

YOUR FUTURE IN HEALTHCARE

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2024

INSIDE:

CHOOSING A CAREER
IN MENTAL HEALTH

PREPPING FOR
HEALTHCARE IN HIGH
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LISTINGS

HELPING YOU EXPLORE
HEALTHCARE

YOUR FUTURE IN

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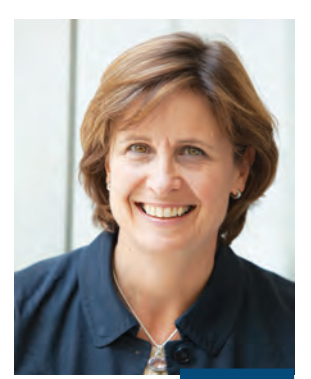
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Marie Schwartz
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PREPARING FOR YOUR FUTURE IN HEALTHCARE

Are you wanting to go into the healthcare field, but don't know where to begin? Do you want to know what the right steps are to take in high school? If so, this year's Your Future in Healthcare guide is the source for answers.

We have created this guide to answer all your questions involving a future in the field. We want to help you learn more about mental health career options, steps to help you get into medical school, as well as summer programs that can help you explore your options before making post high school education decisions. All of the information you find in this guide, we hope, can spark your curiosity to take your interest in the healthcare field to the next level.

At TeenLife, our goal is to help students find their passion for a career beyond school. We aspire to deliver the information you need to take steps along the way of fulfilling your dreams. We created this guide to help those future doctors, nurses, veterinarians, occupational therapists and everything in between. We hope you can find something within this guide that inspires you to take the next step in your professional journey.

QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS?
Email me at mschwartz@teenlife.com



Welcome to "Your Future in Healthcare!" This digital guide strives to help students learn more about careers in specific career clusters, as well as the best ways to prepare themselves during high school and college for well-paying careers of the future! Please let us know if you have any questions or suggestions to make this resource as helpful as possible.

Other publications in this series:





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To download a PDF of this guide, go to:

<https://www.teenlife.com/your-future-in-healthcare/>

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YOUR FUTURE IN HEALTHCARE



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PREPPING FOR HEALTHCARE CAREERS IN HIGH SCHOOL: **FOCUS ON GRADES, COMMITMENT AND SELF-CARE**



By Jessica Zimmer

If you are reading this, you may already know an education in healthcare can be a ticket to a long and rewarding career, in fields ranging from mental health, to working with the elderly, to medicine. Healthcare career degrees are as diverse as the pool of students who seek admission. Requirements and expectations vary widely.

In 2024, healthcare workers in a diverse array of fields are in high demand. Popular jobs beyond dentist, doctor and pharmacist include dental hygienist, nurse anesthetist, nurse practitioner, physician assistant and radiology tech. Certain professionals, like a dental hygienist or radiology tech, must complete a program at the community college level. Others, such as a nurse practitioner or physician assistant, typically earn an undergraduate degree and then complete a specialized graduate program.

It is now difficult to get into many different types of healthcare programs, like registered nursing programs. This is because numerous fields in healthcare are well paid and have good job security. A high number of candidates apply, usually more than

the number of available spots. In addition, there is a shortage of educators and professionals to train healthcare students, even before the COVID-19 pandemic began. The shortage has gotten worse since then. Here are some of the keys to success.

HAVE THE BASICS

High school students applying for healthcare programs should make sure they are up to date for all their vaccinations, particularly against COVID-19. This is a requirement for many schools and clinics. Vaccination also helps ensure students can safely do in-person work with clients and patients in the healthcare setting.

Students should take, at minimum, high school-level algebra, biology and chemistry. High school-level courses in psychology and statistics are helpful if the school offers them. "High school-level biology and chemistry are prerequisites for community college courses in these subjects. A student must take these to be eligible for admission to an associate degree in nursing program," said Tammy Sakanashi, dean of health sciences at Santa Rosa Junior College in Santa Rosa, California.

SHOWCASE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

High school students who intend to become healthcare providers are expected to have high grades in science and math. They should also have a high grade point average across all subjects. This is especially true for very competitive pre-med programs, like the one at University of Rochester in New York, which offers a conditional degree of admission to the school's MD program. "Look at the school's requirements online or talk to an admissions counselor to determine what a program wants beyond a high GPA. Avoid getting information from social media. It can be inaccurate or outdated," said Dr. Joseph Lin, chair of the Health Professions Advisory Program at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, California.

Nursing programs appreciate students who speak languages other than English, like Mandarin Chinese and Spanish. It is also helpful if students can show they are familiar with cultures and groups that have traditionally been underserved in healthcare. "This includes undocumented immigrants, as well as populations experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity. It also includes individuals with disabilities, like people with visual and hearing impairments. If a student has completed service trips with a cultural and/or medical component, (they should) explain how these trips shaped their understanding of healthcare," said Dr. Alicia Bright, director of nursing at the College of Marin in San Rafael, California.

