

HEALTH CAREER PRESENTATION TO STUDENTS 6-12

A. Why am I here?

I am here to tell you that there are lots of job opportunities in the healthcare field, and that there are going to be even more jobs in the future. For instance, in the State of South Dakota, nearly 13,000 additional healthcare workers will be needed between 2004 and 2014. That includes about 5,000 new registered nurses and about 620 physicians just to name a few. That's a whole lot of new jobs and South Dakota is only one State out of 50.

Here, in this area, we're going to need....

B. What are the health professions?

When I talk about healthcare careers, you are probably thinking physicians, dentists, and nurses. But those are only three of more than 250 different healthcare professions. Healthcare professions are jobs that maintain the health and condition of the human body. For instance, did you know that an athletic trainer is a healthcare professional? That's

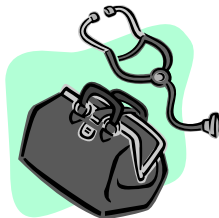
because athletic trainers get athletes in shape after they've injured themselves. Nurse-midwives are also healthcare professionals. Can anybody tell me why?

That's right. Nurse-midwives deliver babies. They look after the health of the baby and the mother.

So, we're talking about 250 different kinds of jobs, something to appeal to every kind of kid, no matter how smart you are, no matter what your interests are. Some of these jobs, like being a physician, require a lot of schooling; others can be had with a 2-year associate's degree or even less time spent in a certificate training program. What this says is that every one of you can qualify for a health profession.

Something else that's important to note is you're not stuck with the first healthcare job you choose. You can always go back to get more education and move up in the healthcare field. So, if you start out as a physician assistant or a pharmacy technician, there's nothing to stop you from going back to school and becoming a physician or a pharmacist.

Let's look at some examples of nontraditional health professions:



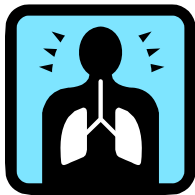
Physician Assistants perform physical examinations, diagnose illness, recommend treatment, and order laboratory tests under the supervision of a physician. Physician assistants attend an accredited Physician Assistant program, usually after going to college. The median annual salary for a physician assistant is \$74,980.



Pharmacy Technicians are support personnel in pharmacies. They attend community colleges or vocation-technical schools where they earn associate's degrees. Pharmacy technicians in South Dakota make an average of \$25,484 annually.



Radiologic Technologists use radiation for diagnostic imaging. (Can anybody tell me what that is? Right, it's like X-rays. Diagnostic imaging is taking pictures of a part of the body for the purpose of making a diagnosis, that is, figuring out what the patient's problem is.) There are programs for radiology at the certificate, associate's, and bachelor's degree levels. The average salary for radiologic technologists in South Dakota is \$42,028 a year.



Respiratory Therapists (does anybody know what respiratory means? Yes, it means having to do with breathing.) Respiratory therapists work with physicians to treat and care for patients with breathing problems, such as asthma or emphysema. They must complete a formal training program, which can be a 4-year bachelor's degree or 2-year associate's degree. The average salary in South Dakota for respiratory therapists is \$47,782 a year.



Athletic Trainers prevent, care for, and rehabilitate athletic injuries as directed by a physician. A certified athletic trainer must graduate from an accredited program, fulfill an internship, and pass a certification exam. Athletic trainers in South Dakota make on average \$31,746 a year.



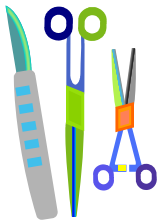
Physical Therapists work with people who have been disabled by illness or accident. Treatment may include exercise, massage, the application of heat, and other techniques. The average salary for physical therapist in South Dakota is \$62,300.



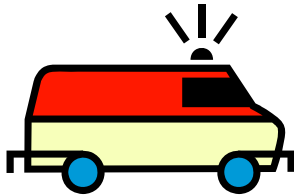
Occupational Therapy Assistants teach disabled patients how to get around, perform strengthening or muscle toning exercises with patients, and work with them in other ways. An associate's degree from an accredited training program is required for these jobs, which in South Dakota pay \$27,800 a year.



Who knows this one? **Dispensing Opticians?** Yes, they make and fit eyeglasses and lenses. Opticians can be trained on the job, either informally or as part of an apprenticeship program. The median annual salary for an optician is \$30,300.



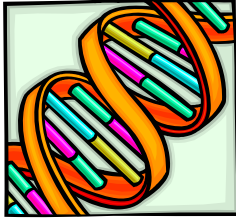
Surgical Technologists prepare operating rooms for surgery, assist during operations, and carry out post-operative procedures. Training programs vary from 9 to 24 months. Surgical technologist in South Dakota make on average \$33,444 a year.



Emergency Medical Technicians are those who come when you dial 911. They perform basic life support skills, such as restoring breathing, controlling blood loss, and treating shock victims. This job requires some 120 hours of classroom exercises and 10 internship hours. The average salary in South Dakota is \$25,640 annually.



Certified Nurse–Midwives are registered nurses with advanced training that allows them to care for expectant mothers, deliver babies, and care for both mother and baby afterwards. To be nurse–midwives, registered nurses must enroll in a 1–year certification program. While nurses earn about \$55,000 a year, nurse–midwives usually make \$80,000.



Genetic Counselors provide information support to people with birth defects or genetic disorders, or those who may be at risk for a variety of inherited conditions. A master's degree is required and the course work includes medical genetics, counseling, and hands-on experience in the field. The average annual salary in South Dakota for genetic counselors is \$53,400.



