

## **Healthcare Experiences: Volunteering**

Healthcare facilities rely on volunteers to provide much needed support and companionship to staff, patients, and visitors. While volunteer opportunities typically do not allow for direct-patient contact and administration of medical care, these opportunities provide pre-health students with an initial, ground-level introduction to healthcare. The time spent simply being in a healthcare setting can expose students to a variety of different people, professionals, and situations that can greatly expand and inform their understanding of healthcare more broadly. While pre-health students may choose to continue in volunteer roles at hospitals and clinics, the goal should be to eventually enter into a position that allows for either shadowing a healthcare professional or obtaining employment in a particular job that will allow students to gain direct patient care experiences.

## **Cottage Hospitals and Sansum Clinics FAQs**

### Volunteering Program(s)

#### Cottage Health

- Webpage: <https://www.cottagehealth.org/donate/volunteer-cottage-health/>
- Goleta Valley Cottage Hospital and Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital have a number of opportunities to volunteer. Visit the website to explore opportunities, and reach out via phone or email to learn more. Call 805-569-7357 or email [volunteering@sbch.org](mailto:volunteering@sbch.org).

#### Sansum Clinics

- Webpage: <https://www.sansumclinic.org/health-and-wellness/community-service-programs>
- Camp Wheez, see [www.SansumClinic.org/camp-wheez](http://www.SansumClinic.org/camp-wheez)
- Ridley-Tree Cancer Center, <https://www.ridleytreecc.org/cancer-center/about-us/volunteering>
- Additional events, see <https://www.ridleytreecc.org/cancer-center/about-us/events>

## **Healthcare Experiences: Shadowing**

While pre-health students can benefit tremendously from shadowing healthcare professionals, these experiences can be very difficult to come by, and obtaining opportunities to shadow certain healthcare professionals, such as physicians, physician assistants, and nurses, can be even more difficult than others due to various laws and policies at hospitals and clinics that are designed to preserve patient rights and safety.

Pre-health students who are successful in gaining shadowing experiences with hospital staff often do so through college/university-sponsored programs, such as UCSB's INT 184PD Clinical Shadowing course. Other students obtain shadowing experiences with professionals in their field by utilizing their personal networks, which can consist of family, friends, peers, and even supervisors from work and clinical volunteer experiences, or they may reach out directly to private practices to see if shadowing opportunities are available/allowed.

Pre-health students who struggle to find shadowing opportunities should not get discouraged because many healthcare facilities maintain robust volunteer programs, which can provide opportunities to be immersed in a healthcare setting and to begin gaining a better understanding of what it means to work in healthcare and provide care to patients. Volunteering may also lead to additional opportunities, such as shadowing or employment, for students who actively engage with the professionals they come into contact with and demonstrate both professionalism and their commitment to pursuing a career in healthcare.

### **Healthcare Experiences: Employment**

Many pre-health students seek employment in various healthcare roles in order to gain experience in directly interacting with and treating patients, as well as working alongside other healthcare professionals. Many of these positions require applicants to receive training and/or a formal certification that signifies they have specific knowledge and skills that will allow them to fully perform the duties required of the position.

Common positions that UCSB pre-health students seek out and obtain include working as medical scribes, medical assistants, emergency department technicians, EMTs, CNAs, dental assistants, pharmacy technicians, veterinary technicians, physical therapy aids, and so on. Some healthcare facilities and outpatient clinics may also offer long-term volunteer or internship opportunities.

Many of these positions require certifications, which are often offered by community colleges and a couple that are offered through UCSB's PaCE program (EMT). Certification programs will vary in terms cost, the time they take to complete (quarter(s)/semester(s)), and the tests for certification. We encourage students to explore options to earn certifications through community colleges, UCSB PaCE, and other educational or vocational training programs, and to also consult with a pre-health advisor prior to committing to a particular certification program.

### **Healthcare Jobs in the Santa Barbara and Goleta Communities**

We encourage students to explore job postings on the websites for the various hospitals, clinics, and private practices in the area in which they will spend the majority of their time over the next 1 to 2 years. Additionally, consider using online job search websites, such as Indeed.com, to browse postings and read about position descriptions, duties and responsibilities, and qualifications, such as experiences and certifications that might be required or preferred to be considered for positions.

Cottage Hospital Jobs: <https://www.cottagehealth.org/careers/>

Sansum Clinics: <https://www.sansumclinic.org/employment>

Indeed: <https://www.indeed.com>