

When you need them...  
will they be there?

THE CENTER FOR HEALTH  
**WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT**  
IN TENNESSEE

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**Acknowledgements**

- U.S. Department of Labor
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics  
Occupational Outlook Handbook
- Tennessee Department of Education
- Tennessee Department of Labor  
and Workforce Development
- American Hospital Association  
Special Workforce Survey
- Allied Consulting, Inc.

Dear educators,

Since 1965, the Tennessee Hospital Association (THA) has been a leader in health career recruitment. It serves as a vital link between hospitals, guidance counselors, teachers and the general public in its efforts to ensure providers will have the health professionals they need in the future.

Job opportunities in the health care industry are increasing at an extraordinary rate, far more quickly than trained workers are being produced. Hospitals comprise just 2 percent of the 460,000 establishments that make up the health services industry nationwide, but employ nearly 40 percent of all workers. When government hospitals are included, that number increases to almost half the 11.3 million people employed in health care.

Many Tennessee hospitals, concerned about the impact of severe workforce shortages, are becoming much more active in workforce recruitment and involved in community and career education. As the largest employers of health care professionals, Tennessee hospitals are facing critical shortages of nurses, clinical laboratory personnel and radiologic technologists as well as many other specialty careers.

Seeking and motivating prospective health professionals should begin as early as possible. Students K-12 are the basic building block of the health services workforce, and hospitals must offer opportunities to increase students' exposure to health careers. This can be accomplished through community efforts in schools and other community activities. Aggressive outreach efforts targeting primary and secondary school students also involve assembly programs, career day/night programs, Boy Scouts of America's Medical Explorer Posts, and Boys and Girls Clubs.

As baby boomers age and retire, there will be an increased need for workers in every industry. Tomorrow's health care resources are in today's classrooms, and hospitals must make every effort to attract young people into health careers. Because of limited funds, health professionals at the local hospital also must be ready to "tell it and sell it."

The Tennessee Hospital Association would like to encourage you to use the enclosed materials to enhance your institution's health care workforce recruitment activities in your local community. This toolkit offers suggestions for presentations on health care careers, suggestions for hospital-sponsored career days at elementary, middle, high schools, colleges and universities (including sample speeches), and other related career material.

For additional assistance or information about the toolkit, contact Brenda Gallin, THA director of client services, at [bgallin@tha.com](mailto:bgallin@tha.com), 615-256-8240, 800-258-9541, fax: 615-242-4803.



Craig A. Becker  
*President & Chief Executive Officer, THA*

### Health Consolidation

Between 1985 and 1994, the number of U.S. community hospitals decreased by 9 percent, from 5,700 to 5,200. At the same time, the community hospital bed count dropped 15 percent, to 840,000.

Fewer hospitals and fewer beds undoubtedly translated into fewer inpatient staff during the course of this consolidation; however, hospital layoffs, in the aggregate, were actually short-lived. In fact, full-time equivalent (FTE) personnel employed in acute care hospitals steadily increased over that time period.