It is desirable for high school students to participate in high school clubs and community organizations. "Colleges are interested in students who have shown they can be leaders, either in the organization or for specific activities, like a day of outreach. We want students who have not just been members of a club, but a president or vice president. They should show they've helped organize activities, resolve conflicts and completed paperwork on time. These are everyday tasks in healthcare," said Michael Daly, senior assistant director of graduate admissions at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California.

JOB SHADOWING AND REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE

Job shadowing and talks with healthcare professionals currently in the workplace help high school students determine whether they want to continue in difficult professions. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, it can be hard to find these opportunities.

One avenue is for a student to ask if they can shadow their current doctor or dentist, according to Eric Cecil, a biology teacher at Piner High School in Santa Rosa, California. Students can determine what experiences they want to observe through their high school classes. This is especially true for students in healthcare-oriented high school programs.

Cecil teaches one of three classes that involve real-world simulations and project-based learning to students in Piner's Health Science & Biotechnology (HSB) Pathway. This is a track for students interested in these topics. HSB classes touch on topics like microbiology and human health and occupations.

"The third year HSB class involves students developing lessons and providing them to each other. This helps students take initiative and learn to share information with peers, all critical steps for healthcare workers," said Cecil. Volunteer work, summer and year-round internships, and paid work in healthcare professions suggest to an admissions department that a student has the personality and dedication needed for healthcare.

"Schools want to see that a student can be academically successful and has a passion for helping others," said Lin.

ENGAGE IN SELF-CARE

When a healthcare worker experiences burnout, they can stop feeling empathetic toward clients and patients. They can also exhibit negative attitudes toward coworkers and individuals receiving treatment. This means healthcare programs seek out students who show they can take care of themselves while offering patient-facing or public-facing experiences. It is helpful for a high school student to show they understand and practice self-care.

Methods to do that range from completing a senior project on mental wellness to attending workshops on managing stress. Regular exercise is also key. A student can explain how they manage stress and self-care in their list of activities and personal statements.

"We want students who tie the seemingly unrelated aspects of their life together. For example, 'How did they cope with stress while earning an A in biology and working as a peer counselor?' 'Did they volunteer at a nursing home or hospital?' Our goal is to attract students who know what they're getting themselves into," said Bright.

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HOW SUMMER PROGRAMS CAN HELP YOU TO **EXPLORE HEALTHCARE CAREERS**



By Larry Griffin

Choosing to embark on a higher education journey and major in a healthcare-related field is not an easy road to walk. Semesters are chock-full of work and intensive studying. Going into school for a degree in one of these fields, whether it be as a medical doctor, a scientist, a pharmacist or something else, is understandably difficult — you're taking other peoples' health and medication into your own hands. It has to be a detailed education. That's why some high school students are choosing to explore healthcare careers during the summer to try and get a sense of what is involved.

There are numerous avenues to take to pursue a summer experience in healthcare. Many colleges offer "pre-college" summer programs to middle and high school students that expose them not only to a potential major but also to their college. Examples include Harvard University, Syracuse University and Imperial College in London.

Another option is to enroll in a summer program offered by companies that specialize in summer programming for K-12 students, such as Summer Discovery or the Boston Leadership Institute. Summer Discovery, for example, offers "access to world-class academics, interactive enrichment courses, immersive travel adventures and residential life experiences" at 15 different college campuses. Examples include two-week programs on topics such as Psychiatry & Neuroscience and

Emergency Medicine. Boston Leadership Institute offers one- and two-week sessions in highly specialized topics such as Anatomy and Intro to Surgery.

Julia Geffner with Summer Discovery said a summer healthcare program is a boon for students because of the sheer amount of details involved in getting a healthcare degree. "There are so many facets and ways to be involved in the healthcare field, from nurses, to doctors, to research, pharmacology and more — that by leveraging the summer to deepen students' knowledge and understanding of the field may open up opportunities that they never realized were possible," she said.

THE BENEFITS OF A SUMMER PROGRAM

Geffner said Summer Discovery boasts multiple campus programs on medicine studying, which allow students the opportunity to sample every medical field of study. That could be a way to help some students narrow down what they really want to do — or perhaps find a completely new passion they wouldn't have known about before. As medical degrees take years to finish, adding ways of finding out what it is you want to do is crucial.

Additionally, the rigorousness of medical or health-related studying is well documented. Semesters are full of work and students can't afford to fall behind or miss a step. Taking a summer class, then, could be a way of laying the groundwork.

By enrolling in a low-stakes summer program to explore the field, you're also gearing up to know exactly what will be coming your way in the regular semesters. It can prepare you mentally to know what kind of work you'll be doing and you'll then be all the more ready when it comes time to dive into the meat of your studies later. Geffner said this will help students "be more prepared for university academics, and know for sure whether it's right."

