

Interested in
a Healthcare
Career?

Workforce Development



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Registered Nurse

What does a registered nurse do?

Nursing is recognized as both a science and an art. It's a profession that encompasses both the science of medicine and the art of caring. A nurse ensures every patient receives personalized, professional and the appropriate care needed. A registered nurse (RN) must have compassion, good technical skills and a broad knowledge of science to provide quality patient care. The RN carefully follows the physicians or healthcare providers plan of care for each patient. An RN will administer various types of medications, perform treatments, monitor test results, provide patient education and monitor a patient's progress toward healing and wellness. The RN also facilitates communication between all members of the healthcare team. RNs may specialize in different areas of medicine and have many opportunities within a hospital for professional growth and advancement.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Business/factory environments
- Clinics
- Education
- Government
- Home care
- Hospitals
- Insurance
- Long term care
- Outpatient treatment/surgical centers
- Physician offices
- Research

What education is needed to perform this role?

An associate or bachelor's degree followed by passing the NCLEX RN exam is required for licensure. Some colleges may want you to interview for a spot in the nursing program. Gain knowledge and practice your interviewing skills. This will also help later when you are looking for your first nursing position.

Three words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Compassionate
- Problem solver
- Team player

Registered Nurse

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- East Tennessee State University (BSN)
- King University (BSN)
- Lincoln Memorial University (BSN)
- Milligan University (BSN)
- Northeast State Community College (ADN)
- Tusculum University (BSN)
- Walters State Community College (ADN)

Virginia

- Emory and Henry College (BSN)
- Mountain Empire Community College (ADN)
- Radford University (BSN)
- Southwest Virginia Community College (SWCC)
- University of Virginia at Wise (BSN)
- Virginia Highlands Community College (ADN)
- Wythe County Community College (ADN)

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Prerequisite courses are needed for most nursing programs. These courses can vary and should be identified as soon as possible. A guidance counselor might be able to assist you. Complete english language arts, algebra, geometry, biology and chemistry. Additional recommendations include physics, anatomy and physiology, psychology, speech and foreign language. Some colleges might require advance placement in classes when possible. Computer skills are also a plus.

Licensed Practical Nurse

What does a licensed practical nurse do?

Nursing is recognized as an art and a science. It's a profession that encompasses both the science of medicine and the art of caring. In general, a nurse ensures every patient receives personalized, professional and the appropriate care needed. The licensed practical nurse (LPN) works under the supervision of an RN or other healthcare provider, closely following the provider's plan of care. In the hospital setting, an LPN works as a part of the nursing team to delivery safe, compassionate care to each patient. An LPN provides basic care to patients such as taking blood pressure, providing wound care and dressings, the administration of certain medications, obtaining blood samples and checking blood sugars, all while developing computer skills, communication skills and other technical skills along the way. The LPN is organized and committed to direct patient care.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Clinics
- Home care
- Hospitals
- Long term care
- Physician office

What education is needed to perform this role?

LPNs obtain a 12-18 month diploma from a practical nursing program before they must pass the LPN NCLEX exam for licensure.

Licensed Practical Nurse

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- TCAT - Elizabethton
- Walters State Community College

Virginia

- Mountain Empire Community College
- Ridgeview High School
- Southwest Virginia Community College
- Virginia Highlands Community College

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Prerequisite courses might be required depending on the nursing program. It is helpful for you to complete biology, chemistry and algebra. Completing anatomy and physiology classes, as well as advanced placement classes, would also be a plus.

Three words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Compassionate
- Social skills
- Team player

Certified Nursing Assistant

What does a certified nursing assistant do?

The certified nursing assistant (CNA) is a vital part of the nursing team. Although the CNA is not a nurse, they work under the direction of a nurse or other healthcare provider and are a part of the nursing team. The CNA performs direct patient-centered tasks such as repositioning, bathing, eating, checking vital signs and aiding with walking to help meet the basic needs of each patient and provide support to them and their family. The CNA can work with various age groups depending on their preference in most hospitals.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Assisted living
- Clinic
- Home care
- Hospital
- Long term care
- Physician offices

What education is needed to perform this role?