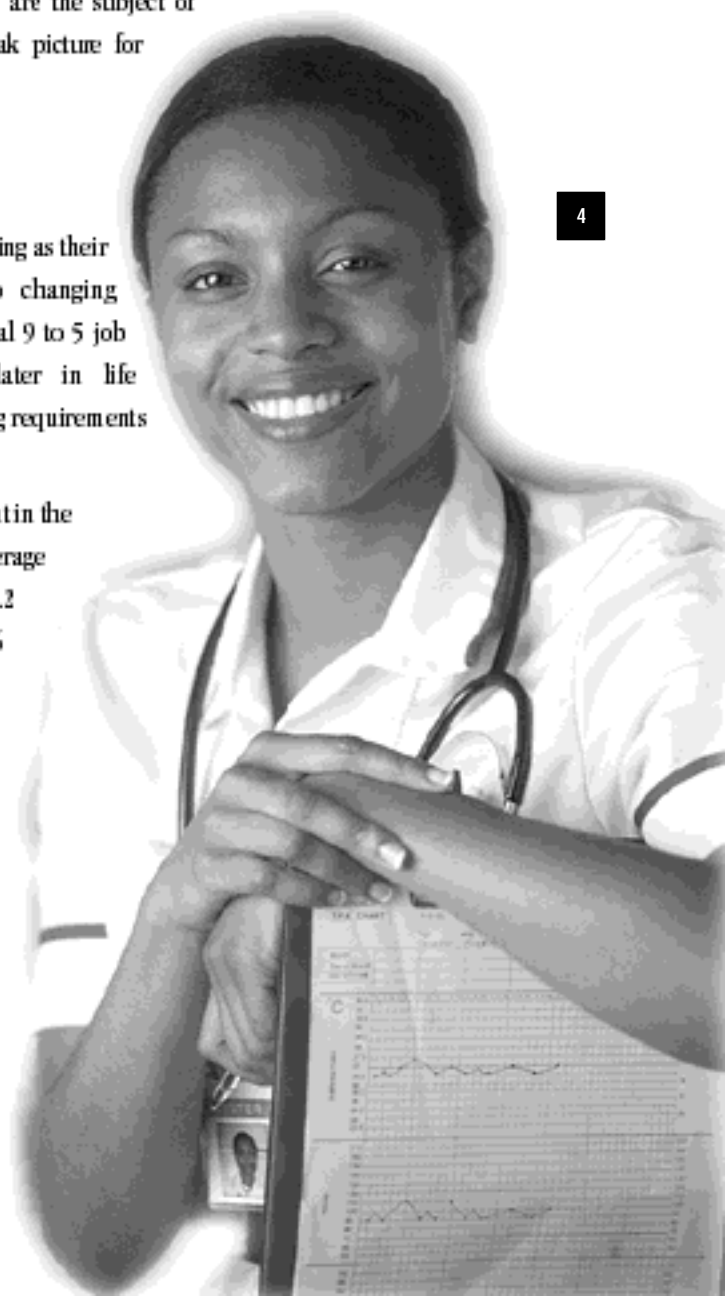
Unfortunately, it was a widely held perception that hospitals were aggressively cutting costs (and by presumption, staff) during that time period. Such a perception sent a misleading signal to the labor pool, and served as a crucial disincentive to those considering a health care profession.

Continued consolidation (the hospital count now stands at 5,015) and hospital cost cutting, especially in the wake of recent pressures relating to the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (BBA), are the subject of significant media attention, and thus continue to paint a similarly bleak picture for potential health care candidates.

### Training for More than Nursing

While young women aspiring to a career in medicine once viewed nursing as their only alternative, today's women have far more choices, thanks to changing social attitudes; the rise of managed care that has fostered more traditional 9 to 5 job opportunities; and the acceptance of marriage and childbirth later in life (allowing room to accommodate the more grueling educational and training requirements of becoming a doctor).

Women accounted for only 26 percent of the medical school enrollment in the U.S. 20 years ago; however, they represent 43 percent today. Nationally, the average age at graduation for registered nurses that graduated prior to 1982 was 23.2 years old; the average age of RNs who graduated between 1991 and 1996 was 31.7 years old.



### **New Opportunities in Health care**

Twenty-five years ago, nearly 75 percent of the RN workforce was employed in acute care hospitals. Today, roughly 60 percent of RNs work in hospitals. New opportunities in ambulatory care (including physician offices, and other outpatient settings), long-term care and home health care have caused a shift in the employment setting. Clearly, the rapidly rising demand for nurses in outpatient settings has provided strong incentives for RNs to choose these locations, along with their promise of comparable (if not superior) pay, less job stress and greater flexibility. Sixty percent of today's RNs have children living at home, making the attractiveness of nonhospital-based employment even more desirable.

The current labor pool is aging, with the average age of RNs estimated at 44 to 46 years old and progressing rapidly toward retirement. Only 9 percent of the nation's RNs are under the age of 30. The aging problem is not exclusive to the clinical setting – the average age of a nurse educator is 48 years, and nearly 25 percent of nurse educators are within 10 years of retirement age.

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Members of the hospital staff may already have established partnerships with guidance counselors and teachers within the local school system. If not, someone from the hospital should contact the principal or guidance counselor to briefly discuss the health care workforce shortage and request to schedule a program to inform students about opportunities in health care careers.