The summer is a low-stress environment — with the lack of a normal schedule of classes and the slower pace of life during the summer, you'll have more time to really focus on a summer course if you choose to take one. School is supposed to be a place for learning, and without the stakes of potentially affecting your grades, there's more of a possibility here for exploration and growth on a personal level. As you'll be more deeply internalizing what you're learning, this can only help you further down the line as you begin a real career.

Adding to that benefit, Geffner said that, oftentimes, there's no formal grades or homework in a summer healthcare program. That means the classes don't affect students' GPAs. That allows students some leeway they won't get during the more rigorous

traditional semesters, letting them take the time to study and learn for its own sake.

TAKE ACTION QUICKLY

A summer program might sound like the best option for you, but with the amount of fellow prospective students looking to go into the field, the programs tend to fill up quickly. So if you think taking one is the right choice, the best course of action is likely to get in before the slots are gone.

Geffner noted there are many programs that are only offered during specific times and dates, too, which further narrows the scope of your options — so best to get in while you can if you think this would be the best option for you.

Geffner said there are other considerations to take into account, as well: "They also vary in application requirements and level of difficulty to get into. It's best to consider a first and second choice," she said. Beyond classes, Geffner said there are also other ways to get involved with healthcare. "From research, to community service, to internships, job shadowing and academic enrichment programs, there are just so many options to choose from," she said.

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Source: NCHSE

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- » American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
- » Association of American Medical Colleges
- » American Association of Nurse Practitioners
- » Girls Health
- » Medical School HQ
- » MyPABox - PA School Finder
- » National Student Nurses' Association
- » OldPreMeds
- » Roadmap to Med
- » Student Doctor Network
- » The PA Education Association
- » The PA Platform
- » U.S. News and World Report Top Medical Schools



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HEALTHCARE SUMMER PROGRAMS

As the healthcare landscape continues to evolve, it's more important than ever for aspiring professionals to gain hands-on experience, develop critical skills, and explore diverse career paths in the field. Our carefully curated selection of summer programs offers a wide range of immersive opportunities for teens. By participating in these programs, students will not only gain a deeper understanding of the healthcare industry but also foster valuable connections and personal growth. Get ready to embark on a life-changing journey and take the first step toward your future in healthcare!

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 \$599-\$4,097

 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th,
11th & 12th

 In-Person

 1-3 Weeks

BLI offers award-winning programs in medicine, engineering, science and business in and around Boston. Three-week research programs include biomedical and surgical research, astrophysics, finance, electronics and robotics and more. These are competitive admissions and provide valuable credentials for college applications. One-week options, available for both middle school and high school students, include Intro to Surgery, Forensics, Architecture and Investment Banking. Day and residential options are available for both three-week and one-week programs.

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 \$1,295

 9th, 10th, 11th & 12th

 Online

 2- or 4-Week
Sessions

Case Western Reserve University's pre-college program offers online courses for high school students interested in neuroscience or other STEM-related subjects. Explore the anatomical structures that comprise the nervous system and how the brain sends messages to the spinal cord. You'll learn from Case Western Reserve University instructors, receive mentorship and earn a Certificate of Completion. The course is 100% online, so you can study whenever your schedule allows. [Learn more »](#)

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY ONLINE HEALTHCARE PROGRAMS | [View Website](#)

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-  9th, 10th, 11th & 12th
-  Online
-  Multilength Courses Available throughout the Year

Are you interested in the world of medicine? Do you picture yourself as a surgeon, nurse or medical researcher? Get a behind-the-scenes look at these exciting fields through Georgetown University's pre-college online courses in medicine for high school students, ages 13 and older. Each course features dynamic video lessons by renowned Georgetown faculty and access to mentors. The program is available year-round, and the online format enables you to study anywhere, anytime, at your own pace. [Learn more »](#)

HARVARD UNIVERSITY: SUMMER PROGRAMS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
[View Website](#)

-  Varies
-  9th, 10th, 11th & 12th
-  In-Person & Online
-  2 & 7 Weeks



Harvard Summer School is your chance to immerse yourself in a world-class academic experience. Learn from leading academics and share classes and activities with bright students from around the world, all while adding Harvard to your college applications. Discover what a Harvard Summer experience can do for your future. [Learn more »](#)

IMPERIAL GLOBAL SUMMER SCHOOL: MEDICINE AND LIFE SCIENCES | [View Website](#)

-  £6,600
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-  In-Person
-  Two Weeks


Imperial Global Summer School (Medicine and Life Sciences) is a two-week residential program specifically designed for 16–17-year-olds with a passion for medicine. Taught by Imperial academics, students can take their subject knowledge to the next level, immersing themselves in classroom-based lectures, laboratory sessions and practical workshops. Program runs in July and August of 2024. [Learn more »](#)