Completion of an education/training program of 100-120 hours including classroom and clinical training, and completion of the certification exam.

Certified Nursing Assistant

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- Ballard Health (in person and in person/virtual)
- TCAT - Elizabethton

Virginia

- Ballard Health
- Wise County Technical School

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Basic, well-rounded education with good grades. Biology and chemistry or life sciences are a plus. Basic computer skills are recommended.

Three words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Compassionate
- Dedicated
- Flexible

Nurse Practitioner

What does a nurse practitioner do?

A nurse practitioner (NP), also known as a healthcare practitioner, is a skilled provider who manages overall patient care similar to and under the direction of a physician. The NP conducts a health evaluation that includes a history of the patient and family health. The NP also completes patient exams, orders tests and prescribes medication in addition to diagnosing and treating illnesses and injuries. Above all, an NP builds a trusting relationship with their patients and family.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Clinics
- Hospitals
- Long term care
- Physician offices

What education is needed to perform this role?

Master's or doctorate degree and professional certification licensure

Three words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Compassion
- Integrity
- Leadership

Nurse Practitioner

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- East Tennessee State University
- University of Tennessee
- Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Virginia

- George Mason University
- Hampton University
- Old Dominion University

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Complete English language arts, algebra, geometry, biology and chemistry. Additional recommendations include physics, psychology, speech, foreign language, and anatomy and physiology, AP classes, volunteer at a hospital or facility, application to an undergraduate nursing (BSN) program. Complete graduate nurse program. Applicants are encouraged to work one to two years as a nurse before going to graduate school for NP.

Respiratory Therapist

What does a respiratory therapist do?

The respiratory therapist (RT) monitors and treats patients of all ages with various types of breathing problems. Through their specialized education process, the RT acquires skills and knowledge to use specialized breathing equipment and medications to treat patients. The RT can also perform specific tests to monitor oxygen levels in the blood stream that help to determine when supplemental oxygen may be needed. In the hospital setting, the RT will set up equipment and help transport patients with specialty breathing equipment such as a ventilator. If a patient were to stop breathing or have any issues with shortness of breath, the RT would know exactly what to do.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Hospitals
- Long term care

What education is needed to perform this role?

Associate degree and a state license are required

Respiratory Therapist

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- East Tennessee State University
- Northeast State Community College
- Tennessee College of Applied Technology

Virginia

- Mountain Empire Community
- University of Virginia

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Complete courses in algebra, statistics and other technical math, biology and chemistry are also recommended

Three words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Detail orientated
- Patience
- Problem Solving

Medical Technologist (Laboratory)

What does a medical technologist do?

The medical laboratory scientist (MLS), sometimes referred to as a clinical laboratory scientist (CLS) or medical technologist (MT), performs and interprets essential laboratory tests that are crucial to health and well-being. These professionals use microscopes and smart technology to search for clues in the blood, body fluids and tissues to help in the diagnosis and treatment of disease or injury. The medical technologist performs complex tests on body fluids and cells. They also clean, maintain and calibrate the equipment to ensure it is working properly. The medical technologist shares the test results with other healthcare professionals such as a healthcare provider or nurse, who then uses the test results to determine what medical treatment a patient may need. Performing tests quickly and accurately is an important part of this role.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Hospitals
- Outpatient labs

What education is needed to perform this role?

Medical Laboratory Technicians (MLT):

Two-year associate degree

Medical Laboratory Scientists (MLS):

Four-year bachelor's degree

The two-year program provides the opportunity to begin working in the clinical laboratory while continuing studies for the completion of a bachelor's degree. The four-year program provides the opportunity for further advancement into technical specialty and/or laboratory management positions.

Medical Technologist (Laboratory)

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- Austin Peay State University
- Lincoln Memorial University
- Northeast State Community College
- University of Tennessee
- Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Virginia

- Mountain Empire Community College
- University of Virginia - Wise

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Consider taking some of these advanced courses in high school: anatomy and physiology, microbiology, statistics, math, biology and chemistry. Identify the college you want to attend and inquire about their recommendations which can vary based on the state you plan to be employed.

