

retail to research



Your career can take you from store to hospital or even to the Food and Drug Administration!

The image of the local drug store pharmacist in a white jacket probably pops into your head when you think of a career in pharmacy. About 60% of all pharmacists do work in the community drug setting. However, pharmacists held about 217,000 jobs in 2000 (the latest year with complete data), ranging from the local hospital to the federal government.

No matter what venue you select, pharmacy offers financial rewards in a job where you can positively impact

people's lives. And, the aging population ensures a growing demand for candidates to work in the profession. In fact, the need for pharmacists is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2010. So, if the local pharmacy counter isn't ideal for you, consider these options:

HOSPITALS, CLINICAL PHARMACY AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS: Years ago, hospital pharmacists were relegated to the basements of hospitals where they merely filled prescriptions. That's not so today. Hospital pharmacists are important members of the hospital or nursing home health care team. And with the aging of America, the demand for pharmacists to work in hospitals and extended care facilities continues to swell. Hospital pharmacy can be very satisfying because the pharmacist works directly with physicians, nurses and patients.

Hospital pharmacy is composed of a number of specialized areas, such as nuclear pharmacy, drug and poison information, and intravenous therapy. About 38,000 pharmacists work full- or part-time in hospitals or nursing homes today.

HOME CARE/LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES PHARMACISTS: The function of a home care or long-term care facilities pharmacist is similar to that of a hospital pharmacist. However, patients served are not on-site in the hospital. This field offers the chance to work hand in hand with nursing care agencies to provide total care for patients in the home and also involves educating patients and caregivers on the medications.

"What I like is that I have an ongoing relationship with patients, rather than just occasional consultations," notes Dave Werner, a pharmacist actively working in a long-care facility in Fulton, N.Y.

CONSULTANT PHARMACIST: Consultant pharmacists typically practice in long-term care, often monitoring medication use in extended-care facilities. The consultant pharmacist, however, may or may not be the pharmacist in charge of actually dispensing the medication.

MANAGED CARE PHARMACY/PHARMACY BENEFITS MANAGERS: Managed care is an expression you'll hear more and more as you get out into the world. Basically, managed care is designed to facilitate checks and balances so that all members of the health care team are delivering the best health care at the best costs.

Pharmacy is a cornerstone of this process because pharmacists are called upon to make sure patients are taking

medications properly to avoid excessive hospital stays. Often a pharmacist working in managed care creates drug therapies in conjunction with physicians.

Pharmacy Benefits Managers, or PBMs, are charged with working with employers to create pharmacy benefit packages. Pharmacists are needed to work within PBMs to ensure the right pharmacy benefits are made available to employees.

ACADEMIC PHARMACY: More than 3,000 full-time faculty members work in the nation's colleges and schools of pharmacy. In addition to serving as teachers and researchers, these academics also serve as goodwill ambassadors to the entire industry.

"Teaching is a wonderful way to use all of your knowledge to train future pharmacists. It keeps you up to date.

Each day is truly a different experience," says Paul W. Jungnickel, Ph.D., RPh, an associate dean/professor at the Harrison School of Pharmacy at Auburn University.

PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES: The pharmaceutical sciences include drug discovery and design, drug delivery, clinical sciences, drug analysis, cost effectiveness of medicines and regulatory affairs. You could work on a team—at a manufacturer or university, for example—to uncover new medications or investigate what delivery systems are most efficient. If you have a strong handle on economics, you could put your talent to work in



determining the economic savings from the use of one drug rather than another.

INDUSTRIAL PHARMACIST/PHARMACEUTICAL SALES AND MARKETING: Most pharmaceutical manufacturers have a variety of jobs for pharmacy graduates ranging from overseeing drug production to selling products to physicians and retailers. Other positions on the manufacturing end of the business include working in marketing, public relations and with government regulators. Many senior executives of leading pharmaceutical firms have pharmacy degrees.

MAIL-ORDER/DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER PHARMACIST: Both mail order and the Internet represent pharmacy industries growing at warp speed. These sectors need pharmacists to oversee filling, as well as to serve as liaisons with patients. Many Internet sites also seek pharmacists for content.

DRUG INFORMATION CENTERS: Many pharmaceutical manufacturers, retailers, hospitals and universities offer hotlines for patients, doctors and other health care providers. Pharmacists are needed to staff these call centers to ensure accurate information for both professional and personal use is dispensed.

ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT: There are numerous associations, national and local, with pharmacists needs. The National Association of Chain Drug Stores, for example, employs several pharmacists who help work on regulatory issues. "My pharmacy degree is monumental in my role in working on very important issues to pharmacy, such as pharmacy benefits cards," explains Kurt Proctor, who is the president of the National Association of Chain Drug Stores Foundation, which is focused on advancing the pharmacy practice nationwide.

COMMUNITY RETAIL PHARMACY: Retail is an appealing career for many pharmacy graduates. Attractive starting salaries and making your own hours are part of the lure. The retail industry has been impacted negatively by a scarcity of pharmacists, and many retailers have made the recruiting of pharmacists one of their most important initiatives. Retail

pharmacists today are no longer just in drug stores-grocery, discount and mail-order merchants all need pharmacists to staff their growing businesses. And, the retail pharmacy of today is different from what your perception might be.

Today's retail pharmacists are frequently called upon to counsel patients, rather than just fill prescriptions. Although filling the prescription called in by the doctor is still the No. 1 function, pharmacists also are instrumental in teaching patients about health care. Perhaps you've even seen physical

changes in your local store where the pharmacist is no longer working behind glass, but down at a special counter where you can consult with him or her. No wonder pharmacists are among the most trusted professionals.

"This has been the perfect profession for me," says Mary Christian, a pharmacist at an independent pharmacy in Warren, N.J. "I raised three children and remained

employed with a job that made me feel I was doing something important."

INDEPENDENT OWNERSHIP: This is the ideal situation for a pharmacist who likes community pharmacy, but wants to be his or her own boss. Rather than look to chain management for direction, independent pharmacies are able to stock a range of prescription and OTC goods that are customized for a particular region or town.

"Pharmacists that own a community pharmacy enjoy the flexibility to develop their pharmacy practice to meet the needs of the patients they serve," notes Tom Murry, Pharm.D and Director of Student Affairs, National Community Pharmacists Association. "Also, the average salary of an independent pharmacy owner is \$150,000 plus profits," he adds, according to his organization.

OTHER FIELDS: Pharmacists also are needed in a host of federal, state and professional positions. For example, the United States Public Health Service, the Food and Drug Administration and all branches of the armed services need pharmacists. There also are positions available in the Veterans Administration.

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