ENVISION BY WORLDSTRIDES: NYLF - MEDICINE AT UCLA | [View Website](#)


-  \$4,245
-  9th, 10th, 11th & 12th
-  In-Person
-  1 Week

The National Youth Leadership Forum (NYLF): Medicine & Healthcare is your chance to gain transformational medical school and career knowledge. Over eight days, discover the right path for your future through a fun and interactive curriculum that can allow you to test your personal and academic strengths in true-to-life simulations and hands-on clinical training, while you gain the confidence needed to give yourself a leg up on your future. [Learn more »](#)

NYU SUMMER PROGRAM: EXPLORING CAREERS IN MEDICINE | [View Website](#)

 \$3,000+

 9th, 10th, 11th & 12th

 In-Person

 1 Week


Experience NYU and explore careers this summer! Immerse yourself in a one-of-a-kind college and career readiness experience at NYU's Career Edge Summer High School Program. These one-week summer sessions allow you to explore career possibilities from health and medicine to psychology. Meet friends from around the world, explore NYC and live in an NYU dorm! Get a taste of the real-world workplace while preparing for college life — only at NYU SPS! [Learn more »](#)

RICE UNIVERSITY PRECOLLEGE PROGRAM | [View Website](#)

 \$1,495


 9th, 10th, 11th & 12th


 Online


 Multilength Courses Available throughout the Year

Are you hoping to test out a subject before college? Rice has an exciting opportunity for motivated students interested in a future in medicine. With courses in genome engineering, physiology, psychology and more, you can experience learning from top Rice professors through engaging, tech-forward videos and demonstrations; and collaborate with in-the-know mentors. Work at your own pace and earn a Certificate of Completion from Rice University. [Learn more »](#)

ROSETTA INSTITUTE: BIOMEDICAL CAMPS | [View Website](#)

 \$400-\$3,580

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We offer workshops on molecular medicine for high-achieving high school and middle school students interested in pursuing careers in medicine or related fields, such as pharmacy, nursing, bioengineering or medical research. There are online and in-person options available, including residential camps held at some of the world's best universities. Workshops include Molecular Biology of Cancer, Molecular Neuroscience, Medicinal Chemistry, Bioinformatics, Molecular Immunology, Molecular Biology of Aging, Biomedical Research, Astrobiology, Neurologic Bioinformatics, AI-Enhanced Bioinformatics and Intro to Cellular and Molecular Medicine.


[Learn more »](#)

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY PRE-COLLEGE SUMMER: HEALTH PROFESSIONS

[View Website](#)

 \$2,200





 11th & 12th

 In-person

 1 Week





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-  \$3,999-\$8,999
-  9th, 10th, 11th & 12th
-  In-Person
-  2-6 Weeks

Summer Discovery offers many courses in health sciences and medicine across six prestigious universities: UC Berkeley, Dartmouth, University of Texas at Austin, UCLA, University of Michigan and Georgetown. Led by experienced healthcare professionals, we offer hands-on learning where you deepen your understanding of the body, disease processes and healthcare systems. Whether dissecting specimens, conducting experiments or exploring medical ethics, our courses provide insights and practical skills for aspiring healthcare professionals. Be inspired and empowered as you start your transformative educational journey! [Learn more »](#)

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY SUMMER COLLEGE: HEALTHCARE AND STEM | [View Website](#)

-  \$1,995-\$7,495
-  10th, 11th, 12th & College
-  In-Person & Online
-  1, 2, 3 or 4 Weeks




For 64 years, Syracuse University Office of Pre-College Programs has been providing high school students with the opportunity to explore college majors and potential career paths through its renowned pre-college programs. Students choose from over 100 credit and noncredit courses, either on campus or online. All courses are taught by Syracuse University faculty and instructors. Students learn to balance freedom and responsibility, much like a college student, and they return home feeling more confident, enthusiastic and ready for college. [Learn more »](#)

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER ONLINE HEALTHCARE PROGRAMS | [View Website](#)

-  \$1,295
-  9th, 10th, 11th & 12th
-  Online
-  2- or 4-Week Sessions

The University of Rochester's Pre-College Online Program is a great way to determine if your passions could lead to a college major or a future career. We offer courses in medicine, orthopedic surgery, biomedical engineering and more. Our online courses are: developed for students ages 13 and older, designed by Rochester faculty who are experts in their respective fields, supported by mentors to enrich your learning experience, delivered through dynamic videos allowing you to learn at your own pace. [Learn more »](#)

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY ONLINE HEALTHCARE PROGRAMS | [View Website](#)

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-  9th, 10th, 11th & 12th
-  Online
-  2- or 4-Week Sessions