Three words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Problem solver
- Reliable
- Team player

Phlebotomist

What does a phlebotomist do?

A phlebotomist has one specialized skill they perform every day – they prepare the necessary supplies to draw blood samples for blood tests that are ordered by a physician or healthcare provider. The phlebotomist might need to show support and kindness to someone who is fearful of having their blood tests completed and will verify patient information accurately before each blood draw. The blood tests help the healthcare provider diagnose and treat illnesses in each patient.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Clinics
- Doctors offices
- Hospitals
- Long term care

What education is needed to perform this role?

Technical training program plus test or certification

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Completing courses in school such as biology and chemistry would be a plus.

Three words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Compassion
- Detail oriented
- Organized

Surgical Technologist

What does a surgical technologist do?

The surgical technologist (ST), or operating room technician, prepares the surgical room, surgical instruments and equipment for each surgery. A surgical tech might specialize in a specific surgical specialty, but must also have general knowledge of most types of surgeries. During a surgery, the ST hands surgical instruments to the surgeon upon their request. The surgical tech is familiar with many surgical instruments as well as surgeon preferences to assist the surgeon performing a surgery.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Hospitals
- Outpatient surgery centers

What education is needed to perform this role?

Associate degree and certificate exam

Surgical Technologist

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- Northeast State Community College
- Walters State Community College

Virginia

- Mountain Empire Community College
- Wise County Technical School

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Courses in biology, chemistry, and anatomy

Three words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Attention to detail
- Flexible
- Team player

Pharmacist

What does a pharmacist do?

A pharmacist is a healthcare professional who is specifically trained to store, handle, prepare and dispense various medications. Pharmacists play an essential role in educating patients about using or administering their medications, and they also serve as a final check to ensure that doses are correct, limiting negative or harmful drug interactions. Pharmacists are team leaders who oversee and manage pharmacy interns and technicians. They are also responsible for basic record-keeping and administrative tasks, as required by state and federal law.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Drug manufacturing
- Governmental agencies
- Hospitals
- Local pharmacies
- Medical clinics and care facilities

What education is needed to perform this role?

Doctor of Pharmacy degree (Pharm.D.) and potentially a one or two-year residency (highly encouraged) depending on career interests.

Six words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Critical thinker
- Detail oriented
- Leader
- Multi-tasker
- Problem solving skills
- Team player

Pharmacist

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- East Tennessee State University (Johnson City)
- South College (Knoxville)

Virginia

- Appalachian College of Pharmacy (Oakwood)
- VCU School of Pharmacy (Richmond or Falls Church)

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Maintain excellent grades in high school with focus in math and science, including chemistry, biology and physics. Most programs require at least two years of undergraduate study, although some require a bachelor's degree with focus on chemistry, biology, physics, pharmacology, pharmacotherapy and pharmacokinetics.

Pharmacy Technician

What does a pharmacy technician do?

Pharmacy technicians work under the supervision of pharmacists. Technicians fill prescriptions, compound or mix medications and call physicians for prescription refill approval. Pharmacy technicians collaborate with a variety of healthcare professionals and can be found working in community pharmacies, hospitals, clinics. There are several roles for pharmacy technicians with insurance companies, drug manufacturers, and government agencies. They are critical in maintaining patient, inventory, and business records.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Governmental agencies
- Hospitals
- Local pharmacies
- Pharmaceutical companies

What education is needed to perform this role?

High school diploma; on-the-job training, associate degree or pharmacy technician program

Pharmacy Technician

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- Northeast State Community College (Blountville)
- Ross Medical Education Center (Johnson City)

Virginia

- Southwest Virginia Community College (Richlands)
- Virginia Highlands Community College (Abingdon)

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Volunteer or shadow pharmacy technicians. Courses in math, chemistry, biology, and medical terminology if offered.

Four words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Customer service skills
- Detail oriented
- Listening skills
- Multi-tasking abilities

Physical Therapist

What does a physical therapist do?