Public Health Program Specialists identify those at risk from a specified health problem. They also implement and evaluate interventions to prevent such health problems. Many colleges and universities award a bachelor's degree in public health; most advanced positions require a master's degree. Public health professionals' salaries vary by specialty, experience, geographic location, and level of education. Average salary for all specialties is \$70,700.

These are only a few of the healthcare professions available. For instance, let me give you short list of just some of the healthcare jobs that can be had with only a **certificate or on-the-job training**:

Cardiovascular Technologist, Dental Assistant, Histotechnologist, Human Service Worker, Massage Therapist, Nuclear Medicine Technologist, Phlebotomist, and Psychiatric Mental Health Technician.

Some other examples I can think of are:

If you are interested in learning more about healthcare professions, check with your guidance counselor or look in the reference section of your library under Health Professions Occupations.

C. Who hires all these health professionals? Where do they work? Can anybody tell me some places that hire healthcare workers?

Healthcare professionals are in demand in a lot of places, including:

- Hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, mental health facilities, etc.
- Managed care organizations
- Federal, State, and local government agencies
- Colleges and universities
- Public/private research organizations
- Medical supplies, equipment, and pharmaceutical industries
- Private practice

Locally, health professionals work at ...

What all of these adds up to is opportunity. If all of these places need healthcare professionals to staff them, that's a lot of healthcare jobs, and also a lot of choice in where you work and the kind of environment you choose to spend your time in. Some of you may like a little action; a more pressured, exciting work atmosphere; others may prefer something a little more laid back. In the healthcare professions, you get to choose.

D. Why be a healthcare professional? What's in it for you? The answer is, a lot. You will:

1. **Earn a living and support yourself and family.** Healthcare jobs pay well and those paychecks come regularly, every week, or two weeks.

2. Have a job that is stable and secure. The healthcare profession is here to stay and if you're not satisfied with the healthcare job you choose, you can always build on it with additional training and move up to a job that suits you better.

3. Attain skills that are in high demand. There are only going to be more healthcare jobs in the future and they're everywhere, so if you have to pick up and move, you can be pretty sure of finding a healthcare job on the other end.

4. Make a difference. There is a critical need for healthcare workers in this country. You would be making a contribution on three important levels:

a) **Providing healthcare to people who need it.** There is tremendous satisfaction in making somebody feel better. As a healthcare professional you would do that every day.

b) **Providing better access to healthcare in the community.** At the moment many people in this country have no healthcare services whatsoever. Maybe you could be the one to do something about that situation in your community.

c) **Helping improve the standard of healthcare in medically underserved and under-represented communities.** If you do choose to provide healthcare in your own community, you would be helping to raise the standard and to make healthcare better for the people who live there.

Other reasons I can think of for choosing a healthcare career include...

[E. What are the academic requirements and how you can meet them?](#)

To become a health professional, first and foremost you must complete your high school education, earning either a diploma or GED. You must also have national test scores that are acceptable to whatever program you want to get into, whether it's a 4-year college, junior college, vocational school, or a training program. National tests include SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test), ACT (American College Test), and Miller's Analogy.

Right now, the most important thing you can do is to take as many math and science classes as you can, including biology, chemistry, general math, algebra, geometry, business math, statistics etc. The better you do in these courses, the more opportunity you will have to get into healthcare training programs.

Other things I suggest you do to prepare for a career in the health professions...

You might talk to the following people if you are interested in choosing a health profession as a career:

- Guidance Counselors ·
- Teachers ·
- Parents
- Personal role models and mentors
- Health professionals (your physician, dentist, school nurse, etc.)

Sources of information I suggest are:

G. How can I afford health professions training?

The cost of training is going to vary depending on the profession you choose. But there are many ways to pay for an education, including scholarships, loans, and grants. The key is to find the right program for you and to do everything they tell you to do to apply for their financial assistance.

Sources for financial aid include Federal, State, and local government financial aid programs. In the private sector, you might be able to get education money from:

- Companies, including businesses in your neighborhood;
- Hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare facilities;
- Medical supply, equipment, and pharmaceutical companies;
- Community-based organizations like your church;
- Social groups such as sororities and fraternities;
- National Organizations (4H Club, YMCA, YWCA, Boys and Girls Clubs); and
- Financial institutions (banks, savings and loans).

H. What are some of the benefits?

I hope something I have said will lead you to consider a career in healthcare. The truth is, you're needed out there. Today, already there are shortages in healthcare. More than 3,000 communities in this country – most of them minority or rural – do not have enough healthcare to meet the needs of the people who live there. Think about that, about how many people that is. If current trends continue, the situation will only get worse.

By getting yourself into a worthwhile, rewarding, and respected career you are also helping your community and giving medical care to many people who simply don't have it now. This is a chance to do yourself a favor and a lot of other people as well.

Be ready for these types of questions:

What is your health career?

What is that? And what do you do?

Where do you work? What other settings could you work in?

What sort of education did you need?

Where did you go to school? For how long?

On average how much does your profession make in South Dakota?

What do you like about your job?

What maybe don't you like about your job?

*****Don't worry if you don't know an answer. Encourage the students to find the answer by asking another health professional, looking it up in a book, or researching it on the internet. You can also do research yourself and get back to the students.**

Resource: Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

<http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/kidscareers/students6-12.htm>