

March 2021

# HEALTHCARE HIGHLIGHTS

The Rural AHEC Student Newsletter



## March's Healthcare Career Focus:

### Pharmacist

Pharmacists are healthcare professionals who support good health outcomes by understanding, and helping their clients understand, medications. Pharmacists know what medications are appropriate for which patients, which medications interact in a harmful way, and the most effective ways to take each medication. They can be a valuable resource to patients and act as a vital component to an individual's healthcare team.

### What might I do as a Pharmacist?

Practice in a variety of settings, including local pharmacies, chain pharmacies, hospitals, clinics, and long-term care facilities, as well as government, the military, or the VA

Work full or part time on varied shifts, since it can be a 24-hour position

Work with physicians, collaborating on the best treatment plan for patients

Administer vaccines, such as COVID-19 or flu vaccines

Provide medication therapy management services—drug therapy review, personal medication record, medication-related action plan, intervention and referral, documentation/follow up

Counsel patients who ask questions by telephone call/ electronic message

Disperse medications through mail service

Conduct research on current and future medications



### How do I become a Pharmacist?

- Attend a two to four-year undergraduate program in pharmaceutical science, followed by four years of graduate studies
- Take and pass a state board of pharmacy licensure examination
- If interested in laboratory research, continue education by completing a Master of Science or PhD.
- If interested in advanced studies, continue education through one or two year residency
- Years of higher education: 6 to 8+ years

**Average Salary:**  
**\$120.440 in NYS**

## **What is it really like to be a Pharmacist?**

There are many different career paths that a Pharmacy student can take, each one leading to different daily routines.

**Ambulatory Care Pharmacists** counsel patients one-on-one about their medications and care plans

**Cardiology Pharmacists** treat cardiovascular disease patients who take multiple drugs and have complex health issues requiring specialized care

**Poison Control Pharmacists** share their expertise with the general public, law enforcement, and hospital staff, seldom dealing directly with patients

**Emergency Medicine Pharmacists** treat patients in fast-paced, emergency room settings, or work for government agencies, developing disaster response plans

**Compounding Pharmacists** prepare customized medications to meet personalized needs in a sterile, controlled laboratory environment

There are many other paths, including the option of becoming a Certified Pharmacy Technician (which requires far less schooling, but also commands a much lower salary—approx. 40,000/year).



Watch several short videos about why students pursue pharmacy studies: <https://pharmacyforme.org/why-pharmacy-may-be-right-for-you/inspiring-journeys/>

Meet Tracy, a clinical Pharmacy Specialist in kidney transplantation (great video!): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QR4D5jJAZJ8>

***“The presence of pharmacists in patient care units to allow direct interaction with physicians, nurses, and other health care providers appears to be the most important factor in achieving good patient outcomes...”***

Thomas R. Brown

***“Today, pharmacists are an essential part of every health care team and are recognized as drug therapy experts...”***

Paul W. Abramowitz

***“In your career as a pharmacist, it is a wise move to keep your skills current, fresh, and transferrable so that you can be adaptable to new opportunities as they arise...”***

Pharmacytimes.com



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*Please contact us if you have questions about healthcare career opportunities or educational pathways to healthcare careers!*

Western New York Rural Area Health Education Center (R-AHEC) is one of nine centers in the New York State Area Health Education Center (NYS AHEC) organization. Our mission is to improve health and healthcare through education.

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