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## **Undergraduate Job Shadowing in the MAHEC Network**

Job shadowing is an activity that allows students to explore careers before choosing which path to take. Many healthcare professionals allow students to observe their routine work and provide an inside look at their day-to-day schedules.

Job shadowing is one of the many learning opportunities available through the regional centers and program offices in the MAHEC system. Pre-medical, pre-nursing, pre-dental, allied health, health science, surgery techs, and radiology techs are some of the disciplines for which AHECs have coordinated job shadowing experiences.

During the last year, more than 50 undergraduate students shadowed at least one day in inpatient or outpatient settings. Many were in family practice clinics, while others were in pediatric, dental, women's health clinics plus specialty clinics such as cardiology or at a pharmacy.

Many hospitals allow undergraduate students to job shadow. As an example, at Phelps County Regional Medical Center, students are allowed to job shadow in over 18 departments, including surgical services, laboratory, acute rehab, respiratory therapy, imaging, endoscopy, and anesthesia. Students are encouraged to shadow in multiple departments.

The MU AHEC Program Office is involved in job shadowing for their Bryant Scholars. The Scholars are required to complete 20 hours per year of physician shadowing with their rural physician mentor (usually a physician in or close to their hometown). Typically, the students set up the experiences themselves with the AHEC office intervening if there is difficulty finding a physician mentor.

Prior to job shadowing, students are provided an orientation to review the basics of being in a healthcare facility. Orientations include training in HIPAA, OSHA and blood borne pathogens, etiquette and professional dress. Proof of immunizations is often required.

Reasons vary as to why students want to do job shadowing. As an example, Mid-MO AHEC had one individual working at Ft. Leonard Wood hospital who asked to shadow in a county hospital. He wanted a civilian experience before entering Uniformed Services University School of Medicine in Bethesda, MD.

Depending on the student's desires or requirements, the amount of time spent job shadowing varies from a few to hundreds of hours. Upon completion of the shadowing experience, students provide evaluation/feedback to the AHEC office.

If you know a person interested in a career in the healthcare field, suggest contacting their local AHEC office to coordinate a shadowing experience. This is a great opportunity for students to gain insight into their potential field of choice and decide for themselves which field they are interested in pursuing.



*Camila Dominquez, St. Joseph, shadows Narayan Veligati, MD in his pediatrics clinic*

*MAHEC is a partnership of seven locally-governed organizations and three university-based health professions education programs working statewide to increase the numbers of Missouri youth entering stable, high-paying jobs as healthcare professionals and the numbers of professionals caring for underserved populations.*

*The MAHEC partners include:*

- A.T. Still University –
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- University of Missouri –
  - Columbia
- Saint Louis University
- Northeast Missouri AHEC -Kirksville
- Northwest Missouri AHEC
  - St. Joseph
- West Central Missouri
  - AHEC – Lexington
- Mid-Missouri AHEC – Rolla
- East Central Missouri AHEC– St. Louis
- Southeastern Missouri AHEC – Poplar Bluff
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