The Wake Forest Online Immersion Program for high school students provides the opportunity to explore your interests before college. We offer engaging courses in the fields of medicine, sports medicine, psychology and more. Our online courses are: developed for students ages 13 and older, designed by Wake Forest University faculty who are experts in their respective fields, supported by mentors who enrich your learning experience, delivered through dynamic videos allowing you to learn at your own pace. [Learn more »](#)

WILLIAM & MARY PRE-COLLEGE ONLINE PROGRAMS | [View Website](#)

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-  9th, 10th, 11th & 12th
-  Online
-  Multilength Courses Available throughout the Year

Curious about how to prepare for your future in medicine? How about exploring cognitive psychology or diseases and diagnostics? Our online pre-college courses are designed for aspiring high school students. You'll hear from W&M professors, receive support from a mentor and study at your own time and pace thanks to our flexible format. Earn a Certificate of Completion and jump start your future today. [Learn more »](#)

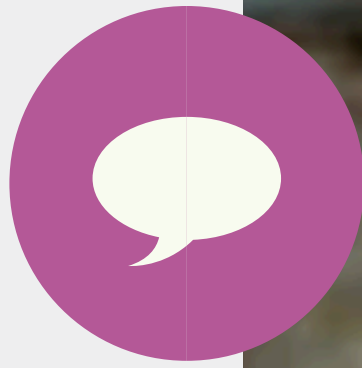
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STUDENT TESTIMONIAL:



Bryanah Houston **BOSTON LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE: INTRO TO SURGERY**

I took Intro to Surgery, described by BLI as a one-week medical program that introduces students to basic surgical skills, such as surgical knot tying and suturing. It allows us to translate these skills to mock surgeries. Students focus on cardiovascular disease, including coronary artery bypass grafting. Students additionally complete, in groups, a slideshow presentation involving cardiothoracic diseases and their surgical treatments. They will then practice their presenting skills as they present their work to the rest of the class. They learn skills that will aid them in the process of applying to and succeeding in pre-med and medical programs in their futures.

During my time attending the BLI Intro to Surgery program, I feel that it impacted me in many ways. I learned skills early on that I otherwise would have had to learn further in my academic career. I was taught verbal study hacks by my amazing instructors. These helped me not only remember the materials better but also how to be more attentive. Overall, I learned skills that will help me down the road to further my education and lead me to be the surgeon I one day hope to become. I was able to perform mock surgeries such as a gastric bypass and a CABG as well as learn and apply many different suture technics that I still practice today. I was also taught the proper way to check someone's blood pressure.

This skill enabled me to be able to check my dad's blood pressure when needed, which I was unable to do prior to my BLI experience.



Being involved in hands-on learning helped me understand and physically see what I was learning to prepare me for the work I will be executing in the future. Apart from the medical skills I took part in, I learned how to be a leader and the importance of collaboration skills. I learned how to work together when in groups/duos and listen to other people's thoughts and ideas. I gained the ability to better my public speaking when presenting my own ideas to my peers. All in all, I learned leadership skills that I now apply to my everyday life. I am involved in multiple clubs at my school, some of which I lead to excel in the community and accomplish great goals. I am forever grateful and blessed that I had the opportunity to learn such amazing things at BLI.

Your Future in Healthcare: WHAT CAN YOU EARN?

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook

The healthcare field is expected to see average growth in the coming years, with an anticipated 2% increase in job opportunities from 2022 to 2032, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' annual report on job trends. The reasons behind this are manifold, ranging from technicians to a growing focus on healthcare specialists. As healthcare professionals become more in demand, wages are also rising,

with many healthcare occupations offering median pay well above the national average. In this list, we'll explore some of the top healthcare occupations and their earning potential, as well as the education requirements necessary to pursue these careers. Whether you're interested in medicine, nursing or anything else healthcare-related, there's a wealth of options available to you in the field. So let's dive in and see what your future in healthcare can hold!

