



Healthcare Career Guide

Explore Careers.
Discover Your Future.



Explore
Career Options



Learn Education
Pathways



Discover Salaries
& Opportunities



Get inspired



CRAWFORD COUNTY
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

INTRODUCTION

Healthcare careers offer many different opportunities for students with a variety of interests and skill sets. Some careers focus on direct patient care, while others involve technology, laboratory work, rehabilitation, emergency response, or support services. This guide provides a simple overview of healthcare careers commonly found in Iowa hospitals and clinics, including what the job involves, typical pay ranges in Iowa and surrounding Midwest areas, and the education needed to enter the field.

Welcome.....	3
What Healthcare Career Is Right for You?	4
Explore Healthcare Careers	5
Other Healthcare Careers	9
Professional Attire & Interview Readiness	15
Questions to Ask Yourself	19
Final Thoughts	19
About CCMH.....	20

WELCOME!

Whether you've always dreamed of working in healthcare or you're just beginning to explore your options, this experience is an opportunity to learn more about the many careers that help care for our community.

During your time with us, you'll meet professionals from a variety of departments, observe or participate in hands-on learning opportunities, explore healthcare technology and equipment, and discover the teamwork that keeps a healthcare organization running every day. You may be surprised to learn that healthcare offers dozens of career paths—from direct patient care to laboratory science, rehabilitation, emergency services, pharmacy, nutrition, business, information technology, facilities management, marketing, and many more.

This workbook is your guide throughout your experience. Use it to:

- Record what you learn.
- Ask questions and take notes.
- Reflect on the careers that interest you.
- Discover your strengths and explore future opportunities.
- Complete activities and make the most of your experience.

Don't be afraid to ask questions, try something new, and step outside your comfort zone. Every healthcare professional you meet was once a student exploring their future and learning where their interests and talents fit best. We hope this experience helps you gain confidence, discover new possibilities, and better understand the many ways you can make a difference in healthcare.

Thank you for spending time with us. We hope you leave with new knowledge, meaningful experiences, and a greater appreciation for the people and professions that work together to provide exceptional patient care.

Welcome—we're glad you're here!

WHAT HEALTHCARE CAREER IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Not sure where to start in healthcare? That's okay. Healthcare careers come in all types, from hands on patient care to technology, business, maintenance, nutrition, emergency services, and community outreach.

A great first step is learning more about your interests, strengths, and personality. These websites offer free career quizzes and healthcare career exploration tools to help you discover careers that may be a good fit for you.

CareerOneStop Career Explorer

<https://www.careeronestop.org>

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, this site offers career assessments, interest quizzes, salary information, and education requirements for hundreds of healthcare careers.

My Next Move

<https://www.mynextmove.org>

Take a quick interest profiler quiz and explore careers that match your personality and strengths. Includes healthcare careers, videos, salary information, and education pathways.

ExploreHealthCareers.org

A healthcare focused career exploration website with information on clinical and non clinical healthcare careers, schooling requirements, and career pathways.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh>

Provides detailed information about healthcare careers including job outlook, average pay, work environment, and education needed.

O*NET Online

<https://www.onetonline.org>

Explore healthcare careers by skills, interests, work styles, and daily job duties. Great for students who want detailed career information.

HEALTHCARE CAREERS

Anesthesiologist

Anesthesiologists are physicians who administer anesthesia and monitor patients during surgery and medical procedures. They work closely with surgeons, nurses, and other healthcare professionals to keep patients safe and comfortable.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$300,000 to \$450,000+

Education Needed: Bachelor's degree, 4 years of medical school, and 4 years of residency training.

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Certified Medical Assistant (CMA) / Medical Assistant (MA)

Medical assistants help healthcare providers by taking vital signs, preparing patients for exams, scheduling appointments, and handling office tasks. CMAs have completed certification testing.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$35,000 to \$48,000

Education Needed: Certificate or diploma program, usually 9 to 18 months. Certification is optional for some MA positions but required for CMA positions.

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Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)

CNAs help patients with daily activities such as bathing, dressing, eating, and mobility. They work closely with nurses and often spend the most time directly caring for patients.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$32,000 to \$45,000

Education Needed: State-approved CNA course, often completed in a few weeks.

Dietitian / Registered Dietitian

Dietitians help patients improve their health through nutrition and healthy eating plans. They may work with patients who have diabetes, heart disease, food allergies, or other medical conditions.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$55,000 to \$75,000

Education Needed: Bachelor's degree in dietetics or nutrition, supervised training, and national registration exam.