Some schools may schedule an assembly program for all students while others may provide program time only for those students who have indicated an interest in a health career. You may be invited to participate in a career day or night program or asked to provide a speaker for classroom presentations. Programs may be held at the school or another community activity site, or you may choose to invite students, teachers and counselors to the hospital.

You or your hospital representative should closely examine the materials in the toolkit. Become familiar with issues concerning both the hospital and education. Speaker possibilities may include any number of department heads from the hospital with good speaking skills and a general knowledge of workforce shortage issues.

The ideal speaker would be young enough to relate with teenagers. It is important to honestly talk to students about the workforce shortages in the community and be able to provide answers about the negative media image of hospitals.

Sample speeches are provided in the toolkit, or hospitals may want to develop their own program. Include questions to captivate the audience (see sample speeches). The length of the program should be determined before requesting time from the school. Provide the school with a time frame whether you are visiting the school or inviting them to your hospital.

Determine how many copies of materials will be needed for the program. You may download health career information from THA's Career Moves web site, including:

#### **Tennessee job outlook in brief**

- Twenty hot health careers, including: salary, career outlook, duties, work environment, qualities, educational facilities
- Complete list of schools, colleges and universities offering health care careers
- Health science education plan for technical, university and dual paths.
- Workforce shortage update: What are the trends? Where are the jobs?

Following the presentation, allow sufficient time for a question and answer session. As an incentive, the speaker can ask the students questions regarding the presentation and hand out prizes as a reward. For example, prizes can include candy, pens, pencils or T-shirts (if the hospital has t-shirts with their name or logo on it). If the program takes place at the hospital, hospital tours may be scheduled for interested students. It is also helpful to give school newspaper editors information about health care workforce shortages and invite them for a special tour.

Sponsoring a health career day at your local hospital will help stimulate and encourage students to consider working in the hospital industry. Many students participating in career day activities already will be committed to health careers; others may be totally undecided about their futures.

A hospital health career day may be held at the same time a community program (health screening/fair) is held. This event would offer enlightening first-hand views of the vast range of career possibilities within the community hospital setting.

Hospitals employ highly qualified professional personnel, as well as technicians and technologists. In addition, there are jobs for unskilled workers.