A physical therapist (PT) assists people of all ages who present with orthopedic conditions and/or injuries, neurological impairments, sports injuries, musculoskeletal injuries, spinal conditions and workplace injuries including repetitive stress disorders. The overall goal of a PT is to help our patients regain movement, range of motion and strength to return to their maximum level of functional ability as prior to their injury or illness.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Home care
- Hospitals
- Inpatient rehab units
- Long term care/skilled nursing facilities
- Outpatient clinics
- Schools

What education is needed to perform this role?

Doctorate of Physical Therapy and license

Six words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Collaborative
- Compassionate
- Independent
- Outcomes oriented
- Positive
- Realistic

Physical Therapist

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- Belmont University
- East Tennessee State University
- Tennessee State University
- University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Virginia

- Emory and Henry College
- Radford University
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Shenandoah University
- Old Dominion University

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Shadow or intern with a PT. Volunteer to work in healthcare. Take honors courses in science or AP science courses and satisfactory SAT/ACT scores.

Occupational Therapist

What does an occupational therapist do?

The occupational therapist (OT) is focused on helping patients regain maximum function for self-care and daily activities after injury, surgery or the onset of illness. While the OT has specialized skills they assist with a wide variety of health challenges, the OT also assists with barriers that affect the emotional, social and physical needs of a patient throughout their recovery. The occupational therapist works with patients of all ages and designs a individualized plan of care which includes education, support and equipment for the patient. Based on the evaluation findings, the OT provides recommendations for home or work to meet the functional needs for day-to-day living for each person. The OT ensures the patient is able to adapt to any changes or modifications as needed.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Home care
- Hospitals
- Inpatient rehab units
- Long term care/skilled nursing facilities
- Outpatient clinics
- Schools

What education is needed to perform this role?

Master's or doctorate and license

Occupational Therapist

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- East Tennessee State University
- Milligan University
- Tennessee State University
- University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Virginia

- Emory and Henry College
- Radford University
- Virginia Tech
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- University of Virginia

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Shadow or intern with an OT. Volunteer to work in healthcare. Computer applications, introduction to healthcare, psychology, take honors courses in science or AP science courses and satisfactory SAT/ACT scores.

Four words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Compassionate
- Good communicator
- Independent
- Innovative and creative

Speech Language Pathologist

What does a speech language pathologist do?

A speech language pathologist (SLP) works with all age groups and has several roles that include helping a patient with their thought process, speech or word annunciation, communication problems, identifying swallowing disorders and identifying hearing problems. The SLP helps to isolate or identify a problem and then helps to resolve those problems with their advanced knowledge and skills. In addition, a SLP provides education for the patient and family to assist in understanding and overcoming healthcare challenges.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Home health
- Hospitals
- Inpatient rehab units
- Long term care/skilled nursing facilities
- Outpatient clinics
- School system

What education is needed to perform this role?

Master's degree, license and American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Certification

Speech Language Pathologist

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- East Tennessee State University
- University of Tennessee
- University of Memphis
- Vanderbilt University

Virginia

- James Madison University
- Radford University
- University of Virginia

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Maintain a good GPA, job shadow or volunteer in a health care program over the summer, and take classes in science and psychology, english with a focus on enunciation and a foreign language

Four words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Compassionate
- Good communicator
- Independent
- Technology savvy

Physical Therapist Assistant

What does a physical therapist assistant do?

A physical therapist assistant (PTA) provides hands-on therapeutic interventions to patients of all ages. The PTA works under the supervision and direction of the physical therapist to implement and execute the treatment plan that the PT has developed for the patient. The PTA collaborates and shares information on the patient's progress with the PT on a regular basis. This allows the PT to modify the plan of care as needed based on the patients response to treatments.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Home care
- Hospitals
- Inpatient rehab units
- Long term care/skilled nursing facilities
- Outpatient clinics
- Schools

What education is needed to perform this role?