MEDIAN ANNUAL WAGES FOR SELECTED HEALTHCARE OCCUPATIONS

OCCUPATION	JOB SUMMARY	ENTRY LEVEL EDUCATION	2021 MEDIAN PAY
ATHLETIC TRAINERS	Athletic trainers specialize in preventing, diagnosing and treating muscle and bone injuries and illnesses.	Master's Degree	\$53,840
CHIROPRACTORS	Chiropractors treat patients with health problems of the neuromusculoskeletal system, which includes nerves, bones, muscles, ligaments, and tendons.	Doctoral or Professional Degree	\$75,380
DENTAL HYGIENISTS	Dental hygienists examine patients for signs of oral diseases, such as gingivitis, and provide preventive care, including oral hygiene.	Associate Degree	\$81,400
DENTISTS	Dentists diagnose and treat problems with patients' teeth, gums and related parts of the mouth.	Doctoral or Professional Degree	\$159,530
DIETICIANS AND NUTRITIONISTS	Dietitians and nutritionists plan and conduct food service or nutritional programs to help people lead healthy lives.	Bachelor's Degree	\$66,450
EMTs AND PARAMEDICS	Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and paramedics respond to emergency calls, performing medical services and transporting patients to medical facilities.	Postsecondary Nondegree Award	\$39,410
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST	Occupational therapists treat patients who have injuries, illnesses, or disabilities through the therapeutic use of everyday activities.	Master's Degree	\$93,180
PHARMACISTS	Pharmacists dispense prescription medications to patients and offer expertise in the safe use of prescriptions.	Doctoral or Professional Degree	\$132,750
RADIATION THERAPISTS	Radiation therapists treat cancer and other diseases in patients by administering radiation treatments.	Associate's Degree	\$89,530
REGISTERED NURSES	Registered Nurses (RNs) provide and coordinate patient care and educate patients and the public about various health conditions.	Bachelor's Degree	\$81,220
SURGEONS AND PHYSICIANS	Physicians and surgeons diagnose and treat injuries or illnesses and address health maintenance.	Doctoral or Professional Degree	\$229,300
VETERINARIANS	Veterinarians care for the health of animals and work to protect public health.	Doctoral or Professional Degree	\$103,260

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT **CHOOSING A CAREER IN MENTAL HEALTH**



By Heather Rose Artushin, LISW-CP

One in five adults in the United States suffer from mental illness each year, with anxiety being most prevalent, followed by depression and trauma-related disorders. Yet, in 2021, less than half of people with mental-health concerns were able to access timely care, with even fewer people facing substance-use disorders being able to find support. With mental health concerns on the rise for people of all ages, and a serious shortage of qualified workers in the field, a career in mental health not only guarantees employment, but also stands to make a significant difference for those who are suffering alone.

Mental-health work is diverse and can be carried out in almost any setting. From school social work to inpatient psychiatry, outpatient marriage counseling to virtual psychotherapy, a career in the mental health field can take you anywhere from the hospital, to the local school district, to an outpatient clinic,

to your own home office and beyond. As a traveling social worker, Tashara Robinson, a licensed independent clinical social worker (LICSW), fills vacancies across the country, going where her agency sends her. “I love exploring, I love traveling, so this is a perfect fit for me,” she said.

Christina Magness, a licensed master social worker (LMSW) and lab manager for suicide prevention research in the Community Lab at the University of Michigan, has focused her work on mental health research. “I’ve learned so much from my mentors and the communities we partner with,” she said. “I think the work we do is impactful largely because of the relationships we have been able to build with various communities, organizations and sectors over the years.”

Being a therapist is another rewarding career option for people committed to mitigating the mental health crisis. Tasha Bailey

enjoys seeing clients, and describes her work this way: “The people I tend to work with are adults who had difficult stuff in their childhood that they didn’t have the opportunity to heal until now,” she said. “I provide a safe, non-judgemental place for them to feel deeply and reframe some of the toxic lessons they were taught when they were younger. Most of the time, we do this by talking. I ask my clients questions they often have never been asked before to help them unpack things in a different way. Sometimes my clients find it hard to use words, so I might ask them to use creative materials instead. Sometimes they laugh and sometimes they cry in therapy with me.”

While the mental health field needs you, you might also find yourself reaping personal rewards from a career in mental health. From gaining deeper insight into your own story, ways of managing emotions and family dynamics, to mastering valuable skills like mindfulness, active listening and approaching difficult conversations with grace, working in mental health can be mutually beneficial, beyond a salary.

Here are a few in-demand careers in the mental health field:

- **Therapist:** While all therapists require at least a master’s degree and a state professional license in order to practice, there are several different pathways that can allow you to provide counseling, including:
 - **Licensed Professional Counselor:** Emphasizes individual emotional wellness, often through cognitive-behavioral or humanistic approaches.
 - **Marriage and Family Therapist:** Specializes in couples counseling and family therapy.
 - **Clinical Social Worker:** Considers the person in the context of their environment, and takes a systems approach to therapy.
- **Psychologist (PhD or PsyD):** Focuses on individual psychopathology.
- **Psychiatrist:** Obtaining a medical degree is required in order to prescribe psychotropic medications as a psychiatrist. Many also provide counseling in addition to medication management. Psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners (PMHNP) typically hold a master’s degree that allows them to diagnose patients and prescribe medication, and sometimes work alongside a psychiatrist in practice.
- **School Social Worker/School Psychologist:** Working in a school setting can be rewarding for people interested in the mental health field. School social workers help to identify students at risk, provide individual counseling per a student’s individualized education program (IEP), and connect students

and families with resources. They also implement school-wide prevention programs. School psychologists often focus on psychological testing and diagnosing learning and developmental disorders.

