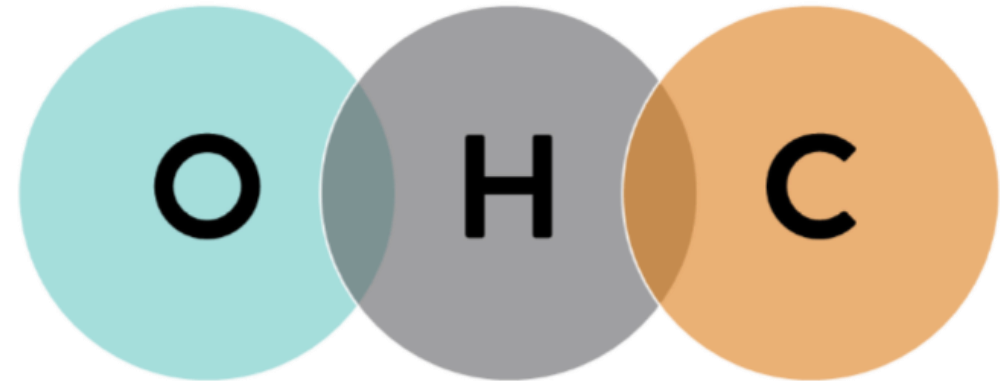




Orientation to Health Careers



**SOUTHWEST
IDAHO AHEC**

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Introduction to Health Careers

IS A HEALTH CAREER RIGHT FOR YOU?



Let's find out.

The next few slides include questions you can ask yourself to help you decide if you should consider a career in health care.

Resource: <https://explorehealthcareers.org/>



1. Are you excited about the idea of lifelong learning?

The best health care practitioners are committed to giving their patients the best care possible.

These health care practitioners prioritize keeping up with the latest developments in the field, continuing to study and learn long after their initial schooling ends.

If you have a similar interest in lifelong learning, it's a good idea to consider entering the health care field.



2. Are you a team player?

Health care is increasingly focusing on team work as patients' recovery depends more and more on how well each member of the team performs his or her specific function and how well they communicate and collaborate with one another.

Even dentists — 70% of whom work in a solo private practice — usually supervise and work closely with several staff members. When choosing a health care position, you'll want to consider the amount of teamwork it requires to ensure it's a good fit for you and your working style.



3. What lifestyle do you envision?

Depending on the path that you choose to go down, you may end up working through emergencies on a daily basis, working extremely long hours and shouldering heavy responsibility.

If you don't mind long workdays and are good at handling stress, go ahead and pursue a career that will demand that of you. But if you'd rather have a job with regular hours and fewer medical crises, there are plenty of other fulfilling health careers to consider.



Let's assume you answered "yes" to all 3 of those questions. What's next?

Now you'll want to focus your career search and plans. Here are a few more questions to ask yourself:

1. How long do you want to be in training? Weeks? Months? Years?
2. How important is money? Would you be happy doing a job you love that may pay less than other jobs?
3. What aspect of a health career interests you most? Medical? Dental? Behavioral Health (social work and counseling)?



Now Let's Look at Some Health Careers and their academic Pathways

WHICH ONE MIGHT BE RIGHT FOR YOU?

Health Careers for you to consider:

- [Certified Nurse Assistant](#)
- [Community Health Worker](#)
- [Dentist, Dental Hygienist, Dental Assistant](#)
- [Emergency Medical Technician](#)
- [Home Health Aide](#)
- [Medical Assistant](#)
- [Mental Health Counselor](#)
- [Nurse Practitioner](#)
- [Occupational Therapist](#) and [Occupational Therapy Aide](#)
- [Pharmacist & Pharmacy Technician](#)
- [Physical Therapist & Physical Therapist Assistant](#)
- [Physician – MD/DO](#)
- [Physician Assistant](#)
- [Radiologic Technologist](#)
- [Registered Nurse](#)
- [Respiratory Therapist](#)
- [Social Worker](#)

Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA)

- Work in nursing homes, home care, assisted living, Hospice, hospitals, community based long-term care, correctional institutions, and other long-term care settings.
- Help patients of all ages perform the most basic daily tasks. They work under a licensed nurse's supervision, and since they have extensive daily contact with each patient, they play a key role in the lives of their patients and in keeping the nurse up to date on vital information about the patients' conditions.