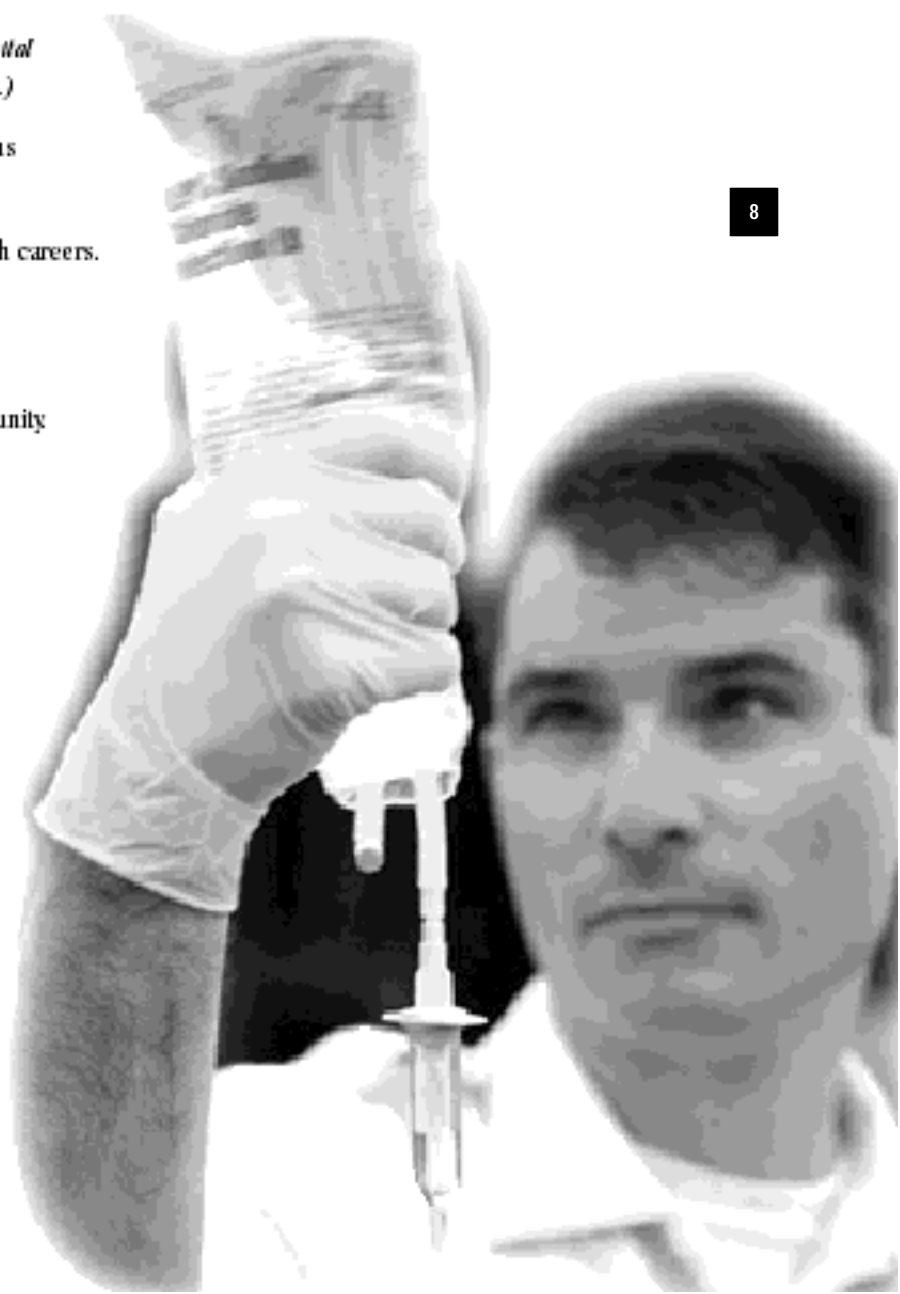
A visit to a hospital is an educational experience in itself and makes a lasting impression on students. In addition to describing employees in a particular department within the hospital, it is recommended that the following points be discussed with students:

- Give a brief description of jobs involved in the various departments.
- List education/training requirements for specific careers.
- Give reasonable expected incomes for specific careers.
- Make students aware of personal qualifications needed for jobs in the department.
- Talk with students about the physical qualifications (if any) for jobs in the department.
- Discuss opportunities for advancement, particularly moving from one level to another within the department.
- Hospitals that already have health science education students onsite should ask them to briefly talk about their experiences and training.
- If the hospital has a junior volunteer program, use them as ambassadors for the institution.
- Most students prefer a "try before you buy" approach and would welcome an opportunity to "job shadow" someone in the department.
- One of the best sources of information for students interested in a specific career is someone who already is working in that career area.

Encourage key health care employees to forge partnerships with guidance counselors to tout their professions' virtues and opportunities with the hope that counselors, in turn, will encourage more students to consider these careers.

Many health careers require education with a hands-on clinical component. Historically, much of that clinical training has been conducted in large urban hospitals. Suburban and rural hospitals should consider expanding their involvement in clinical education programs for high schools, colleges and universities.

- Visit the guidance department of area schools and develop a working relationship with guidance counselors in your city and county.
- Arrange for interested students to be exposed to health careers.
- Plan and arrange for health career fairs, tours, etc.
- Encourage the establishment of teenage voluntary hospital programs that are designed for career orientation.
- Provide scholarships for health careers and/or maintain up-to-date information on scholarships.
- Maintain a supply of up-to-date informational materials on health careers.  
*(These may be downloaded from the Tennessee Hospital Association's Career Notes web site at [www.tha.com](http://www.tha.com).)*
- Encourage and promote work experience programs in hospitals.
- Serve as the liaison for students interested in health careers.
- Adopt a school.
- Work through your local Boy Scouts of America to develop a Medical Explorer Post in your community.