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Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)

EMTs respond to emergencies and provide basic medical care before patients arrive at the hospital. They often work in ambulances and with emergency response teams.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$35,000 to \$50,000

Education Needed: EMT training program that can often be completed in less than one year.

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Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)

LPNs provide basic nursing care under the supervision of registered nurses and physicians. They may work in clinics, hospitals, nursing homes, and long term care facilities.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$45,000 to \$60,000

Education Needed: Practical nursing program, usually about 1 year, plus state licensure exam.

Medical Biller and Coder

Medical billers and coders review patient charts and translate medical information into codes used for insurance billing and healthcare records.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$40,000 to \$60,000

Education Needed: Certificate or associate degree program, usually 1 to 2 years.

Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA)

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists provide anesthesia care for patients during surgeries and procedures. They often work independently or with anesthesiologists.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$180,000 to \$250,000+

Education Needed: Registered nursing degree, ICU experience, and doctoral level CRNA program.

Nurse Practitioner (NP)

Nurse practitioners diagnose illnesses, prescribe medications, and provide advanced patient care. Many NPs specialize in family medicine, pediatrics, emergency medicine, or women's health.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$100,000 to \$140,000

Education Needed: Registered nursing degree plus master's or doctoral nurse practitioner program.

Occupational Therapist (OT)

Occupational therapists help patients regain skills needed for everyday living after illness, injury, or disability.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$75,000 to \$95,000

Education Needed: Master's or doctoral degree in occupational therapy.

Paramedic

Paramedics provide advanced emergency medical care in ambulances and emergency settings. They can perform more advanced procedures than EMTs.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$45,000 to \$70,000

Education Needed: Paramedic program, usually 1 to 2 years after EMT certification.

Pharmacist

Pharmacists prepare and dispense medications while helping patients understand how to safely take them.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$115,000 to \$145,000

Education Needed: Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) degree.

Pharmacy Technician

Pharmacy technicians assist pharmacists by preparing medications, organizing prescriptions, and helping customers.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$35,000 to \$48,000

Education Needed: On the job training or certificate program.

Phlebotomist

Phlebotomists draw blood samples for testing, transfusions, and donations. They help patients feel comfortable during blood draws.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$35,000 to \$48,000

Education Needed: Short term certificate program, often less than 1 year.

Physical Therapist (PT)

Physical therapists help patients improve movement, strength, and recovery after injury or surgery.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$80,000 to \$105,000

Education Needed: Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree.

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Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA)

PTAs assist physical therapists by helping patients complete exercises and rehabilitation treatments.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$50,000 to \$70,000

Education Needed: Associate degree from a PTA program.

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Physician

Physicians diagnose illnesses, perform exams, prescribe treatments, and care for patients in clinics and hospitals.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$220,000 to \$500,000+ depending on specialty

Education Needed: Bachelor's degree, 4 years of medical school, and residency training.

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Physician Assistant (PA)

Physician assistants diagnose illnesses, prescribe medications, and provide treatment under the supervision of a physician.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$100,000 to \$140,000

Education Needed: Master's degree from a physician assistant program.

Radiologic Technologist / X Ray Technologist

Radiologic technologists use imaging equipment such as X ray machines to help providers diagnose injuries and illnesses.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$55,000 to \$80,000

Education Needed: Associate degree in radiologic technology plus certification.

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Registered Nurse (RN)

Registered nurses provide patient care, administer medications, educate patients, and coordinate treatment plans.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$60,000 to \$90,000

Education Needed: Associate or bachelor's degree in nursing plus licensure exam.

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Respiratory Therapist

Respiratory therapists help patients who have trouble breathing due to illness, injury, or chronic lung conditions.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$55,000 to \$75,000

Education Needed: Associate or bachelor's degree in respiratory therapy.

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Surgical Technologist

Surgical technologists prepare operating rooms, sterilize instruments, and assist surgeons during procedures.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$45,000 to \$65,000

Education Needed: Certificate or associate degree program.

Ultrasound Technologist / Sonographer

Sonographers use ultrasound equipment to create images of organs, pregnancies, and other body systems.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$65,000 to \$90,000

Education Needed: Associate degree or certificate in diagnostic medical sonography.

OTHER HEALTHCARE CAREERS

Biomedical Equipment Technician

Biomedical equipment technicians repair and maintain medical equipment used in hospitals and clinics.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$55,000 to \$80,000

Education Needed: Associate degree in biomedical equipment technology or electronics.

Community Outreach Coordinator

Community outreach professionals organize health education events, wellness programs, screenings, and partnerships that connect hospitals with local schools, businesses, and community organizations.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$45,000 to \$70,000

Education Needed: Bachelor's degree in communications, public health, marketing, education, or related field.