Associate degree from an accredited PTA program and state licensure

Physical Therapist Assistant

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- Chattanooga State Community College
- Roane State Community College
- South College
- Walter's State Community College

Virginia

- Radford University
- South University
- Wytheville Community College

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Shadow or volunteer in a physical therapy clinic/hospital or take healthcare clinical classes if offered by your high school. Take honors or AP classes in science.

Five words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Compassionate
- Good communicator
- Highly motivating
- Reliable
- Trustworthy

Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant

What does a certified occupational therapist assistant do?

A certified occupational therapist assistant (COTA) works under the direction and supervision of a licensed occupational therapist. The COTA is responsible for implementing and executing the individualized treatment plan that has been developed by the OT for each patient. They work with patients of all ages to help them regain their ability to perform daily activities of living after an injury or illness. The COTA communicates patient progress with treatment plan to the OT on a regular basis.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Home care
- Hospitals
- Inpatient rehab units
- Long term care/skilled nursing facilities
- Outpatient clinics
- Schools

What education is needed to perform this role?

Associate degree from an accredited COTA program and state licensure

Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- Jackson State Community College
- Nashville State Community College
- Roane State Community College

Virginia

- Jefferson College of Health Sciences
- Northern Virginia Community College
- Southwest Virginia Community College

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Shadow or volunteer in an occupational therapy clinic/hospital department or take healthcare clinical classes if offered by your high school. Take honors or AP classes in science.

Five words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Adaptable
- Creative
- Good communicator
- Observant
- Passionate

Dietician (Nutritionist)

What does a dietician (nutritionist) do?

Registered dietitians work to treat and prevent disease. They provide individualized nutritional recommendations, patient-focused counseling and self-management training. Dietitians working in hospitals assess patients' nutritional needs, then develop and implement nutrition care plans before evaluating and reporting the results. They confer with doctors and other healthcare professionals to coordinate medical and nutrition care. Hospitals are just one of many areas for the registered dietitian to work to improve the nutritional status and quality of life for patients of all ages.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Clinics
- Colleges and universities
- Community and public health settings
- Correctional facilities
- Grocery stores
- Hospitals
- Long term care facilities
- Private practice
- Research in food and pharmaceutical companies
- Schools
- Sports nutrition and corporate wellness programs

What education is needed to perform this role?

Bachelor's degree and internship. Will need master's degree beginning January 1, 2024 to be eligible to take registration exam. State licensure required in Tennessee but not in Virginia.

Three words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Flexible
- Listening skills
- Problem solver

Dietician (Nutritionist)

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- Carson-Newman University
- East Tennessee State University
- Lipscomb University
- Middle Tennessee State University
- Tennessee Tech
- University of Memphis
- University of Tennessee
- Vanderbilt University

Virginia

- James Madison University
- Radford University
- University of Virginia
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Virginia State University
- Virginia Tech

North Carolina

- Appalachian State University
- University of North Carolina Greensboro

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Standard college prep courses including advanced math, health, biology and chemistry. Build on your communication skills with English classes and speech. Volunteer experience in a commercial kitchen, such as a hospital or long term care facility, may also be helpful.

Radiologic Technologist

What does a radiologic technologist do?

A radiologic technologist (RT) performs X-rays and imaging procedures. The images help the healthcare provider identify patient illnesses or problems. The RT will precisely position a patient and the equipment before the x-ray or scan to ensure they obtain good clarity and accurate x-rays or images. They also ensure all patients are appropriately shielded from unnecessary radiation exposure when needed, and they also help to maintain diagnostic imaging equipment. The RT follows the healthcare providers orders when performing images and keeps appropriate records.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Clinics
- Hospitals
- Imaging centers
- Physician offices

What education is needed to perform this role?

Associate degree or bachelor's degree

Three words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Attention to detail
- Compassionate
- Responsible

Radiologic Technologist

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- East Tennessee State University
- South College
- University of Tennessee
- Volunteer State Community College

Virginia

- Averett University
- Blue Ridge Community College
- Southwest Virginia Community College
- Tidewater Community College
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Virginia Highlands Community College

North Carolina

- Asheville Buncombe Technical
Community College

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Maintain good grades in advanced sciences
such as biology, physics and anatomy
if available.

