



Health Care Careers

Careers with a 2-Year Degree

When you think of health care careers, you typically think of years and years of advanced education.

There are, however, well-paying jobs that you can get with an associate degree and spend as little as a year or two in school before you're ready to work.

CLINICAL LABORATORY TECHNICIAN

These technicians perform tests on lab samples to examine and analyze body fluids, tissues and cells for diseases. They don't work with patients, but their work is critical to proper diagnosis and treatment of illness.

MEDICAL SCRIBE

If the sight of blood makes you squeamish, this might be the health care job for you. Medical scribes transcribe doctors' recordings and conversations into documents and charts, recording the details of exams including the patient's clinical history, symptoms, diagnoses and procedures.

PATIENT TRANSPORTER

These health care professionals bring patients from inpatient facilities to other treatment facilities, such as surgeons, radiological specialty services or therapy. They're also responsible for retrieving patient records, lab



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results and any necessary supplies the patient may need for treatment.

CERTIFIED NURSING ASSISTANT

Otherwise called CNAs, these employees monitor patients in nursing homes, hospitals, private homes and treatment centers. They provide care and help with daily activities. CNAs are responsible for reporting daily changes in health status and taking and monitoring vital signs.

PHARMACY TECHNICIAN

These technicians work with licensed pharmacists to assemble and dispense medication to patients. They can put together prescriptions, answer questions and give patients information about medications and treatments.

PATIENT CARE TECHNICIAN

You can help doctors and nurses examine and treat patients with an associate degree as a patient care technician.

You take vital signs, monitor health status, collect lab samples and help with patient charts.

PATIENT SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

Patient service representatives help patients' families and medical staff work together to ensure the patient receives the best care possible. They greet and direct patients, schedule appointments, give patients and families information, keep records

and look into any concerns the patient or family may have.

PHLEBOTOMIST

A simple job with a complicated name. Phlebotomists are the ones that draw blood for diagnostic testing, research and donation. They work in hospitals, doctors' offices and lab facilities and are responsible for medical records, taking blood or other tissue samples and organizing samples for testing.

Fighting COVID Burnout

While we're all worn out from fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, health care workers are particularly hit hard by the crisis.

Among health care professionals of all stripes, the pandemic has led to increased stress, anxiety, fear and other strong emotions that may be surprisingly difficult to handle. Here's some advice on handling COVID-19 burnout from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

The CDC says that traumatic events like the COVID-19 pandemic affect everyone differently. Some people may lack motivation, have trouble sleeping or concentrating, while others feel irrationally angry, uncertain or anxious. Stress can directly affect your physical health, exacerbating existing ailments and making new ones more difficult to treat. It can even lead to problems such as acute stress disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder or secondary traumatic stress. Compassion fatigue and burnout are also real dangers to health care professionals as the pandemic stretches into its third year.

RESILIENCY

But you can be resilient, even in the face of this unprecedented pandemic. Here are some tips from the CDC:

- Talk to your coworkers,



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supervisors and employees about your stress levels. Be open about how the pandemic is affecting you and your work. Ask about mental health resources in your workplace.

- Remind yourself that everyone is in this unprecedented situation. Identify and accept those things which you do not have control over and recognize

that you're performing a crucial role in fighting the pandemic.

- Increase your sense of control by keeping a consistent daily routine when you can. Get enough sleep, eat healthy meals and take breaks to rest, stretch and check in with your support network.
- Take breaks from watching, reading or listening to news sto-

ries, especially those about the pandemic.

- Keep current with treatment for existing mental health conditions and talk to your provider if you experience new or worsening symptoms.
- Be aware of how you're using alcohol or other drugs and ask for help if you feel like you're misusing them.

RESOURCES FOR HELP

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-TALK.

Disaster Distress Helpline: 800-985-5990.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Helpline: 800-662-HELP.

CDCINFO: 800-232-4636.

Becoming an EMT

Emergency medical technicians are at the front lines of health care, often the first on the scene at medical emergencies.

It's an adrenaline-filled career that brings with it a lot of pride. After all, not everyone can say it's their job to save lives.

WHAT DO EMTS DO?

EMTs are certified health care professionals who provide basic medical aid in the field instead of in an office or hospital setting. They can be trained to stop external bleeding, manage respiratory emergencies, perform CPR and treat a host of injuries. They work for ambulance services, fire and rescue departments and hospitals. They often work alongside firefighters and police officers to respond to emergency situations quickly and appropriately, then transport patients safely to hospitals for further treatment.



