot patients' concerns and problems, act as advocate for patient with health care staff. Provide resources, information, and referrals to patients and their families. Conduct training programs for medical employees.

Pharmacist

Interpret and dispense prescriptions written by health practitioners. Inform and advise patients about possible side effects and interactions of medications. Requires a professional degree from a pharmacy school.

Psychiatric Social Worker

Work in mental health center, hospital, or clinic to assist psychiatrists in providing mental health services. Provide individual and group therapy. Develop treatment plans for patients and give referrals to community resources. Help interpret mental health issues to patients' families. May require a master's degree in social work.

TECHNOLOGISTS AND TECHNICIANS

Anesthesiologists' Assistant

Under the supervision of an anesthesiologist, test and calibrate anesthesia equipment, collect preoperative data, induce and maintain anesthesia during surgery, and monitor patient status. Requires a master's degree specializing in anesthesia.

Blood Bank Technologist

Draw and type blood, run tests to ensure the safety of the patient, detect and identify antibodies in the blood, and support physicians in transfusion therapy. Supervise the collection, separation, delivery, and storage of blood components. Requires a bachelor's degree in science, a year of laboratory experience, and specialized coursework.

Cardiology Technologist

Assist physicians in cardiac catheterizations, balloon angioplasties, and other cardiac procedures by preparing patients and monitoring blood gases using EKG equipment. Requires specialized training.

Cytotechnologist

Work with pathologists to identify abnormal changes in body cells that might indicate conditions needing medical intervention, such as disease or hormone imbalance. Examine cell samples under a microscope and report findings to physicians. Requires graduation from a certified cytotechnology program.

Diagnostic Medical Sonographer

Perform sonogram examinations for patients to assess potential medical problems in the brain, heart, blood vessels, lymph nodes, and other body systems or to assess the progress of prenatal development for pregnant women. Requires specialized coursework in a diagnostic medical sonography education program.

Electroneurodiagnostic (END) Technologist

Select appropriate electroencephalography (EEG) procedure for patients' specific medical problems and record patients' EEG activity. Monitor vital signs and record patients' behavior. Write report for attending physician and may manage END lab. Requires on-the-job training or completion of END training program.

Emergency Medical Technician

Provide pre-hospital lifesaving medical interventions to patients in emergency situations. Respond to police or EMS alerts, take vital signs readings, and initiate lifesaving measures. Act as communication link with receiving hospital's emergency physician and transport patient to hospital. Requires specialized paramedic training and certification.

Food Technologist

Examine properties of proteins, fats, starches, and carbohydrates, as well as microcomponents such as additives and flavorants, to determine how each works in a food system. Invent different ways to use ingredients or create new ingredients, such as fat or sugar replacements. Use natural or artificial ingredients, sometimes in combination, to develop flavors for food products. Graduate degree in food science is helpful for advanced-level positions.

Histotechnologist

Prepare human and animal tissue specimens in microscopic slides for diagnostic, research, or instructional uses. Function as supervisors and instructors and perform complex laboratory procedures. Requires specialized coursework in a histotechnologist program.

Medical Technologist (Clinical Lab Scientist)

Perform diagnostic laboratory tests that are used in disease detection and treatment. Supervise lab technicians and monitor lab output for precision and accuracy. May be a generalist or specialize in a clinical area. Requires a bachelor's degree plus completion of a hospital internship.

Nuclear Medicine Technologist

Administer radiopharmaceuticals to patients and then monitor the functions and characteristics of tissues or organs in which they localize to diagnose and treat disease. Requires specialized training.

Ophthalmic Technologist

Under the supervision of an ophthalmologist, perform various diagnostic and therapeutic procedures relating to defects, diseases, and injuries of the eye. Take eye measurements, test visual acuity, administer topical medications, maintain optical and surgical instruments, assist in surgeries, and provide patients

with instructions regarding glasses and contact lenses. Requires specialized training.

Optician

Fit, adjust, and dispense eyeglasses and contact lenses according to a physician's prescription. Training is acquired on-the-job or through an apprenticeship program.

Orthoptist

Under the supervision of an ophthalmologist, provide therapy to improve eye conditions that affect eye movement, such as strabismus. Requires graduation from a two-year certified orthoptic program.

