Frequently Asked Questions About the Nursing Profession

Is nursing for me?

There are several career self-assessment resources available online. Some of the assessments are free of charge while others charge a small fee. One useful and free site is: http://www.rileyguide.com/assess.html.

Nursing is a demanding profession—one that requires a lot of math and science knowledge, as well as a lot of heart and compassion. It takes a special person to be a nurse.

What are the different types of nurses?

There are several types of nurses.

- **Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs)** - CNAs provide hands on care to people who are unable to take care of themselves. This may include such tasks as feeding, bathing, and dressing patients, as well as assisting nurses with diagnostic tests and clinical procedures. Typically, CNAs work under the direction of a nurse and carry out duties assigned by the nurse. Work sites may include nursing homes and hospitals. Training involves a five-week program offered by the American Red Cross and other locations in the Knoxville area. A listing is available in the Pre-Nursing Advisement and Information Center, AL 107. Median salary is about $25,915 in Knoxville and 29,118 nationally.

- **Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs)** – LPNs are responsible for patient care on a personal level. They are usually responsible for monitoring patients' vital signs and performing procedures such as dressing wounds, giving enemas, treating bedsores, and administering prescribed medicines. LPNs work under the supervision on an RN or a physician in many different types of settings, including doctors' offices and hospitals. Training usually involves one year of classes at a hospital or a technology center. In the Knoxville area, this program is offered by Tennessee Technology Center (546-5567) and by Blount Memorial Hospital (273-1544). Median salary is about $ 41,904 nationally and 37,275 in the Knoxville area.

- **Registered Nurses (RNs)** – RNs have direct responsibility for patients, under the supervision of a physician. They are involved with patient assessment, diagnosis, creating a care plan, implementation of the plan, and continuous evaluation of the patient's response to the plan. RN training requires three to four years of college, as indicated in the next question, below. Labor bureau statistics for 2012 list the national median salary for RNs at about $66,667 and 59,334 in the Knoxville area.

Want to learn more?

Visit these helpful websites:

- www.nln.org
- www.nursesource.org
- www.discovernursing.com
- www.allnursingschools.com
- http://nursing-education-tn.org
- http://www.accreditednursingcolleges.org
- http://www.aamn.org
- http://www.nsna.org
- http://nuirsingworld.org

What are the different ways I can become a Registered Nurse (RN)?

- **Associate Degree in Nursing (AND, ASN, AASN, or AAS in Nursing)** – Students take approximately one year of prerequisite courses, followed by two years of nursing school. Upon graduation, students take the board exam to become RNs.
- **Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)** – Students take approximately two years of prerequisite courses, followed by two years of nursing school. After graduation, students who pass the board exam become registered nurses. A BSN is required for entry into a master's degree in nursing program.

What are the differences between Associate Degree RNs and BSN RNs?

Starting pay is often the same for those with either degree. However, the BSN has more opportunities for advancement, as well as working in more technical, specialized areas of nursing. Additionally, BSNs may continue into graduate school to earn an MSN (general MSN or nurse practitioner). There are several local programs designed for nurses who have the associate degree to earn a BSN, often while working.

What can I do as an RN?

You can work in various settings with a variety of clients. Examples include:

- Hospital nursing (e.g., intensive care unit, pediatrics, emergency/flight, labor and delivery, psychiatry/mental health, oncology, ambulatory care, surgical, neurology)
- Office/Clinic nursing
- Community/Public health nursing (government, private agencies, schools)
- Occupational/Industrial nursing
- Home health nursing
- Long-term care facility nursing
- Travel nursing
- Nursing supervisor/manager
- Hospice nursing
- Insurance company nursing

What does the job market look like for the nursing profession?

The job outlook is promising. There are currently more job opportunities than there are nurses to fill the positions. This shortage allows nurses to be more selective in choosing their practice settings. In 1996, 1,971,000 RNs were employed in the United States. By the year 2004, there were over 2,400,000 jobs for RNs. By 2020, more than 808,000 jobs for RNs are expected to be unfilled in the U.S.

VISIT THE PSCC PRE-NURSING ADVISING AND INFORMATION CENTER ON THE HARDIN VALLEY CAMPUS, ALEXANDER 107, 694-6460, pre-nursing@pstcc.edu, or our website: www.pstcc.edu/departments/pre-nursing.

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