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EMT CERTIFICATIONS

Some EMT training courses are as little as 16 weeks, but certifications and training levels vary by state. Here's a general look at the levels of EMT certification and what they mean:

- **EMT-Basic or EMT-B:** The standard level of certification, but still can perform lifesaving procedures such as CPF, automatic external defibrillation

and splinting broken bones. However, they cannot perform more invasive procedures. The basic training takes about 154 to complete, depending on the requirements in your area.

- **EMT-Intermediate, EMT-I, AEMT or EMT-A:** These EMTs have more training hours and can intubate patients and insert IVs. They may also be able to administer non-pre-

scribed drugs to patients.

- **EMT-Paramedic:** The highest level of EMT certification. Paramedics can perform manual defibrillation; administer drugs orally or through IVs; read lab results, X-rays and EKGs; and clean wounds.

REQUIREMENTS FOR DUTY

To become an EMT, you

must be over 18 years old and have a high school diploma or GED. You will also need to be CPR certified and take a state-approved training course that meets the standards of the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians.

You also must be able to pass a cognitive and psychomotor skill exam.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DUTY

EMTs experience trauma every day such as gunshot wounds, car accidents and more. PTSD is common among emergency medical technicians. You will have to pass both a criminal background check and a drug test to enter training, and you may also have to provide medical records.

Working with Children

Pediatricians are maybe the most visible health care professionals that work with children, but if you have a passion for working with kids, there are other health care jobs that may be right for you.

Here are some other medical professionals who work with children.

RECREATIONAL THERAPIST

These health care professionals use activity-based programs to treat patients with either physical or mental issues or both. These programs may incorporate art, music, writing, acting, dance, sports, games and outdoor activities. These programs can be designed to treat anxiety or depression, improve cognitive function, strengthen confidence and social skills, or improve physical coordination.

DIETITIAN

Experts in food and nutrition, dietitians help people — including children — develop healthy eating habits specific to their nutritional needs. Dietitians can counsel both children and their parents on how to achieve optimal health and avoid health conditions, or



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how to avoid exacerbating the ones they have. They may work to overcome challenges like too much or too little weight or developing positive relationships with food.

LACTATION CONSULTANT

These health care professionals work with the youngest of children and their moms to promote healthy breastfeeding. They typically work in hospitals, birth centers and clinics to support nursing mothers and their infants.

They can treat common health problems associated with nursing such as inflammation, infections and clogged ducts. They can also advise new parents on positions for breastfeeding and increasing mom's supply of milk.

OBSTETRIC SONOGRAPHER

These technicians often give new parents their first look at their baby. As a specialist in ultrasonography, you will use high-frequency sound waves to

visualize structures inside the body, including a woman's reproductive system and her developing fetus. Sonographic sessions can help track growth, health problems and potential birth defects as well as the age-old question, is it a boy or a girl.

SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST

More commonly known as a speech pathologist or a speech therapist, these health care professionals work with patients to correct speech dis-

orders. They assess and diagnose patients' disorders and help them overcome them, resulting in significant developmental improvements.

CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST

We are more aware of the importance of good mental health than ever before, and child psychologists are mental health professionals that work strictly with children and teens. They can diagnose and treat mental, emotional, behavioral and developmental issues.

About Oncology

Oncologists study, diagnose and treat cancer, often acting as the main health care provider for cancer patients. They design treatment plans, supportive care and coordinate cancer patients' treatment with other specialists.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The type of education they receive often depends on the type of oncologist they are. Medical oncologists treat cancer with chemotherapy or immunotherapy. Surgical oncologists remove tumors in surgery. Radiation oncologists treat cancer with radiation therapy. Other oncologists may treat cancer in specific areas of the body or treat specific patient populations, such as pediatric oncologists.

Oncologists are medical doctors, so their study of cancer begins in medical school. They may also complete a two- to five-year residence program, usually in internal medicine or surgery, become licensed and pass board certification exams, complete graduate or fellowship study in an oncology specialty, and, finally, pass more licensing exams.

BOARD CERTIFICATIONS

Depending on the type of

oncology you want to specialize in, you may have to pursue board certification from one or more boards. Medical oncologists, for example, are certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine. Radiation oncologists are certified by the American Board of Radiology. Pediatric oncologists are certified by the American Board of Pediatrics, including the hematology-on-

cology sub-board. Gynecologic oncologists are certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology and neurological oncologists by the United Council for Neurologic Subspecialties.