Orthotist

Design, create, and fit braces and strengthening devices for patients who have disabilities of the spine and limbs, such as spinal cord injury or muscular dystrophy. Requires graduation from an accredited orthotist program.

Perfusionist

Operate heart-lung machine during cardiac surgery and other surgeries that require cardiopulmonary bypass. Ensure safe management of patient physiologic functions by monitoring variables such as electrolytes and blood-gas composition. Requires a bachelor's degree plus completion of an accredited perfusionist program.

Prosthetist

Design, create, and fit artificial limbs for patients who have lost a limb through accident, illness, or a congenital condition. Requires graduation for an accredited prosthetist program.

Pulmonary Function Technologist

Under the supervision of a physician, conduct diagnostic evaluations of lung conditions by administering a variety of tests. Select and maintain testing equipment, explain procedures to patient, and monitor patient response. Requires specialized training; many people enter this field with a nursing or respiratory therapy background.

Radiation Therapist

Administer radiation therapy to treat patient diseases such as cancer. Confirm physician's prescription, help radiation physicist calibrate and prepare equipment, observe progress of patient during therapy, and may assist in minor surgical procedures related to therapy. Requires specialized coursework from a radiography program.

Radiology Technologist

Perform diagnostic imaging tests such as x-rays, MRI scans, and CT scans. Explain procedures to patients, operate and maintain radiologic equipment, process film, and maintain patient records. Requires specialized training.

Surgical Technologist

Assist in surgical operations under the supervision of physicians and nurses. Prepare operating room, assemble equipment, and prepare, transport, and monitor patients.

Veterinary Technologist/Technician

Under the supervision of a veterinarian, perform medical and laboratory tests on animals to help diagnose and treat injuries and diseases. May also provide specialized nursing care for animals. Requires completion of a veterinary technology program.

REHABILITATION THERAPISTS

Art Therapist

Work with people of all ages and backgrounds presenting social, psychological and physical difficulties and encourage clients to express emotion and explore their problems using a wide range of art materials, enabling positive change and personal growth. May require additional certification or graduate degree.

Audiologist

Identify, diagnose, and provide medical treatment of hearing, balance, and related ear problems in order to prevent hearing disability and conserve children's and adults' hearing. Fit and dispense hearing aids and cochlear implants and provide counseling on dealing with hearing loss and training on the use of hearing aids, implants, and communication strategies. Requires a clinical doctoral degree.

Dance/Movement Therapist

Work with individuals of all ages, groups and families in a wide variety of settings, such as psychiatric and rehabilitation facilities, schools, nursing homes, drug treatment centers, counseling centers, medical facilities, crisis centers, and wellness and alternative health care centers. Focus on helping clients improve self-esteem and body image, develop effective communication skills and relationships, expand their movement vocabulary, gain insight into patterns of behavior, and create new options for coping with problems. May require additional certification or graduate degree.

Horticultural Therapist

Use involvement with all phases of gardening, from propagation of seeds to selling products, to bring about improvement in the lives of clients with physical, emotional, and cognitive disabilities. Work in rehabilitation programs, health clinics, hospitals, correctional facilities, schools, nursing homes, and community gardens. Requires specialized coursework in horticultural therapy.

Massage Therapist

Perform soft tissue manipulation using a variety of modalities to improve circulation and induce well-being. Requires graduation from a massage therapy school.

Music Therapist

Use music to accomplish therapeutic goals relating to the restoration, maintenance, and improvement of mental and physical health in settings, such as hospitals, treatment centers, nursing homes, hospices, rehabilitation centers, prisons, and mental health clinics. May require additional certification or graduate degree.

Occupational Therapist

Rehabilitate patients with conditions that impair their ability to cope with the tasks of daily life. Analyze patients' potentials and limitations and select appropriate therapeutic activities. Requires a graduate degree in occupational therapy.

Orientation and Mobility Instructor for the Visually Impaired

Help people with visual impairments achieve independence with regard to traveling by evaluating nature of impairment and planning and implementing an individualized instructional program. Requires a master's degree in orientation and mobility.

Physical Therapist

Use therapies such as exercise, stretching, ultrasound, water, or massage to restore function and promote healing following a disabling condition of the muscles, nerves, joints, or bones. Plan, provide, and monitor treatment programs. Requires a graduate degree in physical therapy.