Diagnostic Medical Sonographer or Ultrasound Technician

What does a diagnostic medical sonographer or ultrasound technician do?

The diagnostic medical sonographer, or ultrasound technician (UT), has expert knowledge of ultrasound equipment that uses sound waves to show body structures of a patient. A physician or other healthcare provider orders an ultrasound to look at a specific area of the body. The UT uses the ultrasound equipment to identify and observe potential problem areas. The UT works independently with minimal supervision and must learn to manage several patients and priorities.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Clinics
- Hospitals
- Imaging centers
- Physician offices

What education is needed to perform this role?

- Associates degree

Diagnostic Medical Sonographer or Ultrasound Technician

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- Chattanooga State Community College
- South College
- Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Virginia

- Southside College of Health Sciences
- Tidewater Community College

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Maintain good grades and take courses in
physics, biology and anatomy.

Three words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Interpersonal or social skills
- Self-disciplined
- Well organized

Nuclear Medicine Technologist

What does a nuclear medicine technologist do?

A nuclear medicine technologist prepares and administers small doses of radioactive material to diagnose various medical conditions under the direction of a physician. The technologist is trained to operate scanners which locate the radioactive material in order to produce images.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Hospitals
- Imaging centers
- Physician offices

What education is needed to perform this role?

Associate or bachelor's degree

Nuclear Medicine Technologist

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- Chattanooga State Community College
- Columbia State Community College
- South College

Virginia

- Old Dominion University

North Carolina

- Caldwell Community College
- Forsyth Technical Community College
- Pitt Community College

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Good grades in advanced sciences such as biology, physics and anatomy if available.

Three words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Attention to detail
- Compassionate
- Responsible

Physician Assistant

What does a physician assistant do?

Often referred to as a healthcare practitioner, a physician assistant (PA) is a skilled provider of healthcare who assists in the overall patient care under the guidance of a physician. The PA conducts a health evaluation that includes a history of the patient and family health. They also complete patient exams, order tests and prescribe medication in addition to diagnosing and treating illnesses and injuries. Above all, the PA also builds a trusting relationship with their patients and family.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Clinics
- Hospitals
- Long term care
- Physician Offices

What education is needed to perform this role?

Master's degree

Physician Assistant

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- Lincoln Memorial University
- Milligan University
- South College

Virginia

- Emory and Henry College

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Perform well academically so that you are a candidate for college. Take courses in math, science, biology, chemistry, anatomy and physiology, algebra, calculus are a plus. Consider volunteering in a hospital or shadowing with a PA or physician. Working as an EMT or paramedic offers good experience and may assist in admission to PA school.

Three words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Compassion
- Integrity
- Leadership

Physician

What does a physician do?

The physician is a highly dedicated healthcare provider and can specialize in a specific area of medicine or work in general practice. Physicians might work in a hospital or clinic setting and are a part of a larger healthcare team that can consist of multiple disciplines and specialties. The physician works closely with nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses and other members of the allied health team to provide the most comprehensive care possible to their patients.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Clinics
- Hospitals
- Long term care
- Physician offices

What education is needed to perform this role?

Bachelor's degree and a four-year medical degree; three to nine years of internship or residency

Three words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Empathy
- Leadership
- Life-long learner

Physician

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- East Tennessee State University Quillen College of Medicine
- Lincoln Memorial University
- Meharry Medical College
- Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Virginia

- Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine
- University of Virginia
- Virginia Tech

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

To prepare for a pre-med major, you must take the right courses in high school.

These include physics, chemistry, calculus, statistics and english honors courses. AP, IB college credit is preferable, and strive for the highest grades possible. Also look for a high school summer medical program that will provide you with exposure to the world of medicine. Consider volunteering in a hospital and/or shadowing a physician.

Behavioral Health Technician

What does a behavioral health technician do?

The behavioral health technician is a vital part of the behavioral health inpatient team.