Environmental Services / Housekeeping

Environmental services staff clean and disinfect patient rooms, surgery areas, and public spaces to help prevent the spread of illness and infection.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$30,000 to \$45,000

Education Needed: High school diploma or equivalent. On the job training is commonly provided.

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Health Information Technology (Health IT)

Health IT professionals manage electronic medical records and healthcare computer systems.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$50,000 to \$85,000

Education Needed: Associate or bachelor's degree in health information or information technology.

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Healthcare Marketing and Communications

Healthcare marketing professionals create advertisements, social media content, videos, and educational materials to help hospitals connect with patients and communities.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$45,000 to \$75,000

Education Needed: Bachelor's degree in marketing, communications, public relations, or graphic design.

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Human Resources (HR) Specialist

HR specialists help hospitals hire employees, coordinate benefits, support staff training, and assist with employee relations.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$45,000 to \$75,000

Education Needed: Bachelor's degree in human resources, business, or related field.

Information Technology (IT) Specialist

IT specialists support hospital computer systems, cybersecurity, and networks to keep healthcare technology running safely.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$50,000 to \$90,000

Education Needed: Associate or bachelor's degree in information technology or computer science.

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Materials Management / Supply Chain Specialist

Supply chain staff order, organize, and distribute medical supplies and equipment throughout the hospital.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$40,000 to \$65,000

Education Needed: High school diploma or associate degree. Inventory or logistics experience may be helpful.

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Medical Interpreter

Medical interpreters help patients and healthcare providers communicate clearly when patients speak a different language. They help improve understanding, safety, and patient care.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$40,000 to \$65,000

Education Needed: High school diploma or college coursework plus interpreter training and certification.

Patient Registration / Admissions Specialist

Registration and admissions staff help patients check in for appointments, collect insurance information, schedule visits, and answer questions.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$35,000 to \$50,000

Education Needed: High school diploma or equivalent. Some positions may prefer office or healthcare experience.

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Plant Operations / Maintenance Technician

Plant operations and maintenance staff help keep hospitals running safely by maintaining heating and cooling systems, plumbing, electrical systems, generators, and medical facility equipment.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$45,000 to \$75,000

Education Needed: High school diploma plus technical training, trade school, apprenticeship, or related experience.

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Social Worker

Healthcare social workers help patients and families navigate emotional, financial, and community support needs.

Typical Iowa Pay Range: \$50,000 to \$75,000

Education Needed: Bachelor's or master's degree in social work.

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PROFESSIONAL ATTIRE & INTERVIEW READINESS

Making a Great First Impression

Before you say a single word, employers notice how you present yourself. Dressing appropriately shows respect for yourself, the interviewer, and the job.

Remember: Dress for the job you want—not just the job you're applying for. You don't need expensive clothes. The goal is to look clean, neat, and professional.

What Should I Wear?

Good Choices

- Clean, wrinkle-free clothing
- Polo shirt, button-up shirt, or nice blouse
- Khakis, dress pants, or clean dark jeans (if appropriate)
- Closed-toe shoes that are clean
- Hair neatly styled
- Minimal jewelry
- Light or no fragrance

Avoid

- Clothing with offensive words or graphics
- Dirty or ripped clothes
- Pajama pants or sweatpants
- Hats (unless worn for religious or medical reasons)
- Flip-flops
- Excessive perfume or cologne
- Gum during the interview

Different Jobs = Different Expectations

Think about the position you're applying for.

Job	Typical Interview Attire
Grocery Store Clerk	Polo or nice shirt with khakis or clean jeans
Restaurant	Business casual clothing
Childcare	Comfortable but professional
Hospital or Clinic	Business casual; clean and polished
Office Job	Business casual or business professional

No matter the job, **clean and neat** is always the way to go.

Professional Doesn't Mean Expensive

Many people worry they can't afford interview clothes.

Good news—you don't need a brand-new outfit.

Ideas:

- Borrow from a family member.
- Shop at thrift stores.
- Wear your nicest clean clothes.
- Ask a teacher or counselor for suggestions.

Confidence comes from being prepared—not from wearing expensive clothes.

Interview Tips

No matter what career you choose, interviewing is an important life skill. Whether you're applying for your first part-time job, a volunteer position, college, or a healthcare career in the future, being prepared can help you stand out. Interviews give employers a chance to learn about your personality, communication skills, and work ethic—not just what's on your application. With a little practice and preparation, you can feel more confident, make a great first impression, and show why you'd be a valuable member of their team.