Recreation Therapist

Provide treatment services and recreation activities to individuals with disabilities or illnesses. Develop plans to maintain the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of clients. Help integrate people with disabilities into the community by teaching them to use community resources and recreational activities. Requires specialized coursework or a graduate degree in therapeutic recreation.

Rehabilitation Counselor

Provide counseling and emotional support to improve the quality of life for patients with physical and cognitive disabilities. Assess patients' strengths and weaknesses and formulate rehabilitation plan, which usually includes vocational and life-skill training. Requires a bachelor's or master's degree in rehabilitation counseling.

Respiratory Therapist

Perform tests to diagnose and evaluate respiratory problems, treat patients using respiratory equipment, administer respiratory therapy, and provide emergency respiratory care. Requires specialized training and certification.

Speech-Language Pathologist

Assess, diagnose, and treat disorders relating to speech, language, cognitive-communication, voice, swallowing, and fluency. Use standardized tests and special instruments to measure impairment and develop an individualized plan of care. Examples of disorders treated include stuttering, speech loss after strokes, developmental

delays in speech of children, improper pronunciation, and attention and memory disorders. Requires a master's degree in speech-language pathology.

ADMINISTRATORS

Director of Hospital Development

Develop and implement programs to raise funds for hospitals to pay for non-reimbursed costs and capital expenditures. Plan events, such as dinners and benefits, and organize annual giving programs and corporate donation schemes. Coordinate work with marketing and public relations departments. Maintain records, prepare budgets, and make presentations to administrators and hospital board members. Positions in larger hospitals may require MBA or graduate degree in hospital administration.

Director of Hospital Marketing

Develop long- and short-term marketing strategies to increase use of hospital. Conduct research on community needs and evaluate trends in hospital usage. Work with advertising and public relation staff to develop promotional materials. Prepare annual budget and make presentations to administrators and hospital board members. Positions in larger hospitals may require MBA or graduate degree in hospital administration.

Director of Hospital Public Relations

Create positive image for health care facility by interacting with the press and overseeing the writing of all internal and external publications. May supervise PR staff in larger facilities. Coordinate work with marketing and development departments.

Director of Volunteer Services

Recruit, select, train, and place volunteers in hospitals and other health care facilities. Monitor volunteers' performance, provide feedback and supervision, and maintain accurate records.

Geriatric Care Manager

Act as stand-in provider when families are not available to assist a senior relative. Visit clients to monitor progress, make medical appointments and provide transportation, determine eligibility for social services, provide help with financial tasks such as bill paying, and provide transportation for errands.

Health Information Administrator

Plan, develop, and supervise systems for the management of health records that are consistent with current medical, ethical, and legal requirements. Supervise medical records personnel, analyze patient and institutional data, develop in-service training programs, act as liaison to medical staff, safeguard confidentiality of health records, and testify in court as needed. Work for hospitals, clinics, rehabilitation centers, insurance companies, and nursing homes.

Health Promotion and Wellness Coordinator

Create and implement programs and activities to promote health and wellness for patients and staff in hospitals and other health care facilities. Find ways to address health needs of surrounding community, such as health fairs, support groups, and medical screenings. Work with staff of marketing or public relations department.

Nursing Home Activities Director

Work with other health care professionals in a nursing home to develop recreational activities to meet the needs of each resident. Assess skills, capabilities, and interests of each resident. Write progress reports, prepare budget, and supervise volunteers.

Planning Director

Develop strategic goals and objectives for hospital by analyzing current trends in health care, community needs, and competing health care institutions. Meet regularly with other departments and administrators. Advocate for legislation favorable to hospital. Serve on community boards and committees as representative of hospital. Requires a master's degree in hospital administration or MBA.

Quality Assurance Director

Monitor and evaluate level of patient care provided by a hospital or other health care facility. Create and implement programs to improve patient services. Ensure compliance with federal and state regulatory standards. Hire and supervise quality assurance staff and prepare and monitor departmental budget.

OTHER RELATED HEALTH CARE CAREERS

Athletic Trainer

Evaluate injuries associated with competitive athletics, provide immediate treatment and referral, create injury prevention programs, plan injury rehabilitation programs, and education and counsel athletes about health issues. Requires a bachelor's degree in athletic training or specialized postgraduate training.

