



Careers in Health Care

• Nursing

Nurses care for the sick and injured and help people stay well. They observe, assess and record symptoms reactions and progress. They assist providers during procedures, perform treatments and examinations, administer medications and assist in convalescence and rehabilitation.

Hospital nurses form the largest group of nurses. Most staff nurses provide bedside nursing care which is direct patient care. Not only do they administer medication and perform treatments, they also help patients with bathing, dressing, feeding and personal hygiene. Many advance to management positions. Nurses need to be prepared in critical thinking, leadership and health promotion. They must be able to handle the complex demands of providing professional nursing services in a wide variety of health care settings.

There are two types of nurses: a registered nurse and a licensed practical nurse. A registered nurse (RN) completes either an associate's or bachelor's degree in nursing, as opposed to a licensed practical nurse (LPN) who completes a shorter nursing program and has a more limited scope of practice.

Nurses at Butler County Health care for pediatric to geriatric patients. There are several areas of patient care such as inpatient, outpatient, emergency, obstetrics and surgical. Nurses are needed 24-7 at the hospital, working days, nights, weekends and holidays. Nurses at Butler County Health also have opportunities for advance to management, coordinator and director positions.

Education and License

RN: Educational programs range from a two-year associate degree to a four year bachelor's degree at colleges and universities, as well as master's and doctoral level degrees. An applicant for a license to practice as a RN must complete high school or equivalent, complete an approved program of registered nursing and pass the NCLEX-RN exam.

LPN: The minimum educational requirement is a graduation from a one year accredited program. An applicant for a license to practice as a practical nurse must complete high school or equivalent, complete an approved program of practical nursing and pass the NCLEX-PN exam. After LPNs complete a certification course and take a state exam they are certified to do some IV-therapy.

• Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapy (OT) is a profession concentrated on the promotion of health and well-being through occupation across the lifespan. Occupations refer to how an individual occupies their time such as eating, sleeping, dressing, playing, job duties or leisure activities. If at any point in life an illness, injury

or disability prevents someone from effectively or independently functioning in one of more of these occupational areas, then OT services may be needed. The ultimate goal of Occupational Therapy is to restore function to individuals, however in some cases OT's help patients with compensatory strategies as well to lead a productive and satisfying life. Occupational Therapists may recommend adaptive equipment such as wheelchairs, splints, or aides for dressing and eating to promote performance in everyday life activities.

Occupational Therapists at Butler County Health assist patients from pediatrics to geriatrics within the clinical settings of hospital inpatient, adult and pediatric outpatient, nursing home, and area schools.

Education and Licensure

The minimum educational requirement is an entry-level masters or clinical doctorate in occupational therapy from an accredited institution. An applicant for a license to practice as an occupational therapist must complete the requirements of an approved program, complete six months of supervised field work and pass the certification exam.

• Physical Therapy

Physical therapists play a unique role in helping individuals overcome the effects of disease, injury and developmental abnormalities. Physical therapists evaluate and treat patients who have problems with movement that impair normal function. Physical therapists assess joint motion, muscle strength and endurance, heart and lung function, and the performance of activities required in daily living. Treatment includes therapeutic exercise, cardiovascular endurance training, and rehabilitation in the activities of daily living.

Physical therapists work in many health care settings including hospitals, outpatient clinics, nursing homes, home care agencies, schools and rehabilitation centers. Therapists may elect to practice as generalists, or they choose one of a number of specialty areas such as orthopedics, geriatrics, neurology pediatrics or cardiopulmonary physical therapy. In addition to patient care, physical therapists have many opportunities in administration, research and clinical education.

Physical therapists at Butler County Health assist patients from pediatrics to geriatrics. Clinical settings include inpatient, outpatient, schools and nursing homes.

Education and Licensure

The minimum educational requirement is a doctoral (DPT) degree in physical therapy. Most programs require three to four years of undergraduate preparation followed by two to three years of professional education. An applicant for a license to practice physical therapy must graduate from an approved physical therapy education program and pass the national licensure examination.

• Physical Therapy Assistant

The physical therapist assistant (PTA) is a technically educated health provider who assists the physical therapist (PT) in the provision of physical therapy and may perform physical therapy interventions selected by the supervising physical therapist. The PTA works under the direction and supervision of the PT, helping manage conditions such as back and neck injuries, sprains/strains and fractures, arthritis,

burns, amputations, stroke, multiple sclerosis, birth defects, injuries related to work and sports, and others.

Physical therapists at Butler County Health assist patients from pediatrics to geriatrics. Clinical settings include inpatient, outpatient, schools and nursing homes.

Education and Licensure

PTAs must complete a two-year education program, typically offered through a community or junior college. Candidates receive an associate's degree upon graduation. The course of study usually includes one year of general education and one year of technical courses on physical therapy procedures and clinical experience. PTAs are licensed by the Nebraska Board of Examiners in Physical Therapy. To be licensed, an applicant must be at least 19 years old, have graduated from an approved program, and have passed the national exam.