- **Mental Health Coordinator:** This requires at least a bachelor’s degree. Coordinators implement and monitor client treatment plans at a care facility, like an inpatient program, school or hospital.
- **Mental Health Technician:** This role only requires a high school diploma and involves hands-on experience working with people facing mental illness, from administering medication to checking vital signs and behavior patterns, and providing supportive care.
- **Substance Abuse Counselor:** Therapists that receive specialized training in the treatment of substance-abuse disorders are often in demand and can provide individual or group therapy in an outpatient or residential treatment program.
- **Research Coordinator:** There are many roles you can play in a research setting, and conducting mental health research is critical to advancing the field and providing cutting-edge care for people who are suffering from mental illness.

There are many ways to specialize in the mental health field and focus your work on what you’re most passionate about. If you’re creative, you might be interested in expressive arts therapy, incorporating music, dance and art into your sessions with clients. You might love babies and want to support families in the infant mental health field, or perhaps working with seniors, or as a hospice social worker, supporting people near the end of life.

Maybe the fast-paced ER is the perfect place for you to apply your social work skills, or grief counseling might be something you’re drawn to. You’re likely to find a way to bring your interests, passions and strengths to a career in mental health. “I was drawn to the field of social work and its approach to understanding people in the context of their environment,” said Magness. “Much of my career has been split between my two passions — outpatient therapy for children, adolescents, young adults and families and research.”

If you’re interested in exploring career options in the mental health field, Magness said you could start with these three steps:

1. **Find hands-on learning opportunities** that expose you to the mental health field. Taking on volunteer opportunities, internships or entry-level jobs for organizations that provide



mental health services can offer valuable experiences that might confirm your interest in pursuing an advanced degree and lifelong career in mental health.

- 2. Learn about various career paths** within the mental health field and find one that resonates with you and your career aspirations. Dive deeper into career pathways that sound interesting to you by researching them further, and interviewing or shadowing someone currently in that role.
- 3. Take the time to learn about yourself** through therapy, journaling and self-reflection. When you embark upon a career in the mental health field, working through your own mental health challenges, family of origin complexities, personal biases and stigma all come into play. The process of personal growth is ongoing for those in the mental health field, so begin the journey now by seeing a therapist of your own, developing a journaling habit and making time for self-reflection.

So many people enter the mental health field because of their own stories — they themselves have experienced anxiety, grief and loss or trauma, and become inspired to want to help

others who are struggling. “From a young age, I grew up seeing what mental health looked like as I had a family member with schizophrenia,” Bailey said. “What was hard was that no one really explained to me what schizophrenia is, or even what mental health is. So I grew up having to find my own answers. I soon learned that we all have mental health that we need to look after, and we also all have stories that we need to heal from. So it led me into wanting to help people tell their stories so they could heal from their emotional pain.”

You don’t have to be perfect to be present and qualified to help someone in their time of need as a mental health professional. Make time to continue your own healing journey, and prioritize self-care as you embark upon your mental health career. The future is bright, both for mental health practitioners and the people they serve. “I love seeing how the mental health field is growing so much thanks to the younger generation,” Bailey said. “When I was a kid, no one spoke about mental health unless it was something extreme and it wasn’t deemed normal for people to go to therapy. Nowadays, a third of people have at least tried therapy which is amazing. We’re learning that the same way we would go to the gym to keep our body healthy, we can also go to therapy to take care of our minds.”

Your Future in Healthcare: HOW MUCH EDUCATION DO I NEED?

It's no secret that pursuing a medical degree can be a long and demanding journey. However, many students might be unaware of the diverse array of healthcare professions that require significantly less time to achieve.

For those with a passion for healthcare, but hesitant to commit to over a decade of medical school, we encourage you to explore the alternative options presented below. Many of these careers can be attained through degrees or certifications

completed in four years or less. Keep in mind, though, that education and licensing prerequisites may differ across states and countries.

Utilize our curated list of healthcare occupations as a starting point, and if any pique your curiosity, research the specific requirements for that role in your region. We're excited to witness the remarkable impact you'll make in the healthcare field!

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR EQUIVALENT	POSTSECONDARY NONDEGREE AWARD	ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Health Aide • Opticians • Pharmacy Technicians • Laboratory Animal Caretaker • Personal Care Aide • Veterinary Assistant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dental Assistant • EMT • Licensed Practical Nurse • Licensed Vocational Nurse • Massage Therapist • Medical Assistant • Medical Records Specialist • Medical Transcriptionist • Paramedic • Phlebotomist • Surgical Assistant • Surgical Technologist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardiovascular Technologist • Cardiovascular Technician • Dental Hygienist • Diagnostic Medical Sonographer • Health Information Technologist • Medical Registrar • MRI Technologist • Nuclear Medicine Technologist • Radiation Therapist • Radiologic Technologist • Respiratory Therapist • Veterinary Technologist • Veterinary Technician
BACHELOR'S DEGREE	MASTER'S DEGREE	DOCTORAL OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Lab Technologist • Clinical Lab Technician • Dietician • Exercise Physiologist • Medical Dosimetrists • Nutritionist • Recreational Therapist • Registered Nurse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic Counselor • Nurse Anesthetist • Nurse Practitioner • Midwife • Occupational Therapist • Orthotist • Physician's Assistant • Prosthetists • Speech-Language Pathologist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audiologist • Chiropractor • Dentist • Optometrist • Pharmacist • Physical Therapist • Physician • Surgeon • Podiatrist • Veterinarian