CNA Academic Pathway (0 – 1 years education)

- Licensure not required
- Minimum of 120 training hours in a state approved program, of which 80 hours must be classroom and laboratory work
- 32 hours must be clinical training
- (8) hours can be classroom, lab or clinical training. Idaho does not allow assisted living facilities to be used for clinical training.
- Not licensed, but must always have active status in the Idaho CNA Registry

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Community Health Worker (CHW)

- Licensure not required in Idaho
- Frontline public health workers who have a close understanding of the community they serve.
- Serve as a liaison/link/intermediary between health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery.
- Go by many titles, including health coach, community health advisor, family advocate, health educator, liaison, promoter, outreach worker, peer counselor, patient navigator, health interpreter and public health aide. In Spanish-speaking communities, community health workers are often referred to as health promoters or promotores(as) de salud.



CHW Academic Pathway

(0 – 2 years education)

- CHW training and educational requirements vary across states, cities, employers and employment sectors. The field lacks unified training standards, so trainings tend to be generally local and sometimes employer driven.
- Several states have begun to develop credentialing programs for community health workers.
- An effort is also underway to develop state and national standards for training and capacity building for community health workers.

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Dentist (DMD or DDS)

- DDS means Doctor of Dental Surgery. DMD can mean either Doctor of Medicine in Dentistry or Doctor of Dental Medicine. Some universities award dental graduates with a DDS, while others award a DMD. Both degrees have the same curriculum requirement.
- Use the latest techniques and equipment to examine the head, neck and oral cavity to determine the oral health of the patient and identify and diagnose oral conditions that may manifest into systemic disease.
- Use the latest radiographic and computer-generated imaging as well as other specialized diagnostic techniques to identify diseases of the teeth, supporting bone, gingival tissues and other tissues in the oral cavity and head and neck.



Dentist (DMD or DDS)

- Restore and replace teeth damaged by decay, lost from trauma or disease, with newly developed dental materials, implants and crown and bridge techniques.
- Perform corrective surgery on gums and supporting bones to treat gum disease.
- Extract teeth when necessary using the most up-to-date anesthetic techniques.
- Eliminate pain arising from oral diseases, conditions and trauma, making use of prescriptive medicines to reduce pain and discomfort.



Dentist (DMD or DDS)

- Correct badly positioned teeth to improve chewing, speech, digestion of food and appearance.
- Oversee the administration and business of private practice and frequently employ and supervise a large number of staff and allied dental personnel to help treat their family of patients.
- Evaluate the overall health of their patients including taking and evaluating comprehensive medical histories.
- Provide instruction and advice on oral health care and preventive measures to maintain healthy oral tissues and prevent oral disease.



DMD/DDS Academic Pathway

(8 years education)

- Licensure required
- Preference for Bachelor of Science degree; minimum 2 years college; plus 4 years of dental school
- Internship/Residency required in some states.
- Specialties include: endodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, oral and maxillofacial radiology, oral pathology, orthodontics, pediatric dentistry, periodontics, prosthodontics, and public health dentistry.



Dental Hygienist

Preventive oral health professionals who have graduated from an accredited dental hygiene program in an institution of higher education, licensed in dental hygiene to provide educational, clinical, research, administrative and therapeutic services supporting total health through the promotion of optimum oral health.

Clinical procedures include:

- Removal of plaque, calculus and stains from the teeth
- Exposing and processing dental X-rays
- Applying cavity-preventive agents, such as fluorides and pit and fissure sealants
- Administering antimicrobial agents.



Dental Hygienist Academic Pathway

(2 – 6 years education)

- State Licensure
- Associate of Science or Bachelor of Science degree
- May pursue graduate degree in dental hygiene – leads to broader range of opportunities



Dental Assistant continued

- Assist the dentist in all phases of treatment
- Sterilize instruments
- Prepare treatment rooms
- Provide patient education and nutritional counseling
- Arrange and confirm appointments
- Preparing dental insurance claims
- Expose, process and mount radiographs
- Perform a variety of intra-oral expanded functions
- Fabricate mouth guards
- Work as members of the dental team
- Perform laboratory procedures
- Select and transfer instruments to the dentist

Dental Assistant

- Place temporary sedative restorations
- Place and removing retraction cord
- Place sealants
- Remove sutures
- Place and remove periodontal and surgical dressings
- Take impressions
- Fabricate and place provisional restorations
- Remove arch wires and ligatures
- Take and record vital signs
- Assist with medical emergency care by providing CPR, first aid and adjunctive services
- Place sedative bases in a tooth prepared for a permanent restoration
- Place permanent restorations