Biomedical Engineer

Use both engineering technology and biomedical information to design and create medical devices, materials, instruments, procedures, techniques, and treatment that can improve the quality of patients' lives. Requires a bachelor's degree in biomedical engineering.

Biomedical Equipment Technician

Install, calibrate, inspect, maintain, and repair biomedical and other technical equipment, such as CT scanners, x-ray machinery, and dialysis machines. Teach hospital staff to operate equipment and assist in experiments and procedures. Requires specialized coursework.

Biomedical Photographer

Produce photographs and videos for health professionals to use for educational purposes, in patient records, in research, and in publications. Many specialties are available such as ophthalmic photography, photomicrography (photographing through a microscope), dental photography, and autopsy photography. There is no required educational background, although both science and photography classes are recommended. Several schools and the Biological Communication Association offer specialized courses and training and a voluntary certification program.

Epidemiologist

Conduct fieldwork and use statistical analysis to determine causes of diseases, risk factors, and containment strategies. Research the relationship between demographic and social trends and disease. Requires a master's degree in public health.

Environmental Health Scientist

Identify and understand the environmental factors that can negatively impact human health. Can specialize in areas such as toxicology, public policy, and urban sprawl. Conduct research and design programs and policies to improve the relationship between health and environmental pressures. Requires a master's degree in public health.

Exercise Physiologist

Design exercise programs for individuals who want to improve their fitness level or for patients trying to recover from or manage a medical illness or condition. Evaluate clients by taking vital signs and measuring strength and flexibility. Teach exercise routines and monitor progress. Work for universities, rehabilitation clinics, hospitals, sport and athletic programs, and health and fitness facilities. Often requires a master's degree.

Health Sciences Librarian

Catalog, organize, maintain, and disseminate medical information in the form of books, journals, audiovisual programs, and online indices. Select and purchase materials, prepare user guides, respond to requests for information, and manage all aspects of library, including budgeting, planning, and supervising staff. Work for hospitals, medical and allied health schools, pharmaceutical companies, government agencies, and health insurance companies. Requires a master's degree in library science and science coursework.

Health Sociologist

Describe and analyze how social issues affect health and health care. Gather data, conduct research, and share findings with health care professionals to improve health care delivery. Work for universities, government agencies, health departments, and hospitals. Requires a Ph.D. in health sociology.

International HIV Specialist

Reduce international rate of HIV infection by conducting research, advocating policy changes through government agencies and international organizations, and providing direct services such as counseling and educational outreach to at-risk populations. Requires a master's degree in public health.

Medical Illustrator

Create scientifically accurate medical illustrations for medical textbooks and journals, consumer health magazines, films and exhibits, magazines, websites, law courts, or pharmaceutical advertising. May require graduate coursework.

Medical Interpreter

Facilitate communication between patients with limited English skills and their physicians, nurses, therapists, and other healthcare professionals. Interpret interactions between patients and staff, provide cultural information to aid treatment plans, and educate other members of the healthcare team. Requires fluency in a foreign language and knowledge of medical terminology and techniques.

Medical Writer

Write and edit health care brochures, textbook and journal article introductions, press releases, magazine articles, instruction manuals, advertisements, and media scripts. Work for health care publishers, medical schools, hospitals, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and pharmaceutical companies. A science background is recommended in addition to writing and editing skills.

Occupational Health and Safety Expert

Develop programs to identify, control, and prevent health and safety hazards in work environments. Investigate health problems caused by chemical, physical, or biological agents. Advise organizations about safety of equipment and furniture. Conduct occupational safety investigations and ensure compliance with federal regulations. Advanced positions may require a master's degree in public health or a related field.

Pharmaceutical Sales Representative

Market a pharmaceutical company's products to physicians, hospitals, and pharmacists. Conduct sales meetings, give presentations, and maintain current knowledge about employer's products. Science coursework, including psychology courses that emphasize science, and sales experience are helpful.

Public Health Specialist

Design programs to change policies, environments, attitudes, and behaviors that impact public health. Design and present workshops, act as liaison with community groups, assess community health education needs, and evaluate program effectiveness. Requires master's degree in public health.

SOURCES

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Career Opportunities in Health Care by Shelly Field. Checkmark Books, 2002.

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Occupational Outlook Handbook: www.bls.gov/oco

Explore Health Careers: www.explorehealthcareers.org

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