• Speech-Language Pathology

Speech- language pathologists (SLP) assess and treat patients with speech, language, voice and fluency disorders. SLPs work with people who cannot make speech sounds, or cannot make them clearly; those with speech rhythm and fluency problems, such as stuttering; people with speech quality problems, such as inappropriate pitch or harsh voice; and those with problems understanding and producing language. They may also work with people who have oral motor problems that cause eating and swallowing difficulties.

Most SLPs provide direct clinical services to individuals with communication disorders. They may independently develop and carry out a treatment program and they may work with physicians, social workers, psychologists and other therapists to develop and execute a treatment plan. SLPs at Butler County assist patients from pediatric to geriatrics. Clinical settings include inpatient, outpatient and schools.

Education & Licensure

Individuals applying for certification in speech-language pathology must have been awarded a master's, doctoral, or other recognized post-baccalaureate degree. An applicant for a license to practice speech-language therapy must be at least 19 years of age, have a master's degree in speech-language pathology from an approved program, complete a clinical fellowship year and pass the licensure or obtain an endorsement by a nationwide professional accrediting organization.

• Radiology

Radiologic technologists are allied health professionals who perform diagnostic imaging examinations. They use x-ray units and other modalities to produce images of the tissues, organs, bones and vessels of the human body. Radiologic technologists are educated in anatomy, patient positioning, examination techniques, equipment protocols, radiation safety, radiation protection and basic patient care.

Radiologic technologists are responsible for accurately positioning patients and ensuring that a quality diagnostic image is produced with minimal exposure to the patient. They work closely with radiologists (physicians specially trained in radiology) to interpret the images. Radiologic technologists often

specialize in second certification modalities such as mammography, computerized tomography, magnetic resonance imaging, cardiovascular interventional technology, sonography and bone densitometry.

Education and Certification

Completion of an accredited radiography program offered by a hospital or college is required. An individual seeking certification must complete a program approved by the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology and pass an exam to be certified by the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists. Registered technologists may become certified in radiation therapy or nuclear medicine by completing an additional year of study.

• Pharmacy

Pharmacy is the health profession that links the science of drug action in living systems with the use of medicine in patients. The goal of pharmacy is the development and use of medicine to cure, prevent or ease the symptoms of disease. Pharmacists are the link between the science of pharmacy and the patients.

Pharmacists interpret prescriptions from physicians then prepare and dispense the medications. They provide the physician and patients with information about the uses, effects and interactions of medicines. They also assist patients in choosing nonprescription medicines and health products, and they may counsel a patient to seek the advice and treatment of a physician, dentist or other health practitioner. Pharmacists are important members of the health care team and part of a rapidly expanding industry. The career options are broad. Pharmacists may work in hospitals, community pharmacies, colleges or schools of pharmacy or in public health facilities. They may also work in pharmaceutical research in public institutions or private industry.

The practice of clinical pharmacy and the role of a pharmacist at a Critical Access Hospital, like Butler County Health, looks much different than those at a large tertiary care facility like Bryan, UNMC or CHI St. Elizabeth's. Clinical pharmacy practice at BCH is much less specialized and we must know and understand a lot of different areas. The pharmacy staff at BCH also works very closely with the nurses and doctors to care directly for the patient. Clinical pharmacists, no matter what size hospital they work at, assist the entire health care team to treat patients in the ER, medical/surgical floor, OR and outpatient clinic. Hospital pharmacists review all medication orders for patients in the hospital to help ensure the medications being used will help the patient recover from their current illness. Medications are also reviewed by pharmacists to help ensure the current treatment regimen will work together and will not cause harm to the patient in their current state. Pharmacists at BCH communicate with the medical providers to help decide treatment plans and decide what medication would work best for the patient's current needs. BCH pharmacists provide dose adjustments for medications, recommend antibiotics to treat serious infections and dose antibiotics, and other medications, based on the patient's current condition. BCH pharmacists assist the doctors and nurses with patients in the ER and provide treatment options, drug doses and calculations to help treat complicated disease states. They also work closely with the nursing staff to help answer questions that arise about drug therapy every day during medication pass times and attend daily rounds to help make suggestions for medication and treatment changes to aid the patients on their journey to recovery.

Education and Licensure

Students must complete at least sixty credit hours (two years) of prerequisite study prior to entering a college of pharmacy. Most professional programs in pharmacy require four additional years leading to a doctor of pharmacy (Pharm.D.) degree. Pharmacists must be licensed by the Nebraska Board of Pharmacy. To be licensed, a person must be 21 years of age, be a graduate of an accredited college/school of pharmacy, have completed an internship under the supervision of a licensed pharmacist, and pass the licensure exam. Continuing education requirements must be met.