Dental Assistant continued

- Place topical anesthetics
- Assist with the administration of local anesthesia
- Assist in monitoring nitrous oxide and oxygen sedation
- Apply fluoride
- Prepare teeth for bonding
- Collect patient data
- Enter data utilizing computer programs
- Perform intra- and extra-oral examinations
- Perform coronal polish

Dental Assistant Academic Pathway

(1 – 2 years education)

- If you want to become a dental assistant, you will need to enroll in a post-high school program.
- You can find those programs at community colleges, vocational schools, technical institutes, universities or dental schools.
- Graduates of these programs usually receive certificates.
- Although the majority of academic dental assisting programs take nine to 11 months to complete, some schools offer accelerated training, part-time education programs or training via distance education.

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Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) & Paramedic

- Provide first-line medical or emergency care for sick and injured people at the scene, which may be in the person's home, at an accident site or other places and while they are being transported to the hospital for care.
- Typically operate in teams with one person serving as an emergency vehicle operator while the other continues to provide life-saving emergency care to the patient en route to a medical facility.
- In many places, EMTs provide the majority of out-of-hospital care.
- Advanced EMTs can also conduct limited advanced and pharmacological interventions.
- Paramedics are trained in and capable to do invasive and pharmacological interventions.



EMT & Paramedic Academic Pathway

(2 years education)

- Licensure required
- EMTs usually complete a course that takes between 120 and 150 hours to complete. Paramedic classes take longer, between 1,200 and 1,800 hours.
- EMTs learn how to: give CPR, give oxygen, administer glucose to diabetic patients, help people who are having asthma attacks or allergic reactions, extricate patients and prepare them for transport.
- Paramedics learn everything EMTs learn in addition to more advanced skills, including how to: administer medications, start intravenous lines, provide advanced airway management for patients, resuscitate patients, and help people who have suffered trauma

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Home Health Aide

- Help care for physically or mentally ill, injured, disabled or infirm individuals who are confined to their homes or living in residential care facilities. They may also provide daily care services to people with disabilities who work outside the home.
- Work the supervision of a nurse who may or may not be readily available.
- They also work closely with family members in the provision of care.



Home Health Aide Academic Pathway

- In many cases, you can get a job as a home care aide without a high school diploma or previous work experience.
- While state certification is not required, professional organizations may set standards of practice for their states. In most situations, there is a requirement to demonstrate competency prior to performing services.
- Medicare-certified home health agencies require competency evaluation program that meets certain federal regulation standards.

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Medical Assistant (MA)

- Perform routine administrative and clinical tasks to keep the offices and clinics of physicians, podiatrists, chiropractors and optometrists running smoothly.
- One of the nation's fastest growing careers, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- Have both administrative and clinical duties.
- MAs often are the people who take medical histories, prepare patients for examination, assist the doctor during appointments and perform basic laboratory tests, along with other clinical responsibilities, depending on state law.



MA Academic Pathway

- No state licensure/certification
- Most employers prefer graduates of formal programs in medical assisting. Such programs are offered in vocational-technical high schools, post-secondary vocational schools, community and junior colleges and colleges and universities.
- Post-secondary programs usually last either one year, resulting in a certificate or diploma, or two years, resulting in an associate degree.

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Professional Counselor (LPC, LCPC)

- Licensed Professional Counselors and Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors are mental health service providers, trained to work with individuals, families, and groups in treating mental, behavioral, and emotional problems and disorders.
- Diagnose and treat mental and emotional disorders, including addictive disorders
- Provide direct therapy to clients in individual and group settings (this may include interpersonal, cognitive-behavioral and psychodynamic therapy)
- Research more effective therapeutic treatment modalities to benefit clients and advance the counseling/therapy profession



Professional Counselor Academic Pathway

- A Professional Counselor will possess a master's or doctoral degree in Addiction Counseling, Career Counseling, Clinical Mental Health or Community Agency Counseling, Marriage, Couple and Family Counseling, School Counseling, Student Affairs and College Counseling, Gerontological Counseling, or Counselor Education & Supervision
- Requires licensure: Registered Counselor Intern is a stepping stone to log supervised experience en route to becoming an LPC and eventually and LCPC.
- In order to find meaningful employment professional counselors have the option(s) to become a National Certified Counselor (NCC), Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, and/or a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC).
- A doctorate is not necessary to practice; most practitioners are educated at the masters-level. A doctorate is for professionals who want to become expert Researchers, Educators, Supervisors, or Consultants.