Before the Interview

- ✓ Arrive 10–15 minutes early.
- ✓ Silence your phone.
- ✓ Bring a positive attitude.
- ✓ Smile.
- ✓ Make eye contact.
- ✓ Offer a friendly greeting.
- ✓ Know a little about the company.

During the Interview

- Listen carefully.
- Think before answering.
- Speak clearly.
- Be honest.
- Sit up straight.
- Don't interrupt.
- Thank the interviewer before leaving.

Body Language Matters

Your body language says a lot before you even speak.

Positive Body Language

- ✓ Smile
- ✓ Make eye contact
- ✓ Give a confident handshake (if appropriate)
- ✓ Sit up straight
- ✓ Keep your hands relaxed

Avoid

- ✗ Looking at your phone
- ✗ Slouching
- ✗ Crossing your arms the entire time
- ✗ Fidgeting
- ✗ Speaking too quietly

Common Interview Questions

Practice answering these questions.

Tell me about yourself.

Why do you want this job?

What are your strengths?

Tell me about a challenge you've overcome.

Describe a time you worked as part of a team.

What would you do if you disagreed with a coworker?

How do you handle stress or busy situations?

Why should we hire you?

Do you have any questions for us?

Some good questions include:

- What does a typical day look like?
- What qualities make someone successful here?
- What training will I receive?
- What do you enjoy most about working here?

Interview Reflection

After your practice interview, take a few minutes to reflect.

Which question was the easiest for you to answer?

Which question was the hardest?

Why was it difficult?

Did you make eye contact?

Did you speak clearly?

Did you sound confident?

What did you do well?

What could you improve next time?

How can you prepare before your next interview?

Remember: An interview isn't just about proving you're the right fit for the employer—it's also your chance to decide if the job is the right fit for you.

Every interview is a learning experience. The more you practice, the more confident you'll become.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- Do I enjoy helping and caring for people?
- Am I interested in science, technology, or problem solving?
- Would I rather work directly with patients or behind the scenes?
- Do I like fast paced environments or structured routines?
- How much schooling do I want to complete?
- Do I enjoy working with my hands, computers, equipment, or data?

Remember: There is no single “right” healthcare career. Hospitals and clinics need many different types of professionals to care for patients and support the community. Whether you are interested in nursing, emergency care, imaging, nutrition, maintenance, information technology, or administration, there is a place for many different talents in healthcare.

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FINAL THOUGHTS

Healthcare careers are in high demand across Iowa and the Midwest. Whether students are interested in direct patient care, technology, emergency response, rehabilitation, or support services, there are many rewarding career paths available. Many healthcare careers also offer opportunities for advancement, flexible schedules, and the ability to make a positive impact on patients and communities every day.

ABOUT CCMH

Crawford County Memorial Hospital (CCMH) is more than just a hospital, it's a place where people come together to care for our community. Whether you're interested in becoming a doctor, nurse, therapist, technician, or working behind the scenes in healthcare, you'll discover that it takes an entire team of professionals to keep a hospital running every day.

Located in Denison, Iowa, CCMH is a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital that has proudly served Crawford County and the surrounding communities since 1951. In 2011, CCMH opened a modern, state-of-the-art facility at 100 Medical Parkway, allowing us to continue providing high-quality healthcare close to home.

Today, CCMH offers a wide variety of services, including:

- Emergency care with 24/7 emergency physicians
- Family medicine and pediatric care
- General surgery and orthopedic services
- Specialty clinics with visiting providers
- Rehabilitation services, including physical, occupational, and speech therapy
- Laboratory and diagnostic imaging, including MRI, CT, X-ray, ultrasound, and 3D mammography
- EMS and ambulance services

As healthcare continues to evolve, so does CCMH. In August 2025, construction began on an exciting remodeling and expansion project that will modernize several key areas of the hospital, including our Specialty Clinic, Rehabilitation Services, Patient Registration, and Rural Health Clinic. The project is expected to be completed in 2027 and reflects CCMH's ongoing commitment to providing exceptional healthcare and creating outstanding learning and working environments for future healthcare professionals.

One of the most exciting things about CCMH is the variety of career opportunities available. While many people think only of doctors and nurses, hospitals also rely on experts in laboratory science, radiology, respiratory therapy, pharmacy, nutrition, information technology, maintenance, finance, marketing, human resources, environmental services, emergency medical services, and many other fields.

As you explore CCMH, pay attention to how every department works together. Every role — whether caring directly for patients or supporting those who do — is an important part of helping people live healthier lives.

We hope this experience inspires you to learn something new, ask questions, and discover where your interests may lead. The future of healthcare needs talented, compassionate people like you, and your journey could start here!

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