



# *Health Care Careers*

## *Exploration Patch*

### *Program Description (age 9-17)*



The aging of America's baby boomers and the increased demand for health care professionals in specialized areas of care have combined to create a serious need for health care professionals. The result is that the future for those desiring employment in health care has never looked brighter! Health care professionals use their intelligence, skills and compassion to make a difference in people's lives. Completing this project will increase your knowledge of the variety of career opportunities available in health care and will increase your awareness of the growing need for health care professionals. Books, magazines, videos, Internet sites, health care professionals, health care schools and organizations are available as resources for this project.

**For:** Middle and High School Girls and Boys (age 9 to 17)

**Purpose:** To increase the knowledge of youth concerning the variety of career opportunities available in the health care profession, focusing on exploring the need for health care professionals, the many roles they play, education requirements, resources available for those pursuing careers in health care, as well as general health and wellness information.

**Requirements:** To earn this patch, youth will complete a total of six (6) of the following activities:

#### *Career Exploration*

- 1) **Shadow a Health Care Professional or Researcher** – Contact your local hospital, doctor's office, health clinic, school nurse, and ask if you can shadow them for a day or half day - whatever their schedule allows. Document all the activities you observe. Answer the following questions:
  1. What roles does this health care professional perform?
  2. How does he/she incorporate science and math into his/her roles?
  3. What classes should I take to prepare for this type of career?
  4. What kind of leadership, organizational or decision-making skills does he/she use in his/her position?
  5. Would you want to work as a health care professional? Why or why not?
- 2) **Research Health Care Programs** – Research the various types of health care programs offered in Kansas, the types of degrees offered and the entrance requirements. After finding this information, decide what school you would attend and what classes and/or other requirements you would need to get accepted into the school.
- 3) **Do Research on a Famous Health Care Professional** – Have the students break up into groups to conduct research on a famous health care professional, focusing on who he/she was, what contributions he/she made to health care and society and how he/she influenced new ideas about health care delivery.
- 4) **Visit a Health Care School** – Interview a student, or an instructor. Ask for a tour of the facility. Document your observations.
- 5) **Research Health Care Scholarships** – Investigate scholarships available for students interested in health care. What are the requirements? Who's eligible? Are there more scholarships offered for specialized areas of study? Do scholarships differ depending on the type of degree you are seeking or the type of school you attend? Document your findings.
- 6) **Explore the Variety of Careers** – Visit the Web site: [www.kha-net.org](http://www.kha-net.org) and identify at least five health care careers; note the different specialties and the different patient populations.

## *Educational Lessons*

- 1) **Proper Hand-washing Technique** – Visit the Web site: [www.microbe.org](http://www.microbe.org) and learn the importance of proper hand washing in general and in the health care setting. Design an activity to teach younger students how to properly wash their hands (i.e. have the students rub glitter on their hands and then wash to see how well they can get the glitter off). Have older students design a research project that could be performed to measure the impact of hand washing.
- 2) **Create Information on Health Promotion or Safety** – Design a poster, storyboard or videotape depicting the importance of a healthy lifestyle and/or healthy behaviors. Design a poster or display related to the basic food groups and the recommended serving for each group; the dangers of smoking or being overweight; or showing the need for immunizations, seat belt use or helmet use. Or, you could conduct an activity at a school or in the community that emphasizes health promotion or safety, such as a bike ride.
- 3) **Research a Disease or Condition** – Put together a short information guide on a particular disease, condition or illness, such as asthma, diabetes, cancer, depression, that could be shared with a patient or family. The emphasis should be on where to find additional information about the disease, condition or illness and what resources exist in the community to help persons and families with the disease, illness or condition learn more or get support.
- 4) **Investigate Teen Drug Abuse** – Design a storyboard or story about the effects of drugs on the body.
- 5) **Learn How a Body System Works** – As an individual or a group, select a body system and understand how that body system works. Use a nurse, health educator or other health care provider to help in gaining that understanding.
- 6) **Visit a Health Club or Recreation Center** – Visit a YMCA, Boys & Girls Club or Health Club. Speak to a personal trainer. Ask how exercise contributes to health. Investigate various sports and sports medicine. Teach a friend or family member how to perform exercises you have learned or develop an exercise program for yourself and document what you did each day in a diary and how you felt after doing the exercise.

## *Skill Builders*

- 1) **Earn Your CPR Certification** – CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation). Visit the American Heart Association Web site at: [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org) to find a Basic Life Support Heartsaver Course (or any CPR course) near you. This is an entry-level course that offers guidelines for one-rescuer adult, child and infant cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- 2) **Earn First Aid Certification** – This course is usually offered through the American Red Cross. Visit the American Red Cross Web site at: [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) to find your local Red Cross.
- 3) **Attend Babysitting “How To” Workshop** – The Babysitter’s Training course provides youths, ages 11-15, with the information and skills necessary to provide safe and responsible care for children in the absence of parents or guardians. This course is usually offered through your local Red Cross.

## *Service Projects*

- 1) **Participate in a Community Health Project** – (Blood Drives, Diabetes, Heart, Cancer and Alzheimer Walks, Screening, etc.) Find ways to participate, other than raising money. Help with registration, offer water, provide sun protection, etc. Write a brief statement of how the health project helped the community, as well as what you learned about the illness/condition and how it impacts those who are coping with the disease.
- 2) **Volunteer Four (4) Hours in a Health Care Facility** – Volunteer your time in a doctor’s office, health clinic, hospital, retirement or nursing center. Document your observations.
- 3) **Do a Project for a Health Care Facility** – Contact a doctor’s office, health clinic, hospital, retirement or nursing center to find out what project might be done to meet a need in that organization. Examples might be collecting magazines for offices or residents, donating and taping books for use by the elderly or pediatric patients, collecting toys for donation

to a pediatric unit, designing a “boredom” box with activities for patients who are hospitalized, decorating a nursing home unit for a holiday event, planning a special event for the residents of a nursing home, etc.

### ***Technology***

1) **Learn About Equipment and Supplies Used by Health Care Professionals** – Lots of different equipment and supplies are used in caring for patients. Get a health care professional to tell you about this equipment, how it works and when it’s used. For some equipment – such as pulse oximeters, dopplers, stethoscopes, thermometers, glucose monitors, students may also have an opportunity to practice with the equipment.

For additional information, contact:

Cindy Samuelson  
Kansas Hospital Association  
215 S.E. Eighth Ave.  
Topeka, KS 66601-2308

Fax: (785) 233-6955

E-mail: [csamuelson@kha-net.org](mailto:csamuelson@kha-net.org)