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Nurse Practitioner (NP)

- Nurse practitioners are advanced practice RNs who provide care to patients throughout the lifespan.
- Two out of three nurse practitioners provide primary care, often specializing in family care, women's health, pediatrics or adult/geriatric care.
- Nurse practitioners can prescribe medications, including controlled substances, in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. In 26 states, nurse practitioners have authority to practice independently.



NP Responsibilities

- Performing comprehensive and focused physical examinations
- Diagnosing and treating common acute illnesses and injuries
- Providing immunizations
- Managing high blood pressure, diabetes, depression and other chronic health problems
- Ordering and interpreting diagnostic tests such as X-rays and EKGs, as well as laboratory tests
- Prescribing medications and therapies
- Performing procedures
- Educating and counseling patients and their families regarding healthy lifestyles and health care options

NP Academic Pathway (6 – 8 years education)

- Requires licensure/certification
- NPs are RNs with graduate education in nursing.
- Master of Science in Nursing requires at least two years of full-time study beyond the bachelor's degree in nursing.
- NPs specialize in pediatrics, adult and gerontology, family and women's primary care, occupational health, psychiatric/mental health and acute care. Sub-specialty preparation, such as oncology, is also available.
- Students also complete several semesters of supervised clinical practice to demonstrate competency in providing health care. Graduates from these programs are eligible to sit for national board examinations to become certified.

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Occupational Therapist

- Help people of all ages to fully engage in their daily lives, from their work and recreation to activities of daily living like getting dressed, cooking, eating and driving.
- May work with premature babies at a pediatric hospital or children with cerebral palsy or Down syndrome.
- Many OTs choose to help children thrive in the “occupations” of childhood, which include learning, playing and growing.
- Also work in schools with students who have learning disabilities or behavioral problems.
- Work with older people in their homes or nursing homes, helping them to recover from strokes or deal with Alzheimer’s disease.
- Help accident victims to regain needed skills or offer assistance to people with mental illness.



Occupational Therapist Academic Pathway (6 – 8 years)

- Licensure required in Idaho
- Bachelor's degree and then go on to a master's degree program in occupational therapy.
- Master's programs generally take two to three years to complete.
- Some students go on to get a doctorate in occupational therapy. Doctoral programs usually require three years of study.
- Both master's and doctoral programs require at least 24 weeks of supervised fieldwork, in which prospective occupational therapists gain clinical work experience.

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Occupational Therapist (OT) Aide

- Licensure not required
- Prepare materials and assemble equipment used during treatment and are responsible for a range of clerical tasks.
- Duties can include scheduling appointments, answering the telephone, restocking or ordering depleted supplies and filling out insurance forms or other paperwork.
- Aides are not licensed, so by law they are not allowed to perform as wide a range of tasks as occupational therapy assistants.



OT Aide Academic Pathway

(0 – 2 years education)

- Licensure required in Idaho
- Occupational therapy aides typically have a high school degree.
- Receive most of their training on the job working with more experienced assistants or aides.
- Having previous health care experience and CPR and Basic Life Support certifications may be helpful for getting a position as an occupational therapy aide.

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Pharmacist

- Prepare and dispense prescriptions, ensure medicines and doses are correct, prevent harmful drug interactions, and counsel patients on the safe and appropriate use of their medications.
- Have specialized expertise about the composition of medicines, including their chemical, biological, and physical properties, as well as their manufacture and use.
- Pharmacists may also prepare personalized medications, participate in patient rounds at a hospital, reduce the spread of infections, conduct research or clinical trials, or focus on a specific patient population or disease state (e.g., diabetes, heart disease, asthma, HIV, and pain management).



Pharmacist Academic Pathway

(6 – 8 years education)

- Licensure required
- 2-years of specific preprofessional (undergraduate) coursework
- 4-academic years (or 3-calendar years) of professional study leading to Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm. D.) degree
- Pharmacy colleges and schools may accept students directly from high school for both the pre-pharmacy and pharmacy curriculum, or after completion of the college course prerequisites.
- The majority of students enter a pharmacy program with 3 years of college experience.



