



Exploring Careers In Healthcare - It's Not Just Nursing



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When I was a little girl, we used to visit my Aunt Belle in a nursing home in southern New Jersey. I can remember being fascinated by those visits. We walked the long halls, with hospital green cinder block walls, passing from one resident filled room to another. I could hear the residents call out to us for help or attention, I wanted to help, I could feel that pull, but I couldn't. We always took Aunt Belle out to lunch, she was impeccably dressed, a city girl from Jersey City with a great sense of style. I can recall sitting across from her at the diner, fascinated by this pink string of denture grip that spanned her

mouth as she spoke. She always used too much denture grip. These early exposures to life in a nursing home (40 years ago) helped to form my view of how life in a nursing home should and should not be.

When I started my career in healthcare in 1983, I had just graduated from college out in California. My degree was in Sociology, but I had taken enough elective courses in Geriatric Studies to qualify for a concentration. I had no idea what opportunities for employment existed in the nursing home world upon graduation, but after answering a small ad for an Assistant Administrator, I was soon to discover the wealth of opportunities for growth both financially and personally.

I have been a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator for 20 years, but that first job, was my foot in the door. Over the years I worked in positions as Admissions, Social Worker, Purchasing, Central Supply, Medical Records, and Marketing.

Whether you're a college bound student or a stay at home mom re-entering the job market, I'd recommend taking a look at what

healthcare centers have to offer in your area of interest. If you're having a hard time getting your foot in the door, try volunteering or starting as a receptionist or activity aide on a part time basis.

If your job has been a victim of the economy and you have skills already in place to offer then consider how those skills might fit into the variety of positions.

Consider the following Careers in Healthcare:

- **Admissions:** This position is all about customer service and sales. Families are in crisis and need to choose a facility for rehabilitation or long term care. You are the face of the facility, the family must trust and like you. The details of the job are book knowledge, learning how Medicare, Medicaid and other insurances apply to the persons care needs, and some knowledge of medical terminology is helpful.
- **Activities:** If you enjoy event planning, are organized and outgoing this may be a good place to start. Activity Assistants are employed full time and part time and Directors are always especially interested if you have special talents and hobbies. You work closely with the residents so you must be comfortable working with residents with dementia and other healthcare issues.
- **Food Services** has many opportunities to start your career. A dining room server here named Kristen is now a food service supervisor.
- **Human Resources:** Another named Sarah, working her way through college is now working in Human Resources because she was open to the possibilities.
- **Administration** includes reception, staffing coordinators and office support staff. It's a good place to get exposed to a lot of the workings of a nursing home. You must be very organized and have excellent customer service skills.
- **Housekeeping** may not seem like a likely springboard for a career in Healthcare, but I know a man who started in laundry and now owns several nursing homes. You just have to be always working to improve service to get recognized by management for upward growth.
- **The Business Office** employs people who specialize in Accounts Payable, Payroll and Medical Billing, and is an area of specialty growing very quickly.
- **Therapy Services,**
- **Social Services and**
- **Nursing Services** require specific college degrees and licensure but volunteering in a nursing home can put you ahead of other applicants once you've obtained your degree. The Pines at Whiting does offer an entry nurse aide program where we will train and pay for an aide to become Certified and our policies offer tuition reimbursement for those looking to advance their education.

I love my job as Healthcare Administrator at Hamilton Place Skilled Nursing and Georgetown Commons Assisted Living. Its halls are full of laughter and activity. The rooms are beautifully decorated with Private Rehabilitation Suites and residents who were once isolated now experience a newness of life. *Aunt Belle would have loved*

FACTS

Healthcare will generate 3.2 million new wage and salary jobs between 2008 and 2018, more than any other industry, largely in response to rapid growth in the elderly population.

Employment growth in Healthcare is expected to account for about 22 percent of all wage and salary jobs added to the economy over the 2008-2018 period.

Demand for healthcare will increase, especially in employment settings specializing in gerontology care for the elderly.

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Career Guide to Industries, 2010-11 Edition, Healthcare, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/cg/cgs035.htm>

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Snow Shoveling Advice to Avoid Injury

Back Injuries due to snow shoveling can happen to anyone, not just older adults. Here are some tips to avoid injury:

- If possible wait until the afternoon to shovel. Slipped discs occur more readily in the morning because there is increased fluid pressure in the disc because the body has been in a resting position all night.
- Step in the direction you are throwing the snow, the spine cannot tolerate twisting as well as other movements. Remember to bend at the knees and keep your back straight.
- Take frequent breaks, walk around periodically. Do standing extension exercises by placing your hands on your hips and bending backward slightly.
- The shaft of the shovel should be long enough to allow you to keep your back straight while lifting. Too short a shaft makes you bend your back while lifting, too long a shaft makes the weight on the other end heavier.



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