• Cardiopulmonary

Respiratory therapists evaluate, treat and care for patients with lung and heart disorders. In evaluating the patients, therapists can test the capacity of the lungs and analyze the oxygen and carbon dioxide concentration. They also measure potential of hydrogen, and indication of the acidity or alkalinity level of the blood. Respiratory Therapists also perform cardiac procedures including EKGs and nuclear medicine stress testing.

Respiratory therapists at Butler County Health assist infant to geriatric patients. Clinical settings include inpatient, outpatient, emergency care, and surgery. Areas of care include pulmonary care, cardiac care, pulmonary and cardiac rehab, and support in C-sections for newborns.

Education and Licensure

Educational training programs may range in length from eighteen months to four years. A bachelor's degree is awarded to those completing four years of training; those studying for lesser times periods earn associate degrees. An applicant for a license to practice respiratory care must be at least 19 years of age, complete a high school program or equivalent finish an approved training program and pass the licensure examination.

• Laboratory

Laboratory technicians and scientists provide and supervise laboratory services for the diagnosis, treatment and management of disease. They perform complex chemical, biological and molecular techniques which are used in clinical and research laboratories. Laboratory technicians also perform routine laboratory procedures, such as drawing blood.

Education and Licensure

Medical laboratory technicians must have a two-year associate degree. Clinical laboratory scientists require a four-year baccalaureate degree. Certification includes the passing of a national examination given by the Board of Registry, American Society for Clinical Pathology or the National Certifying Agency.

• Registered Dietitian Nutritionist

Registered dietitian nutritionists (RD) are food and nutrition experts who work in a wide variety of employment settings, including health care, business, public health, education, research and private practice. In health care, the RD educate patients about nutrition and administer medical nutrition therapy as part of the health care team. They may also teach nurses, physicians and other health care

professionals about nutrition and its role in patient care. RD with an administrative focus may also manage the food service operations in these settings.

The role of the RD at Butler County Health is to educate inpatients and outpatients about healthy diets for their health condition, work with other healthcare providers to ensure our policies and treatments are the most up-to-date, supervise the kitchen staff and all kitchen activities and provide and provide education for hospital staff on healthy diets for their patients and themselves. The RD also works with Wellness Center director to plan fun and education events for staff, coordinate activities related to our community garden, plan and lead cooking and educational classes for the public (kids to elderly). The RD is also responsible for the development and maintaining of the budget for dietary department.

Education and Licensure

Commission on Dietetics Registration (CDR) will require a minimum of a master's degree to be eligible to take the credentialing exam to become a registered dietitian nutritionist. To become a registered dietitian nutritionist, an applicant must complete a baccalaureate degree program and a supervised practice/dietetic internship program, both of which must be accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics, the accrediting agency for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Typically, the supervised practice program/dietetic internship follows the baccalaureate degree program and is six to twelve months in length. Then the applicant must pass a national examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration. To provide medical nutrition therapy in Nebraska, the registered dietitian must become licensed by the Nebraska Board of Examiners in Medical Nutrition Therapy.

• Coding Technician

Coding technicians are professionals skilled in classifying medical data from patient records, generally in the hospital setting. These coding practitioners review patients' records and assign numeric codes for each diagnosis and procedure. To perform this task, they must have expertise in specialized coding systems.

Education and Licensure

The program is designed to prepare the student to enter the health information field with a certificate or diploma, and associate degree, or a bachelor's degree. Students receiving a diploma will be prepared to work in entry-level positions as coding technicians in a variety of health care settings. The American Health Information Management Association offers two certification exams for coders, the Certified Coding Specialist and Physician Based Coding Specialist. Potential candidates must possess a high school diploma. It is also recommended that an individual have at least three years of on-the-job coding experience and coding education from seminars and colleges.

• Health Information Management

The field of Health Information Management (HIM) combines the disciplines of medicine, management, finance, information technology, and law. Because of this unique mixture, HIM graduates can select a variety of work settings with varying responsibilities. Career opportunities for health information managers can be found in hospitals, clinics, physicians' offices, university research departments, information technology vendors, and government. The positions held in these organizations range from

managers of the health information management departments, information privacy officer, research associate, systems design consultant, data analyst, cancer registrar, and coding compliance analyst.

Education and Licensure

Health Information Technician: An associate degree in health information technology from a program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management (CAHIIM) in cooperation with the American Health Information Management Association's Council on Accreditation. To become an RHIT (registered health information technician) an individual must earn an associate degree from an accredited health information technology program and pass the national certification exam.

Health Information Administrator: A bachelor's degree in health information administration from a program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Educational Programs (CAAHEP) in cooperation with the American Health Information Management Association's Council on Accreditation. To become an RHIA (registered health information administrator) one must earn a bachelor's degree from an accredited health information administration program and pass the national exam