YOUR FUTURE IN HEALTHCARE: **SCHOLARSHIPS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

If you're a high school student who dreams about working in healthcare, you may be wondering how to make your dreams a reality. The path to becoming a healthcare professional can be long and challenging, but there are many resources available to help you achieve your goals.

One of the most significant challenges facing aspiring healthcare professionals is the cost of education. Healthcare programs, especially those at the graduate level, can be quite expensive. Fortunately, there are many scholarships available to help high school students pursue their dreams without breaking the bank.

In this list, we have compiled several scholarships specifically aimed at high school students who are interested in pursuing a career in healthcare. These scholarships are offered by various

organizations, including professional associations, foundations and corporations, and they provide financial support to students who demonstrate academic excellence, leadership potential and a passion for healthcare.

Additionally, if you've already applied to a college or university, be sure to check whether or not they have any healthcare-specific scholarships. Many colleges and universities have "fast-track" programs available too, where students can complete multiple degrees at once, cutting down on the overall total cost of higher education. Be sure to ask the colleges you're interested in if they have any such programs or scholarships available.

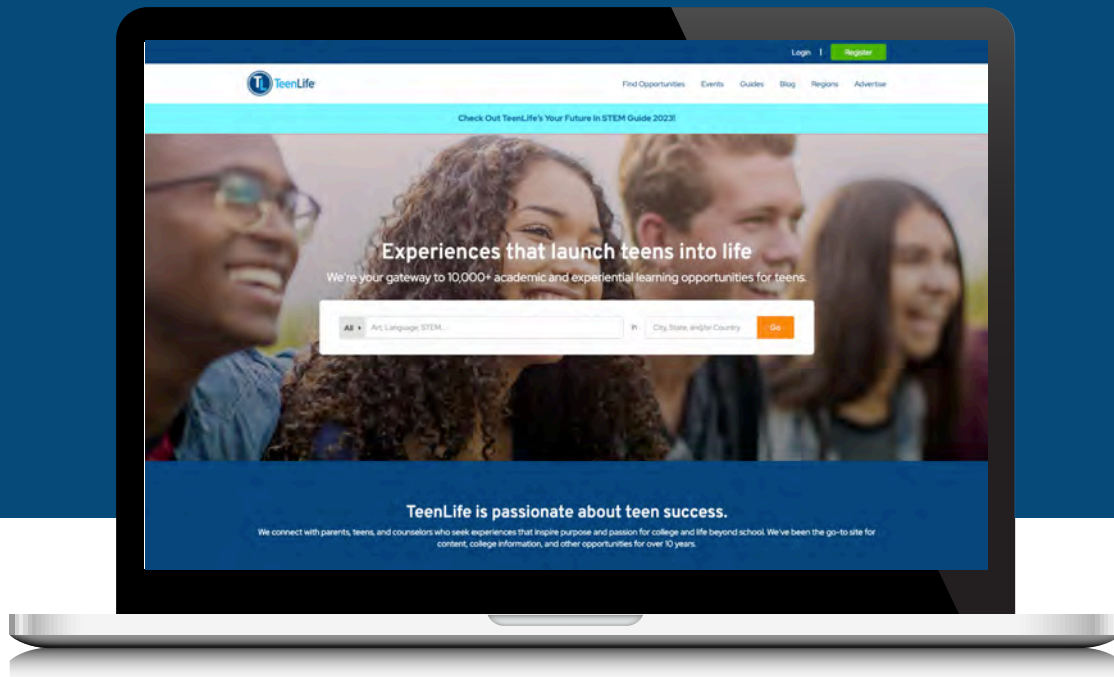
So if you're ready to take the first step towards your healthcare career, check out the following list of scholarships and start applying today!

- » American Psychological Association Scholarship Database
- » American Physiological Association Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships
- » A Nurse I Am Scholarship
- » Caroline E. Holt Nursing Scholarship
- » James "Rhio" O'Connor Mesothelioma Scholarship Fund
- » National Black Nurses Association
- » National Institutes of Health Undergraduate Scholarship Program
- » Nurses Educational Funds, Inc
- » Sunshine Behavioral Health's Opioid Awareness Scholarship
- » Tylenol Future Care Scholarship
- » U.S. Air Force ROTC Nursing Scholarship Program



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