Tennessee has an impressive number of county fairs scheduled across the state each year. The exhibit should feature job opportunities as well as other related information, i.e. building expansions, wellness programs, financial aid the hospital may offer to qualified students, or any other information about the hospital that might be of interest to the general public.

- The Center for Health Workforce Development in Tennessee encourages community hospitals to provide health career exhibits at their local county fair.
- Health career materials may be downloaded from the THA Career Moves web site ([www.tha.com](http://www.tha.com)) and provided to individuals who may be interested in pursuing a health career.



### Health Workforce Shortages

I am here today representing \_\_\_ (Name of Hospital)\_\_\_.

I'm sure you've all heard this question: Do you know what you want to do when you grow up? Well, do you? Would you like a job that's stable and pays really well? The reason why I'm asking is because I want to tell you about an industry that is booming, one that has such a demand for people just like you. Do you know what I'm talking about?

I would like to talk to you about job opportunities available within the health care industry. Many of the fastest growing occupations are concentrated in the health care field, which is expected to increase twice as fast as the economy as a whole.

Health care services will account for almost one-fifth of all job growth through 2005. Factors contributing to continued growth in the health industry include the aging population, which will continue to require more services, and the increased use of innovative medical technology for intensive diagnosis and treatment.

Opportunities are not limited to traditional health care careers, although the industry is experiencing unprecedented shortages in nurses, pharmacists, radiologic technologists and medical laboratory personnel. Hospitals will need thousands of additional personnel specialists, computer programmers and support specialists, buyers, engineers, and administrative and service support personnel.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, six of the 10 occupations with the fastest employment growth are in health care and the other four are in computers, an industry that is increasingly important in medicine. By the year 2006, health services employment is projected to increase to 12.6 million persons, an increase of over 3 million new jobs.

The increased demand for health care services, fed by the growing proportion of elderly in the population, is expected to continue for at least 50 years.

Health care jobs have increased more than any other comparable industry group since the 1950s. The year 2000 marked a downturn in employment in many industries, but health care was not among them. It is anticipated that health care providers will enjoy abundant opportunities even in less robust economic times.

(Speaker Should be Prepared to Talk About the Manpower Needs and Opportunities at the Local Hospital and Educational Requirements for Various Health care Positions.)

### Health Workforce Shortages

I am here today representing \_ (Name of Hospital)\_\_\_to talk with you about career opportunities in the health care industry.

Have you ever spent 15 minutes on hold listening to bad music and hoping the voice on the other end would give you some relief?

Imagine what it would be like recovering in a hospital and having to wait a long time while you were in pain! That's the way a tight labor force affects health care. It's simple...We need people to take care of people. The stability of a health care system relies on a sufficient supply of appropriately educated and skilled professionals. We are experiencing critical workforce shortages in Tennessee that affects every single person.

The current and emerging health care system requires a workforce whose education prepares it to manage and provide health care. All evidence suggests these shortages will be long lasting; increasing in severity; affecting virtually every area of health care; and requiring long-term, innovative and collaborative strategies.

What does all of this mean to you? What does the word opportunity mean to you? Opportunity is one of the most important things to consider in seeking a career. Careers in health care provide excitement, challenge, personal satisfaction and today, greater financial rewards...in a word, opportunity!

The critical shortage of personnel is only one reason there is tremendous opportunity in the health care field. Science and technology create many new careers stimulating demand as new medical technologies permit intervention for conditions previously undiagnosable or untreatable.

In health careers, there is an accent on youth, not just because we need youths to fill the vacancies, but because so many of the career opportunities are very new. Many careers did not even exist a few years ago and the older occupations have been changed in scope and concept.

In health care, the future arrives daily. Many of tomorrow's jobs are already here. The future belongs to those who prepare for it. The numbers and types of health care specialists at all levels have increased as medical science has advanced. Today there are jobs so new, that many people have never heard of them.

All health careers have a lot in common, but no two are exactly alike. Each job involves different talents, interests and skills. Each offers its own rewards, satisfactions and challenges. Each is searching for personnel. Every effort is being made by your local hospital to help those who are interested in a health career select the one most suited to your abilities.

