

Careers in Health Professions

Audiology, Dentistry, Forensic Science, Medicine, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, Physician Assistant, Public Health, and Speech Language Pathology

Audiology: Hearing and balance disorders can be assessed, treated, and rehabilitated by an audiologist. Audiologists also select, fit, and dispense amplification systems such as hearing aids; they prevent hearing loss through providing and fitting hearing protective devices, consultation on the effects of noise on hearing, and consumer education; and they can serve as expert witnesses in litigation related to their areas of expertise. Some audiologists conduct research on hearing, tinnitus, and the balance system.

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association:
<http://www.asha.org/careers/professions/audiology/> Directory of accredited programs: <http://www.asha.org/edfind/>

Dentistry: Dentists maintain the teeth, gums and hard and soft tissues in the oral cavity and adjunct structures. Dentists prevent pain, improper chewing and digestion, dry mouth, abnormal speech and altered facial appearance by treating and preventing tooth decay, periodontal disease, malocclusion, and oral-facial anomalies. Dentists also detect early oral cancer and other conditions with oral symptoms, as well as utilize new cosmetic and aesthetic practices. Beyond direct patient care, dentists also teach, conduct research and work in public and international health.

American Dental Education Association:
<http://info.adea.org/dep/> Associated American Dental Schools Application Service: <https://portal.aadsasweb.org/>

Forensic Science: Forensic science lies at the intersection of science and the law. Forensic scientists contribute to legal debates by applying scientific methods to the investigation of legal problems. Health care providers in this field include doctors, dentists, and toxicologists. In many cases, they serve as frontline workers at the scene of a disaster or crime. Forensic scientists use chemistry, physics, biology, mathematics, and even psychology to help protect people, serve justice and promote better public health. In addition to working with law enforcement to help solve crimes, forensic scientists investigate environmental contamination, doping by athletes, and employee drug use.

American Academy of Forensic Sciences: <http://www.aafs.org/>
Forensic science careers: <http://www.aafs.org/choosing-career>

Medicine: Medicine offers a vast variety of career choices. Most physicians treat patients full time, while others also teach, conduct research, manage hospitals

and clinics, and develop health care policy. **Specialists (or subspecialists)** concentrate on particular types of illnesses or problems that affect specific tissues or organ systems in the body. These doctors may treat patients with complicated illnesses who are referred to them by primary care physicians or by other specialists. Whatever their focus may be, all physicians must hold one of two degrees. Most have an **M.D. (doctor of medicine)** degree, while others hold a **D.O. (doctor of osteopathy)** degree. While the two types of degrees reflect different theories and practices of medicine, medical licensing authorities recognize both training paths.

Association of American Medical Colleges:
<https://www.aamc.org/about/medicalschoools/> American Medical College Application Service:
<https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/amcas/>

Nursing: Nurses often develop plans of care, assist in personal care of patients, administer medications, monitor medication doses and interactions, giving diagnostic tests, therapies, operating medical equipment maintaining meticulous documentation and working with physicians. Nurses often work in hospital settings however positions in home care, private duty, ambulatory care centers, informatics, physician offices, education, forensics or private business are also available. Some students choose to pursue **Psychiatric Nursing** as a graduate specialty. Psychiatric mental health registered nurses work with individuals, families, groups, and communities, assessing their mental health needs.

American Association of Colleges of Nursing (also directory of accredited programs):

<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/>

Centralized application service for Nursing:

<http://nursingcas.org/>

Nursing for Psychology Majors:

<http://nursingdegreeguide.com/psych/>

American Psychiatric Nurses Association: www.apna.org/

Occupational Therapy (OT): Occupational therapists help people across the lifespan in everyday functioning and desired activities by customizing an intervention that employs everyday activities for a therapeutic purpose. Interventions include helping children and adults with disabilities function independently and participate in social situations, rehabilitate those that are recovering from injury, as well as supporting geriatric clients through physical

and cognitive changes. Occupational therapists will also modify the environment the client lives in through evaluations, adaptive equipment and guidance for family members and caregivers.

The American Occupational Therapy Association
<http://www.aota.org/> Directory of accredited programs:
<https://portal.otcas.org/>

Pharmacy: Pharmacist responsibilities include a range of care for patients, from dispensing medications to monitoring patient health and progress to maximize their response to the medication. Pharmacists also educate consumers and patients on the use of prescriptions and over-the-counter medications, and advise physicians, nurses and other health professionals on drug decisions. Pharmacists also provide expertise about the composition of drugs, including their chemical, biological, and physical properties and their manufacture and use. They ensure drug purity and strength and make sure that drugs do not interact in a harmful way. Pharmacists are drug information experts ultimately concerned about their patients' health and wellness. Pharmacists work in community pharmacies, however, pharmacists are found in a wide variety of settings including hospitals, managed care, public health, armed forces, pharmaceutical industry, government and more.

The American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACCP):
<http://www.aacp.org/Pages/Default.aspx> Pharmacy College Application Service (PharmCAS)
<http://www.pharmacas.org/>

Physical Therapy (PT): Physical therapy improves or restores physical mobility as a possible alternative to surgery or medication. Professionals in this area will complete diagnostic evaluations and come up with treatment or prevention plans that utilize supported research according to the individual needs of the client. Physical therapists can work in many different settings, including schools, hospitals, outpatient clinics, sports facilities, nursing homes and work settings.

American Physical Therapy Association:
<http://www.apta.org/> The Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service: <http://www.ptcas.org/home.aspx>

Physician Assistant (PA): Physician Assistants practice medicine and prescribe medication under the supervision of a physician. Physicians and physician assistants work together as a team to provide the best care for patients. Typical tasks include diagnosis and treatment of illnesses, order and interpret lab tests, perform physical examinations, assist in surgery, provide education and counseling and make rounds in hospitals and nursing homes. *American Academy of*

Physician Assistants: <http://www.aapa.org/> Central Application Service for Physician Assistants: <https://portal.caspaonline.org/>

Public health: Public Health is the science of protecting and improving the health of communities through education, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and research for disease and injury prevention. Public health professionals analyze the effect on health of genetics, personal choice and the environment in order to develop programs that protect the health of your family and community. Overall, public health is concerned with protecting the health of entire populations. These populations can be as small as a local neighborhood, or as big as an entire country. Public health professionals try to prevent problems from happening or re-occurring through implementing educational programs, developing policies, administering services, regulating health systems and some health professions, and conducting research, in contrast to clinical professionals, such as doctors and nurses, who focus primarily on treating individuals after they become sick or injured. It is also a field that is concerned with limiting health disparities and a large part of public health is the fight for health care equity, quality, and accessibility.

Association of Schools of Public Health: www.asph.org/
Occupation overview and career fields:
<http://whatispublichealth.org/>

Speech language pathology: The professionals who are educated to assess speech and language development and to treat speech and language disorders are called speech-language pathologists (sometimes informally referred to as speech therapists). Speech-language pathologists can also help people with swallowing disorders.

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association:
<http://www.asha.org/careers/professions/slp/> Directory of accredited programs: <http://www.asha.org/edfind/>

University resources:

Andrea Abt and Angela Illig, Health professions advisors: Medical, dental, optometry, podiatry, and veterinary schools.

<http://honorscollege.pitt.edu/advising/health-professions-advising/access-health-professions-advising>

Rich Fann, Career Consultant for Health-Related Careers: Pharmacy School, Public Health, Exercise Science, Nursing, any of the majors in the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (SHRS).

<http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/node/1425>

Comprehensive: <http://explorehealthcareers.org/en/home>

References:

All career field information extracted from the respective professional association listed with each category.