

A HEALTHCARE CAREER & ITS BENEFITS

There are a variety of reasons people go into healthcare, perhaps you are just starting out in your career and looking for an entry-level position that has the potential for growth and advancement. Or you are looking for part-time or full-time work to supplement or support your family income. If you are a person who enjoys working directly with the public where you would provide hands-on assistance with a patient's healthcare this is the career field for you. If you like the idea of working in the medical field, but would rather not work directly with patients you might consider a job as a medical biller or scheduler where you would assist patients with their medical documentation. Now that we have looked at a few of the reasons why people go into healthcare let us look at some of the benefits.

BENEFIT #1. MORE JOBS IN HEALTHCARE

According to the United States Department of Labor (www.bls.gov) health care is, "the largest industry in 2006, health care provided 14 million jobs for workers and about 438,000 jobs for the self-employed. Seven of the twenty fastest growing occupations are health care related." This is good news for those considering going into healthcare field because where there is growth in an industry there are jobs.

For people whose first language is not English the healthcare field is a great place to work and expand your career options. At www.explorehealthcareers.org it states that, "English as Second Language (ESL) workers are especially needed because of today's diverse patient population. If you can speak English reasonable well and can translate for a patient who speaks your native language, you are in high demand!" These types of jobs can be found in doctors' offices, hospitals, home health care services, outpatient care centers, clinics and government health care departments. Your ability to translate for a patient becomes a highly sought after job qualification in the healthcare industry that only you could fill.

BENEFIT #2. HEALTHCARE JOBS PAY MORE

For the median hourly wage earner healthcare jobs pay well, and an employee can expect to receive additional benefits such as insurance, paid vacation, sick leave, and pension plans from some employers. As of May 2006 the Bureau of Labor and Statistics reported the following:

Median hourly wages in Healthcare

Registered Nurse	\$25.03 – 28.12
Licensed Vocational Nurse	\$16.78 – 18.35
Dental Assistants	\$14.50 – 14.53
Medical Secretaries	\$12.66 -13.62
Medical Assistants	\$11.60 – 13.14
Receptionists/Information clerks	\$11.07 – 11.74

Median hourly wages in Healthcare (continued)

Nursing aides, orderlies, attendants	\$10.30 – 11.06
Home health aides	\$ 9.15 – 10.64
Personal/home care aids	\$ 7.23 – 9.36

Benefit #3. VARIETY OF HEALTHCARE CHOICES

In the chart above there are a variety of positions to choose from starting with a career as a personal home health care aid to the higher skill level position of a registered nurse; however, there are many more jobs to choose from.

A great place to start exploring the variety of choices is www.explorehealthcareers.org where you will find a, “free, multi-disciplinary, interactive health career website” designed to “...helping as many students as possible find a health career that suits them...” this website gives people the opportunity to learn, at their own pace, current and reliable information.

BENEFIT #4. EDUCATION OPENS DOORS

Education can open doors to a new career; however, if you do not know how to begin the process you may become frustrated before you have even started the process. The good news is that a person does not have to do this on their own! According to the Illinois Department Commerce and Economic Development website (www.commerce.state.il.us), “About half of Illinois workers have pursued education beyond the high school level. Illinois has some of the finest colleges and universities in the nation” with Illinois colleges providing, “more than 240 occupational specialties” to students. Now that is what I call a great benefit!

For some going back to school might not be the only challenge for you. The additional cost of education might be a problem; however, financial services are available, and in some cases free to the public in the form of scholarships, financial aid and special school grants. Another good and reliable website is www.fafsa.gov (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) where you can apply, submit and view more information on receiving financial assistance.

Situated in one of Chicago’s far northeastern suburbs is the College of Lake County (www.clcillinois.edu) which boasts, “...a wide range of academic program choices to meet student’s education needs at different points in their lives.” The college has three locations to choose from located in Grayslake, Waukegan and Vernon Hills which makes getting to a classroom near you easier than ever.

As of February 2009 Adult Basic Education Students helped to make up the highest headcount in the College’s history according to the office of IEPR (Institutional Effectiveness, Planning & Research). This is great news for the Basic Adult Education Student because it means that students are learning. Collectively you are among the following:

- 3,223 Adult/Vocational Education students (19% of CLC students)
- 63% are enrolled in English as A Second Language
- 76% are minorities, 62% Hispanic
- 91% attend part-time, 9% are full-time
- 57% female, 42% male students
- 27% are new students
- 53% are continuing students from fall 2008
- 11% are enrolled in GET preparation courses
- 50% attend evening classes, 38% during the day and 12% o the weekends

The minority population and ESL students have much to offer the healthcare industry and the benefits for student and employer are many. Remember this simple motto from www.explorehealthcareers.org, "Do something that matters. For yourself. For others." and consider an exciting career in the healthcare industry.

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