Understanding the BHS in Health Science Degree

What can you do with a Health Sciences Degree?

A bachelor’s degree in health science can prepare you for a variety of career and educational opportunities related to health care. If you have a general interest in the sciences as they relate to human health but you are unsure which direction you would like to pursue for a career, the Bachelor of Health Science (BHS) in Health Science offers four emphasis areas: health and wellness services, leadership and policy, pre-professional, and rehabilitation science. These tracks can help narrow your focus and can prepare you more intently for career and educational opportunities related to healthcare.

There are two paths students generally take with a BHS in Health Science.

Students working toward a BHS in Health Science usually go one of two ways professionally: clinical or non-clinical. If you would like to work directly with patients and prepare for a terminal professional degree or for graduate studies in clinical health care, a Bachelor of Health Science degree can provide an excellent foundation. Examples of clinical career paths include physical therapy, occupational therapy, and respiratory therapy. Clinical paths are very straightforward and students know exactly what the program allows them to do.

What if I love the health field, but I don’t want to take a clinical path?

You have plenty of options as a student with a BHS in Health Science. As more and more employers seek students with a solid background in health care, your degree is extremely marketable. From EMR (electronic medical records) to disaster relief and prevention, many choices exist if you take the time to research possibilities and figure out how you see yourself contributing to the world of health care.

What are some general non-clinical paths to help me get started?

Generally speaking, you would make a great fit for a variety of different fields, including government (local, state, and federal), non-profit/public health, sales, insurance, administration, and many more. Let’s examine these routes in more detail.

Exploring the Non-Clinical Side of Health Care

GOVERNMENT

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is the government’s principal agency for protecting the health and well-being of all Americans. This is a tremendous responsibility and requires HHS to employ individuals who are willing and able to respond to the call.

HHS employs individuals from diverse social and academic backgrounds into a full range of career fields and positions: doctors, nurses, biologists, social and physical scientists, economists, computer specialists, budget analysts, administrative and clerical specialists, and epidemiologists – to name a few.
U.S. Department of State

The U.S. Department of State (DoS) works to shape and sustain a peaceful, prosperous, just, and democratic world and foster conditions for stability and progress for the benefit of the American people and people everywhere.

What does this mean for you? As an employer of the U.S. Department of State, you could find yourself working all over the world aiding those with little access to health care. DoS has a number of different agencies and affiliates that would allow you to serve worldwide and work in public health care.

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration

The mission of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is to enforce the controlled substances laws and regulations of the United States and bring to the criminal and civil justice system of the United States, or any other competent jurisdiction, those organizations and principal members of organizations, involved in the growing, manufacture, or distribution of controlled substances appearing in or destined for illicit traffic in the United States; and to recommend and support non-enforcement programs aimed at reducing the availability of illicit controlled substances on the domestic and international markets.

The DEA has a variety of career paths, including special agent, intelligence research specialist, professional and administrative, diversion investigator, and forensic science.

If you are interested in a career with the government, it is best to familiarize yourself with the specific agency, department, or bureau you are considering. Many of the websites provide information for job-seekers. For a full list of U.S. departments and agencies, go to:

http://www.usa.gov/directory/federal/index.shtml

CORPORATE/SALES

Do you see yourself in business? With a BHS in Health Science, many companies seek to hire students who can work in sales and business and also understand health care and the vocabulary behind it. A few examples are listed below:

Cerner

Located in Kansas City, MO, Cerner's mission is to contribute to the systemic improvement of health care delivery and the health of communities. They are transforming health care by eliminating error, variance and waste for health care providers and consumers around the world. Their solutions optimize processes for health care organizations ranging from single-doctor practices to entire countries, for the pharmaceutical and medical device industries and for the field of health care as a whole. Their solutions are licensed by more than 9,000 facilities worldwide.

Potential jobs with Cerner include consulting, sales, human services, operations, and technical roles.
Airgas

Located in St. Louis, MO, hospitals, clinics, surgery centers, nursing homes, physicians’ practices, home healthcare distributors, and other medical businesses recognize Airgas as a trusted supplier of medical gases, gas equipment and medical facility certification. More than 14,000 employees work in approximately 1,100 locations, including branches, retail stores, gas fill plants, specialty gas labs, production facilities and distribution centers.

*For more corporate positions*, make sure to meet with your career advisor and attend SHP career events to make contacts and learn about other opportunities.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Non-Profit

A multitude of non-profit organizations exists in the health industry. If you have a passion for the public sector and want to help your community, you may also consider a path in non-profit management/administration. For this path, you must be proactive in seeking opportunities. You may also decide to start your own! In any event, non-profit work is a great path. Consult your career advisor early on to decide what coursework would be beneficial for this route.

MPH

The University of Missouri offers both a [BHS in Public Health](#) & [Master of Public Health](#) degree for students who would like to advance their education away from the clinical route.

**This list is just the beginning!** The range of career paths for you is as great as you want to make it:

- secondary schools, community colleges/universities
- local and county health departments and agencies
- volunteer agencies such as the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, and Planned Parenthood
- hospitals and health clinics
- industrial corporations
- health maintenance organizations
- community based organizations