Pharmacy Technician

- Work under the direct supervision of a licensed pharmacist and perform many pharmacy-related functions.
- Refer any questions regarding prescriptions, drug information, or health matters to a pharmacist.
- Work in a wide variety of practice settings, including community pharmacies, hospitals, the military, in-home health care settings, long term care facilities, mail service pharmacies, managed health care organizations, and educational programs.



Pharmacy Technician Academic Pathway

(1 – 2 years education)

- Formal pharmacy-technician education programs require classroom and laboratory work in a variety of areas, including medical and pharmaceutical terminology, pharmaceutical calculations, pharmacy recordkeeping, pharmaceutical techniques, and pharmacy law and ethics.
- Technicians also are required to learn medication names, actions, uses, and doses.
- Many training programs include internships, in which students gain hands-on experience in actual pharmacies.
- Students receive a diploma, certificate, or an associate degree, depending on the program.

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Physical Therapist

- Diagnose and treat individuals of all ages who have medical problems or other health-related conditions that limit their abilities to move and perform functional activities in their daily lives.
- Offer cost-effective treatment that improves mobility and relieves pain, reduces the need for surgery and prescription drugs, and allows patients to participate in a recovery plan designed for their specific needs.
- Work with individuals to prevent the loss of mobility before it occurs by developing fitness and wellness programs for healthier and more active lifestyles.



Physical Therapist Academic Pathway (6 – 7 years education)

- Licensure required in Idaho
- Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree from an accredited program and pass a state licensure exam.
- Generally, students complete a bachelor's degree in four years followed by three years in the DPT education program.
- Some programs offer a 3+3 curricular format in which three years of specific pre-professional (undergraduate/pre-PT) courses must be taken before the student can advance into a three-year professional DPT program.



Physical Therapist Assistant

- Provide physical therapy services under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist.
- Help patients and clients who have movement difficulties due to injury or disease, by assisting the physical therapist with therapies designed to improve mobility, relieve pain, prevent or limit permanent physical disability and promote overall fitness and wellness.



Physical Therapist Assistant Academic Pathway (2 years education)

- Licensure required in Idaho
- 2-year Associate of Science Degree
- 75% of the curriculum comprises classroom and lab study and the remaining 25% is dedicated to clinical education.

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Physician – MD/DO

Along with nurses, physicians are on the front line of medicine. Here's a broad list of what physicians do:

- Examine patients and obtain medical histories
- Order, perform, and interpret diagnostic tests
- Prescribe and administer treatment for patients suffering from injury or disease
- Counsel patients about illness, injuries, health conditions and preventive healthcare (diet/fitness, smoking cessation, etc.).
- Refer patients to other specialists specifically trained to treat certain illnesses, injuries, and health conditions that exceed their own training and scope of practice.



MD/DO continued...

In hospitals, physicians provide emergency care, perform surgery and care for patients with injuries or life-threatening illnesses like cancer or serious conditions like asthma.

In laboratories across the country, physician researchers look for the cause of illnesses and for new and better ways to treat all kinds of diseases and injuries.

Physicians also run medical centers and teach future generations of physicians and other health care practitioners.



Physician Specialties - There are 133 physician specialties and subspecialties. Here's a short list:

- Anesthesiology
- Cardiovascular medicine
- Dermatology
- Emergency medicine
- Family medicine
- Internal medicine
- Neurology
- Oncology
- Orthopedics
- Pediatrics
- Psychiatry
- Radiation oncology
- Sports medicine
- Surgery

Other resources: <https://apps.acgme.org/ads/Public> and <https://www.abms.org/member-boards/specialty-subspecialty-certificates/>

Physician Academic Pathway (8 years education)

- There are 2 standard pathways for physician training:
 - Allopathic medicine leads to a Doctor of Medicine degree with the MD credential
 - Osteopathic medicine leads to a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree with the DO credential; in addition to a full scope of medical practice DOs practice osteopathic manipulative medicine – a distinctive system of hands-on diagnosis and treatment that focuses specifically on the musculoskeletal system.
- Licensure and hospital privileges are required
- A minimum of 3 years of college is required in order to apply to medical school



Physician Academic Pathway continued

(8 years education)

- 4 years of medical school
- Some schools offer combined degrees, offering MD or DO degrees along with degrees in public health, law or business
- After graduating medical school: 3 – 8 years of residency depending on the specialty
- Residents are doctors in training. They have graduated from medical school, been awarded an M.D. degree, and now are training to be a particular type of doctor — such as a pediatrician or pediatric specialist, or a type of surgeon.