(Speaker Should be Prepared to Talk About Manpower Shortages and Opportunities at the  
Local Hospital and Educational Requirements for Various Health care Positions.)

**What are health careers?**

- Range from direct patient care to careers in administration, education and research.
- Involve both physical and mental health.
- Involve individual and community health.
- Help both people and animals.

**Where can I work in a health career?**

- Hospitals, general, surgical, women's, children's, extended care facilities, psychiatric, cancer, alcohol and drug treatment centers, and home health.
- Private offices of doctors and dentists
- Clinics
- Public health
- Education

**What kinds of allied health education programs are in Tennessee?**

- Nursing: registered (associate, bachelor's of science, masters), advanced practice nursing (clinician and practitioner) and doctorate
- Licensed practical/vocational nurse
- Certified nursing assistants and technicians
- Laboratory careers: certified laboratory assistant, medical laboratory technician, medical technologists, cytotechnologist, histologic technologist
- Radiological technician and technologist, ultrasound, radiation therapist
- Pharmacist, Pharm D, pharmacy technician
- Social work: social worker, caseworker, case aide
- Physical therapy: physical therapist, physical therapy assistant and aide
- Occupational therapy: occupational therapist, occupational therapy assistant
- Food service: dietitian, food service manager, etc.
- Administration: chief executive officer, administrator, hospital engineer, personnel director, public relations director, admitting officer, materials manager, etc.
- Medical information: administrator, technician

**Where are most allied health education programs located?**

In hospitals, high schools, technology centers, colleges and universities. Geographically, all over the state with a heavier concentration in larger cities.

**How long does a program last?**

- Some on-the-job training programs, such as certified nurse assistants, last only a few weeks.
- Technicians generally require one of two years of training, technologists three to four years of training.
- Registered nurse training may be two, three or four years training.
- Formal education is only the beginning – health care changes so rapidly that learning is a lifelong process.

**What kind of preparation must I have from high school?**

In Tennessee, each 8th grade student who does not plan to follow the college preparation path must follow either the technical education path or dual education path. Within these paths are study programs called “clusters.” Each cluster prepares students for a different career field. The student selects a cluster in which to study. The student’s plan will be reviewed annually to connect academic and career goals.

**What is the outlook for jobs in health careers today?**

According to the American Hospital Association special workforce survey dated June 5, 2001, up to 168,000 hospital positions are unfilled today.

- Up to 126,000 registered nurses are needed today.
- Hospital positions on the survey included:
  - Registered nurses
  - Pharmacists
  - Radiological technologists
  - Laboratory technologists
  - Billing/coders
  - Housekeeping/maintenance

**Where can additional information be obtained?**

Write: Career Moves  
c/o Tennessee Hospital Association  
500 Interstate Boulevard, South  
Nashville, Tennessee 37210  
E-mail: [hgalln@tha.com](mailto:hgalln@tha.com)  
Web site: [www.tha.com](http://www.tha.com)  
Call: 615-256-8240, 800-258-9541  
Fax: 615-242-4803

**Health careers have many advantages over other careers, including:**

- **Job security:** Health career skills will always be in demand, particularly in direct patient care areas, such as nursing and allied health careers.
- **Income:** Salaries often are higher in health careers than jobs requiring the same amount of education. Because health careers are high in demand, salaries are steadily increasing.
- **Geographic mobility:** Many health careers require you to take a test that evaluates certain basic skills. If you pass the test (often a certification or licensure), you become certified or licensed in your specialty area. The skills you learn in Tennessee are the same skills needed in hospitals and health care settings across the country. You are not limited to working in a single location. Health care professionals are needed in both rural and urban areas.
- **Educational choices:** In almost every health career, you can choose your own level of educational preparation, from on-the-job training during or after high school, to college/university and beyond. Professional growth is unlimited, and many hospitals offer financial assistance to employees who wish to continue their education.
- **Intellectual challenge and professional growth:** Because the knowledge of science and medicine is constantly expanding, the health care field is never stagnant. There are always new challenges and new problems to solve. In many health careers, job training is a lifelong process.
- **Personal satisfaction:** Ask any health care worker.