HEMATOLOGY

Oncologists may also be certified for hematology and also treat disorders of the blood. Some of the most common

blood disorders oncologists treat are anemia, sickle cell disease and thrombosis. Patients may also see oncologists not just to treat a cancer or blood disorder, but also to rule one out or to investigate a condition that presents much like one of these diseases.

SUPPORT STAFF

Cancer is a complicated illness and the treatment is

equally multifaceted. The medical doctor may be backed up by an entire specialized cancer care team that includes staff such as oncology nurses, oncology nurse practitioners and physician assistants, palliative care doctors and nurses, oncology social workers, genetic counselors, pathologists, oncology clinical pharmacists, dietitians and nutritionists, radiologists and more.



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Careers in Mental Health

Mental health is a growing health care profession as more people recognize the importance of holistic health care, including recognizing and promptly treating mental health diseases and disorders.

There are all kinds of mental health care professionals that require different amounts of education and different patient responsibilities. Here are a few.

PSYCHOLOGIST

Psychologists study cognitive, emotional and social processes and behavior by observing, interpreting and recording how people relate to one another and to their environments. They may work independently or as part of a health care team. Psychologists typically need a doctoral degree in psychology, but a master's degree may be enough for some positions. Most psychologists must also be licensed.

PSYCHIATRIST

A psychiatrist is a medical doctor who specializes in mental health. They are qualified to assess both mental and physical aspects of psychological problems and can order or perform medical laboratory and psychological tests to provide a complete picture of a



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patient's physical and mental state. Psychiatrists can use psychotherapy, medications, psychosocial interventions and other treatments for mental health patients.

Psychiatrists must complete medical school and be licensed to practice medicine as well as a four-year psychiatry residency. Board-certified psychiatrists also take a written and oral exam from the American Board of Psychiatry

and Neurology. They are recertified every 10 years.

THERAPIST

A therapist is someone who is trained to help treat mental or physical health problems, usually through psychotherapy. Some types of therapists are licensed clinical social workers, licensed addiction counselors, and licensed marriage and family therapists. Therapists are often the first

point of contact for people seeking mental health care and can help people process the challenges their mental health presents in their lives.

PSYCHIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH NURSING

These registered nurses represent the second-largest group of behavioral health professionals in the U.S., the American Psychiatric Nurses Association says. This type of

nursing requires a range of expertise, including with psychosocial behaviors and neurological expertise. PMH nurses provide education in addition to assessment, diagnosis, care and treatment of both mental health and substance abuse disorders. Advanced practice nurses may provide psychotherapy, prescribe medication, conduct assessments and therapies, and perform procedures.

Midwifery

Certified nurse-midwives and certified midwives provide medical care for women mainly of reproductive age, but also to menopause and beyond.

They are best known for their help in childbirth and with prenatal care, but they can also provide family planning services and other gynecologic care. Midwives can also provide newborn care in the first few weeks after birth.

According to the American College of Nurse-Midwives, the benefits of midwifery care include a decreased risk of cesarean sections, reduced rates of labor induction and augmentation, reduced use of regional anesthesia, decreased infant mortality rates, decreased risk of a preterm birth, lower costs and increased satisfaction with the quality of care.

EDUCATION

People who want to become midwives have several options for training.

Certified nurse midwives are trained in nursing and midwifery and receive hospital-based training. They often have a bachelor's degree and are registered nurses. Certified midwives have a background in a health-related field other than nursing and have also graduated from a master's



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level midwifery education program. Certified professional midwives are trained in and out of hospital settings. They can provide midwifery care in homes and in freestanding birth centers. In some states, they may also practice in offices providing well-woman and maternity care.

Traditional or lay midwives are those who choose not to

become certified or licensed for religious, personal or philosophical reasons. They believe they are ultimately accountable to the communities they serve and that midwifery shouldn't be legislated, the Midwives Alliance of North America says. Typically, lay midwives learned through self-study and apprenticeship and do not practice in clinics

or birth centers. Depending on state and local regulations, traditional midwifery without certification or licensure may not be legal.

LEGALITY

Certified nurse midwives can practice legally in all 50 states. In most states, they are independent practitioners, but some states still require physi-

cian supervision. More than 35 states allow certified professional midwives — those without the nursing background — to practice, and each state has their own guidelines for practice. Several states also recognize the certified midwife credential, but it's fewer than those that recognize the certified professional midwife credential.