Although the behavioral health technician is not a nurse, they work under the direction of a nurse or other healthcare provider and are an important part of the nursing team. The behavioral health technician performs direct patient-centered tasks to meet the basic needs of each patient, such as bathing, eating, dressing, checking vital signs, assistance with walking and other needs. The behavioral health technician can work with various age groups depending on their preference.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Emergency departments
- Hospitals

What education is needed to perform this role?

High school diploma or GED

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Basic, well-rounded education with good grades. Biology and chemistry or life sciences are a plus. Basic computer skills are recommended.

Three words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Compassionate
- Dedicated
- Flexible

Community Navigator

What does a community navigator do?

The community navigator is an essential part of the care team who coordinates diagnostic, treatment and/or support services. This individual ensures a smooth flow of patient information and care by acting as a bridge between the patient, their family and the different care services they require. The community navigator is a liaison for local support groups and other organizations, providing support and making community referrals for patients and their families as needed.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Clinics
- Emergency departments
- Hospitals
- Physician offices

What education is needed to perform this role?

Bachelor's degree or master's degree in social work, counseling, psychology or mental-health related field

Three words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Compassionate
- Problem-solver
- Social skills

Community Navigator

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

Tennessee

- East Tennessee State University
- King University
- Lincoln Memorial University
- Milligan University
- Tusculum University
- Walters State Community College

Virginia

- Emory and Henry College
- Mountain Empire Community College
- Radford University
- Southwest Virginia Community College
- University of Virginia at Wise
- Virginia Highlands Community College
- Wythe County Community College

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Basic, well-rounded education with good grades. Math, science, biology, chemistry and anatomy and physiology are a plus. Basic computer skills are recommended.

Mental Health Therapist

What does a mental health therapist do?

The mental health therapist is an instrumental piece in a patient's behavioral health care plan. The therapist documents progress and supports each client as they establish and work toward individual goals. The therapist conducts individual, family and group therapy sessions as needed, and will facilitate group therapy modalities within scope of their practice. This individual also facilitates clinical problem solving.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Clinics
- Hospitals
- Physician offices

What education is needed to perform this role?

Bachelor's degree or master's degree in social work, counseling, psychology or mental-health related field

Three words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Compassionate
- Problem-solver
- Social skills

Mental Health Therapist

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

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- Mountain Empire Community College
- Radford University
- Southwest Virginia Community College
- University of Virginia at Wise
- Virginia Highlands Community College
- Wythe County Community College

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Basic, well-rounded education with good grades. Emphasis in math, science, biology, chemistry, anatomy and physiology are a plus. Consider volunteering in a hospital or a clinic shadowing with a mental health therapist or a psychiatrist.

Social Worker

What does a social worker do?

Social workers provide psychosocial support to individuals, families and groups to help them cope with chronic, acute or terminal illness. Regardless of the setting, social workers are responsible for assessing the needs, circumstances and support systems of those they serve. Depending on the needs of the client, the social worker provides treatment or counseling while also connecting their clients to available resources to best meet their needs. The social worker develops a plan of care that includes measurable goals and often follows up with the client and their providers to monitor improvement and identify new and ongoing needs. Most importantly, the social worker is an advocate for those they serve. An individual with a master's degree in social work might work in counseling and treatment in behavioral health, family dynamics, bereavement and other group and individual settings.

Where does this healthcare professional work?

- Behavioral health settings
- Client's home
- Community-based locations such as child protective or adult protective services
- Home health and hospice
- Hospitals
- Nursing homes
- Outpatient clinics

Social Worker

What education is needed to perform this role?

Social workers might earn either a bachelor's degree or master's degree in social work, and certifications in areas such as counseling are available.

Regional academic programs near us to acquire this education?

- East Tennessee State University
- King University
- Lincoln Memorial University
- Milligan University
- University of Tennessee

In middle/high school what can I do to prepare me for this role/acceptance into the formal educational program at a college/university/training program?

Focus studies in all areas of social sciences. In addition, volunteering at nursing homes, hospitals and various community agencies provides an excellent opportunity for the student to see social work in action and determine interest/fit in that career path.

Three words to describe the characteristic of a person doing this role:

- Advocate
- Empathetic
- Facilitator