DESCRIPTION OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Clinical Laboratory Profession: Clinical Laboratory Scientists (Medical Technologists) are responsible for the development, performance, and evaluation of laboratory testing that is needed in patient medical care and clinical research. 70% - 80% of medical decisions are based on their accurate and precise results. Clinical Laboratory Scientists have a wide range of expertise including clinical chemistry, hematology, forensics, toxicology, molecular diagnostics, transfusion therapy, microbiology diagnostics and antibiotic therapy, and transplant services. A Bachelor of Science degree in Clinical Lab Science will give you the ability and knowledge to be a generalist and work in all areas mentioned above or become a specialist in one area such as microbiology or molecular diagnostics.

Dentists diagnose, prevent, and treat problems with teeth or mouth tissue. They remove decay, fill cavities, examine x rays, place protective plastic sealants on children’s teeth, straighten teeth, and repair fractured teeth. They also perform corrective surgery on gums and supporting bones to treat gum diseases. Dentists extract teeth and make models and measurements for dentures to replace missing teeth. They provide instruction on diet, brushing, flossing, the use of fluorides, and other aspects of dental care. They also administer anesthetics and write prescriptions for antibiotics and other medications. Most dentists are general practitioners, handling a variety of dental needs. Other dentists practice in any of nine specialty areas. Dental Hygienists, on the other hand, provide preventive dental care. They teach patients how to practice good oral hygiene. They use instruments to remove calculus, stain, and plaque from teeth. They also take and develop dental x-rays.

Medical Nutrition Therapists are registered dieticians. They are food and nutrition experts who work in a wide variety of employment settings, including healthcare, business, public health, education, research, and private practice. In health care, medical nutrition therapists educate patients about nutrition and administer medical nutrition therapy as part of the health care team. They teach nurses, physicians, other health care professionals, and students about nutrition and its role in patient care. Registered dieticians with an administrative focus may also manage the food service operations in these settings. They may also conduct research relating to nutrition and health in university or private industry settings.

Nurses protect, promote and optimize health and abilities, prevent illness and injury, alleviate suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human response and advocate in the care of individuals, families, communities and populations. Nursing is a scientific profession that attracts both men and women and is changing in diversity in both gender and ethnicity. As licensed health professionals, nurses are no longer just in the hospitals. There are nurse attorneys, corporate or private industry nurses, nurse anesthetists, nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, nurse educators, nurse researchers and informatic nurses (translators between nursing and computers.) Some nurses work in pharmaceutics sales and research and other nurses travel around the world. Those in nursing experience a career that is flexible with job security. Nurse practitioners can specialize in their practice and write prescriptions. Some nurses may advance their practice to a Master or Doctoral level. It is one of the most trusted professions in the country.

Pharmacists are licensed health professionals who are experts in the science and art of drug therapy. As such, they are vital members of the health care team. The goal of pharmacy is the development and use of medications to cure, prevent, or ease the symptoms of disease. Pharmacists interpret prescriptions from physicians, then prepare and dispense the medications. They provide other health practitioners and patients with information about the uses, effects and interactions of medications. They assist patients in choosing over-the-counter medications and health products, as well as counsel patients to seek the advice and treatment of other health practitioners. Pharmacists may work in hospital or 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.

Physical Therapists (PTs) are health care professionals who diagnose and treat people 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. PTs also help prevent conditions associated with loss of mobility through fitness and wellness programs that achieve healthy and active lifestyles. PTs examine individuals and develop plans using treatment techniques that promote the ability to move, reduce pain, restore function, and prevent disability. They provide care in hospitals, clinics, schools, sports facilities, and more. PTs must have a graduate degree from an accredited physical therapy program before taking the national licensure examination. The minimum educational requirement is a master's degree, yet most educational programs now offer the doctor of physical therapy (DPT) degree. Licensure is required in each state in which a physical therapist practices.
Physicians serve a fundamental role in our society and have an effect upon all our lives. They diagnose illnesses, prescribe, and administer treatment for people suffering from injury or disease. Physicians examine patients, obtain medical histories, and order, perform, and interpret diagnostic tests. Physicians counsel patients on diet, hygiene, and preventive health care. Pediatricians, family practitioners and general internists are often called primary care physicians since they are usually the first health professionals patients consult. They tend to see the same patients on a regular basis for a variety of ailments and preventive treatments. There are two types of physicians. An MD is a Doctor of Medicine and a DO is a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine. Physicians work in one or more of several specialties, including, but not limited to, anesthesiology, family and general medicine, general internal medicine, general pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, psychiatry, and surgery.

Physician Assistants are licensed health professionals who practice medicine with physician supervision. Physician assistants are formally trained to provide diagnostic, therapeutic, and preventive health care services, as delegated by a physician. They take medical histories, examine patients, order and interpret laboratory tests and x-rays, and make diagnoses. They also treat minor injuries by suturing, splinting, and casting. Physician assistants record progress notes, instruct and counsel patients, and order or carry out therapy. Physician assistants are allowed to prescribe medications in all 50 states within the U.S. Physician assistants may provide care in rural or inner city clinics where a physician is present for only 1 or 2 days each week. They may also make house calls or go to hospitals and nursing homes to check on patients and report back to the physician and other medical professionals as required by law.

Public Health is the science and practice of protecting the health and welfare of all people by preventing and controlling disease. Public health is comprised of practitioners from many different professions: medicine, nursing, business, epidemiology, law, biology, economics, nutrition, social work, environmental science, health education and behavior sciences, among others. They are involved in a many activities and work to protect the environment; identify sources of illness in population groups; control disease outbreaks caused by microbes; evaluate the economic impacts of changing demographics; develop media campaigns to promote healthy behavior; produce health policy legislation. Childhood nutrition, work-related hypertension, pesticide exposures, hospital mergers, and AIDS education are but a few examples of public health's work which cuts across all economic and social strata. There are many rewarding careers in public health, ranging from pure research to direct public education. Areas of specialization within public health include Health Service Administration, Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Behavioral Health Sciences, Health Education, Environmental Health, Biomedical/Infectious Diseases, International Health, Nutrition, and Maternal and Child Health. Students interested in pursuing public health careers find internships and jobs in government agencies, nonprofit and community based organizations, medical research institutions, bio/pharmaceutical and healthcare consulting firms. Most public health professionals have advanced degrees; the most common is the Masters in Public Health.

Radiologic Science Technologists are comprised of at least four separate disciplines that use radiation in the diagnosis and/or treatment of diseases of the human body. The Nuclear Medicine Technologist administers radioactive substances to patients to aide in the diagnosis, treatment, and investigation of human disease. The Diagnostic Medical Sonographer (Ultrasound Technologist) uses high frequency sound waves to produce diagnostic images of the human body. The Radiation Therapist uses high energy radiation in the treatment of patients with various types of cancer. The Radiographer (X-ray Technologist) uses x-radiation to produce detailed diagnostic images of the human body. Other specialties include Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), Computerized Tomography (CT), Cardiovascular Interventional Technology (CVIT) and Mammography. All disciplines follow a specialized curriculum that can lead to Bachelor of Science degree and national certification. Radiation Science Technologists work as part of a team in hospitals, diagnostic imaging centers, and clinics.

Admissions Information for UNK, UNL, and UNO. Representatives from all the University of Nebraska sister institutions will discuss general admissions requirements and will answer your general information questions in an informal friendly setting.