### **What you can do**

Try a career before you “buy” With a solid academic foundation, drive and a commitment to help others, you can choose from one of hundreds of health care specialties.

Here’s how you can supplement your health careers exploration with first-hand experience:

#### **Be a Junior Volunteer**

Hospitals have junior volunteer programs that allow you to experience the adventure of a health career while you are still in school. Contact your local hospital for more information.

#### **Consider a Health Science Education Class**

Health careers training is available in Tennessee schools and blends classroom study with clinical rotations in hospitals. Choose a technical, university or dual path and select the health career of your choice.

#### **Join a Student Organization**

Student clubs combine social and leadership activities with career exploration. HOSA (Health Occupation Students of America) allow students access to every aspect of health care. The Boy Scouts of America’s Medical Explorer Posts are popular organizations for high school students (both male and female).

#### **Youth Mentoring and Job Shadowing**

Get to know health care professionals. One of the best sources of information about a specific career is someone who already is working in the field. Health care workers are excellent mentors.

#### **Summer Jobs and Part-Time Employment**

If you are sincerely interested in pursuing a health career, your local hospital may have summer, temporary or part-time openings that will let you sample life on the health care team.

#### **Other Opportunities for Experience**

- Cooperative programs
- Work-based learning
- Site-based learning
- Military service

**What do we have to offer?**

Visit our site [www.tha.com](http://www.tha.com) and discover everything you need to know about Tennessee health careers

**You'll find...**

- Tennessee Job Outlook In Brief
- Twenty HOT Careers In Health care with indepth detail on:
  - Salary
  - Career Outlook
  - Duties
  - Work Environment
  - Qualities
  - Educational Facilities

**The HOT careers include:**

- Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
  - Pharmacist
  - Clinical Laboratory Technologist/Technician
  - Dietitian/Nutritionist
  - Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic
  - Health Information Administrator
  - Licensed Practical Nurse
  - Nuclear Medicine Technologist
  - Nurse Practitioner
  - Occupational Therapist
  - Physical Therapist
  - Physician
  - Physician Assistant
  - Radiologic Technologist
  - Registered Nurse
  - Respiratory Therapist
  - Social Worker
  - Sonographer
  - Surgical Technologist
- A complete listing of schools, colleges and universities.
  - Is there a health career for you?
  - Find out what high school courses you should take
  - Manpower Update
    - What are the trends?
    - Where are the jobs?
    - What job seekers want
  - THA's Web site is hot-linked to the Tennessee Department Of Education

**For further information contact:**

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 615-401-7434  
[bgatlin@tha.com](mailto:bgatlin@tha.com)

SUGGESTED POSTERS

**DISCOVER  
YOUR FUTURE...**

(LOCAL HOSPITAL NAME  
OR LOGO)



**INA  
HEALTH  
CAREER!**

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
VISIT US AT  
www.inahealthcareer.com

**Make this  
a Summer of  
Discovery...**

(LOCAL HOSPITAL NAME OR LOGO)

**Become a  
Junior Volunteer!**

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
VISIT US AT  
www.inahealthcareer.com

**THINK IT!  
BELIEVE IT!  
VISUALIZE IT!  
BECOME IT!**


(LOCAL HOSPITAL NAME OR LOGO)

**HEALTH CAREERS.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
VISIT US AT  
www.inahealthcareer.com

**BE PART OF  
A HEALTH  
HAPPENING...**

(LOCAL HOSPITAL NAME  
OR LOGO)



**JOIN A  
HEALTH  
TEAM!**

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
VISIT US AT  
www.inahealthcareer.com

**THE CENTER FOR HEALTH  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN TENNESSEE**

The Center for Health Workforce Development in Tennessee is an initiative to promote educational and other strategies which encourage training, recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals. Through the efforts of the Tennessee Hospital Education and Research Foundation (THERF), the Center for Health Workforce Development has been funded by a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Center will operate as part of THERF's not-for-profit 501 (c) 3 corporation and will be located in the corporate offices of the Tennessee Hospital Association. The Center will work with hospitals and others to achieve an abundant, competent and motivated healthcare workforce through statewide collaboration, strategies and solutions.