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Physician Assistant

- Diagnose and treat illness and disease and to prescribe medication for patients.
- Work in physician offices, hospitals and clinics in collaboration with a licensed physician.
- Are critical to increasing access to care for rural and other underserved patients as they are often the only health providers in these areas.
- Work in specialties outside of primary care, including medical and surgical specialties and sub-specialties.



PA Academic Pathway (6-7 years education)

- Requires licensure
- Bachelor of Science degree
- 2-year PA Program leading to Master's of Physician Assistant Studies and a PA certificate

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Radiologic Technologist

- Perform diagnostic imaging procedures, such as X-ray examinations, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans and computed tomography (CT) scans.
- May specialize in specific techniques such as cardiovascular-interventional radiography, mammography or sonography.
- Are responsible for accurately positioning patients and ensuring that a quality diagnostic image is produced.
- Work closely with radiologists, the physicians who interpret medical images to either diagnose or rule out disease or injury. For the images to be interpreted correctly by the radiologist, the imaging examination must be performed properly by a radiologic technologist.



Radiologic Technologist Academic Pathway (1 – 4 years education)

- Minimum of an associate's degree in order to sit for certification exams offered by the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists.
- Educated in anatomy, patient positioning, examination techniques, equipment protocols, radiation safety, radiation protection and basic patient care.
- Many specialize in a particular area of medical imaging, such as mammography or computed tomography (CT scans).
- Preparation for this profession is offered in hospitals, colleges and universities, vocational-technical institutes and the U.S. Armed Forces.

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Registered Nurse

- Works in collaboration with physicians and other health care disciplines
- Provides direct patient care, observing, assessing and recording symptoms, reactions and progress, which provides the basis for care planning and intervention.
- Develops and manages nursing care plans
- Instructs patients and their families in proper care and helps individuals and groups take steps to improve or maintain their health.
- A few specialties include: ambulatory care, burn care, cardiac care, case management, critical care, emergency, home health, and hospice.



RN Academic Pathway (4-6 years education)

- Requires certification
- Associate Degree (2 yrs) or Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Degree (4 yrs); more jobs for BSN
- Some schools offer 3-year accelerated nursing programs for students who already hold a bachelor's in another field; such programs take 11 – 18 months
- Masters of Science in Nursing can be earned in 3 years
- Some schools offer “articulation agreements” allowing nurses with associate or bachelor's degrees to transition into BSN and MSN programs

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Respiratory Therapist

- Help people who suffer from chronic respiratory diseases like asthma, bronchitis and emphysema. People who have had heart attacks or who have sleep disorders and infants who are born prematurely might also need respiratory therapy to help them breathe more easily.
- Provide emergency care to patients suffering from heart attacks, drowning or shock.
- Advanced level therapists participate in clinical decision-making and patient education, the development and implementation of protocols and treatment plans, health promotion, disease prevention and disease management.
- Practice under the supervision of a physician.



RT Academic Pathway (2 -5 years education)

- Licensure required in Idaho
- Minimum associate degree from an accredited respiratory therapy education program.
- Many students get a bachelor's degree and some go on to earn a graduate degree.
- After graduation, respiratory therapists are eligible to take a national voluntary multiple-choice examination to earn the Certified Respiratory Therapist credential.

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Social Worker

- Assist individuals, groups or communities to restore or enhance their capacity for social functioning.
- Respond to and help prevent crises.
- Counsel individuals, families, groups and communities on how to cope with the stresses of everyday life.
- Help people with socio-economic disadvantages, including severe poverty, unemployment, discrimination or inadequate housing.
- Help people who have serious illness, disabilities or substance abuse problems, as well as families with serious domestic conflicts, sometimes involving child abuse or intimate partner violence.



Social Worker Academic Pathway

(4 – 10 years education)

- Licensure/Certification required
- bachelor's degree in social work (BSW) is the minimum requirement to qualify for most jobs.
- Clinical positions and some jobs in public or private agencies typically require a master's degree (MSW), as do most supervisory, administrative and staff training positions.
- College/university teaching positions and most research appointments require a doctorate in social work (DSW or Ph.D.)

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