

Health Care Careers Glossary

Dentist

Most common general practice dentist although several specialties exist, usually in private practice, education—four years after undergraduate degree.

Dental Hygienist

Works alongside the dentist, responsible for patient screening, preliminary examinations, and counseling patients on dental care. Most jobs usually found in dental office. Education required is two years. Community College of Southern Nevada (CCSN) and Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) have the only programs in the state.

Dental Assistant

Works closely with hygienist and dentist, assists during dental procedures, takes patient history and performs office administration. One year of training is required. Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) and Community College of Southern Nevada (CCSN) offer the only program in the state. Some of these professionals are trained in individual dentist offices.

Dietitian

This health professional works in many settings. In the hospital, the dietitian plans patient menus, special diets as prescribed by physicians and often acts as the administrator of the facility's food service department. Other roles include public health or nutrition counseling. AA bachelor's degree is required and the University of Nevada, Reno, offers the state's only educational program. An additional one year internship, which is not available in Nevada, must be completed for certification. UNR also offers a master's degree.

Basic Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)

Volunteer, works on ambulances, can provide basic life support, 110 hours of training required, certification valid for two years. TMCC in Reno and CCSN offer certification programs.

Emergency Medical Technician II (EMT II)

Volunteer or paid depending on location, 150 hours of training required, can perform many medical procedures, recertification required every six months and must work on an ambulance. TMCC and CCSN offer programs in this field.

Paramedic

First line of emergency service in many parts of the state can provide many more medical procedures than EMT II, works with ambulance or fire services, up to 2 years of education required. CCSN and TMCC offer programs in this field.

Health Care Administrator

As health care becomes increasingly complicated, students educated in health care administration are becoming more sought after. Job opportunities are numerous and include positions in hospitals, long-term care facilities, insurance companies, mental health agencies, outpatient clinics and public health agencies. Some of the specific areas administrators are concerned with include cost control, quality assurance and personnel management. A bachelor's degree is required. UNLV offers the state's only program.

Health Educator

Works for schools, public health agencies, and non-profit organizations and provides information and education to the public on health issues. Two tracks are available: 1 – School Health – this prepares students to teach at the secondary level. 2 – Community Health track is designed to prepare students to be community-based educator. A bachelor's degree is required and school districts require teaching credentials. Both programs are available at UNLV.

Medical Laboratory Technologist

Works in hospital or clinic laboratories performing tests on blood and other body tissues. A bachelor's degree is required. Programs in northern and southern Nevada are available. A related field is technician. This professional works with a technologist, but only two years of education are required. Community College of Southern Nevada and the University Of Nevada School Of Medicine, Reno offers this program.

Health Information Technologist

This professional is trained to organize and analyze health information. Two career tracks are available for students. Students can choose record administrator or record technician. A four-year degree is required for the administrator and two years are required for the technician. A related field is medical transcription which requires a one-year certificate. Education programs are available in Nevada at CCSN and TMCC:

Associate Degree in Health Info. Technology – 2 yrs.

Certificate of Achievement, Medical Coding –1 yr.

Certificate of Achievement, Medical Transcription – 1yr.

Register Nurse

The most commonly found nursing professional. Often specializes in various areas of care, such as pediatrics, or emergency medicine. Rural nurses are usually generalized in their profession. Education varies from two to four years and many educational programs are available within Nevada. Every university and most community colleges offer a nursing program.

Practical Nurse

This nurse works alongside the registered nurse to provide patient care, usually supervised by a registered nurse. One year of education is required. CCSN and TMCC offer a certificate of completion for nursing assistants. (150 hrs)

Nurse Practitioner

Provide diagnosis and treatment of diseases, can prescribe medicines, works closely with the physician and requires a master's degree. UNLV offers a Family Nurse Practitioner program.

Optometrist

Optometrists, or Doctors of Optometry (O.D.) provide services to improve vision. They diagnose and treat certain conditions of the human eye and prescribe glasses and contact lenses to correct vision problems. Optometrists often work in hospital eye clinics, pharmacies that provide vision care services, and public health agencies and clinics. Optometrists are required to complete four years of college. After receiving a bachelor's degree, the student is then eligible to apply to an accredited four year optometry school. The application process includes taking the Optometry Admission test. There are no optometry schools in Nevada, but the state participates in an exchange program with several schools through the WICHE program.

Physician Assistant

Duties similar to nurse practitioner. Can provide diagnosis and treatment of diseases under supervision of physician. Educational requirements vary, but generally years of experience in a medical field can substitute for formal education. Nevada offers a 2 year program through the University of Nevada School of Medicine and the University of Washington in Seattle.

Physician

Physicians diagnose and treat diseases of all kinds, usually in a specific specialty. Nevada offers a medical education to 53 students each year at the University of Nevada School of Medicine. Students are admitted after completion of a bachelor's degree and other qualifications are met. After the four-year program, students must complete a minimum three-year residency in their chosen specialty.

Pharmacist

Dispenses drugs according to a physician's prescription as well as provides information on safe drug use and helps patients use their medications correctly. Most work in chain store pharmacies, individually-owned pharmacies, hospitals and large clinics. Nevada has no pharmacy school, but students can travel out of state through the WICHE program. A related field is pharmacy technician and a program is available at Community College of Southern Nevada.

Physical Therapist

Provides rehabilitation for patients needing to regain use of joints or muscles, walking ability, or strength. Most jobs are in hospitals. No physical therapy education programs are available in Nevada but students can go out of state through the WICHE program. A related field is physical therapy assistant, which requires two years of education. Community College of Southern Nevada offers the state's only program.

Respiratory Therapist

Works with patients having problems with their heart and lungs. Most jobs are in hospitals. No programs available in Nevada, but students can go out of state through the WICHE program

Radiological Sciences

This profession has several areas of specialty:

- Radiographer – uses X-ray equipment to assist in the diagnosis of disease or injury. Two years of education are required.
- Ultrasonographer – uses ultrasound equipment to assist in the diagnosis and treatment of disease. Four years of education are required
- Radiation Therapist – provides radiation treatments to cancer patients. Four years of education are required.
- Nuclear Medicine Technologist – uses radioactive materials to diagnose disease or conduct research. Four years of education is required.

Both the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and Truckee Meadows Community College offer programs for these fields.

Speech Therapist

Works with children and adults with speech, voice, and language disorders. Most jobs are in school districts, hospitals, private practice, or clinics. The University of Nevada School of Medicine offers the state's only program, a six year program providing a master's degree.