

# THE RURAL HEALTH CAREER PLANNING GUIDE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS



**OFFICE OF PRIMARY CARE & RURAL HEALTH**  
ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
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The Office of Primary Care and Rural Health facilitates and participates in activities to improve access to healthcare services for all rural Alabamians with special concern for children, the elderly, minorities and other medically underserved vulnerable populations.

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# WHY CHOOSE A CAREER IN RURAL HEALTHCARE?



**Dr. Jerry Harrison**  
Haleyville, Alabama

A career in rural health care provides you with many rewards. Your work contains a lot of variety and is never boring. You enjoy the challenge of providing medical care and playing a pivotal role in the well-being of a whole community.

During the course of a day primary care physicians, like Dr Harrison, see patients from all age groups and deal with a wide variety of health care problems, ranging from high blood pressure, diabetes, and skin conditions to a new pregnancy, an eye problem, unexplained headaches, and abdominal pain.

The primary care physician works with a team of healthcare providers including nurse practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacists, dietitians, nurses, social workers, mental health professionals, physical therapists, just to name a few.

If you have an interest in a career in healthcare, planning early is important. This guide will help you successfully map your future toward a health career. The Alabama Office of Primary Care and Rural Health, Dr Jerry Harrison, and many other Alabama healthcare programs, included in this guide, are here to help you choose a career in rural healthcare.

Because   
I care



# HEALTHCARE CAREER PERSONAL EVALUATION

Do you have personal interests or talents that could lead to a healthcare career?

Read the statements below and place a check beside the statements that apply to you.

- Do you have an interest in helping and caring for others?.....  YES  NO
- Are you interested and talented in art? .....  YES  NO
- Are you interested in math and science classes? .....  YES  NO
- Do you enjoy school and make good grades? .....  YES  NO
- Do you like to work with children?.....  YES  NO
- Are you interested in health issues? .....  YES  NO
- Are you able to listen to others and help them solve problems? .....  YES  NO
- Do you enjoy working with computers? .....  YES  NO
- Do you enjoy research and laboratory science? .....  YES  NO
- Do you like to work with your hands?.....  YES  NO
- Are you interested in nutrition and preparing food?.....  YES  NO
- Do you like to teach others about things? .....  YES  NO
- Would you like to run your own business? .....  YES  NO
- Are you willing to go to college and graduate school?.....  YES  NO
- Are you interested in educating others about their health? .....  YES  NO
- Would you like a job that is interesting and changes from day-to-day?.....  YES  NO
- Are you interested in helping others after an illness or accident? .....  YES  NO
- Do you like to be part of a group or team? .....  YES  NO

Total Number Checked "YES" \_\_\_\_\_

Every one of these 18 statements shows an ability to work in healthcare. There are many types of health occupations that require different talents and skills. The more "YES" checkmarks you have, the larger the number of health careers that might suit you.



Kids



# PLAN FOR COLLEGE. MAP YOUR FUTURE. START TODAY.

## **EIGHTH GRADE**

- Get involved in school activities now. Join a club, learn an instrument, act in a play, write for the paper, or participate in athletics. Find out what interests you.
- Talk to your parents about your college financing plan. Save money for school by starting a college savings plan if you haven't already.
- Read for pleasure, and while you're at it, learn the unfamiliar words. Vocabulary skills come in very handy on the ACT and SAT - and in college, too.
- Thinking about college? Don't think about it too much. Focus on your grades and your interests. If you learn how to handle school, extra-curricular activities, and a social life now, you'll be ready to apply to college in your junior or senior year.

## **NINTH GRADE (FRESHMAN)**

- Meet with your guidance counselor to map out a four-year curriculum that will put you in the most challenging courses you can handle. Ask your guidance counselor about science courses recommended for a health career.
- Keep up your grades, since even your ninth grade A's (or D's) will be recorded on your transcript and will be reviewed by college officials. Let your guidance counselor and parents know if you are having trouble in any subjects.
- Start a file where you keep all of your important documents, such as your resumé listing your activities and leadership roles, immunization record, letters of recommendations, copies of information you have sent to colleges, etc.
- Start researching colleges and careers and talk to your parents and other adults about your interests and goals. Interview people working in the professions that you think may interest you.

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## **TENTH GRADE (SOPHOMORE)**

- Register for the PSAT or the ACT PLAN if they are offered to sophomores in the fall at your school. These exams will prepare you for the SAT and ACT taken in your junior and senior years.
- Attend college fairs in your community and talk to college representatives that visit your school.
- Get a summer job to gain experience and save money for college. If you are not old enough, consider enrolling in an educational summer camp or volunteering for an organization.
- Continue meeting with your guidance counselor, keeping up your grades, participating in activities, updating your file, researching colleges and careers, and saving money.

## **ELEVENTH GRADE (JUNIOR)**

- Start a list of colleges and identify characteristics that are important to you, such as location, size, academic program, cost, activities, etc.
- Request information about the colleges and schedule a campus tour. If a school is too far from home, try taking a “virtual tour” on the college’s website. Be sure to review admission requirements.
- Set up a calendar for college entrance exams, campus visits, and application and financial aid deadlines.
- Register and take the ACT and/or SAT in the spring. Invest in an exam prep course or book to help you prepare and improve your performance.
- Discuss your family’s financial resources and review plans for seeking financial aid. Begin exploring scholarships and grants. (See Financial Resources on page 12)
- Begin requesting letters of recommendation from your teachers, guidance counselor, coach, employer, and/or church members. Be sure to make many copies for your file.

## **TWELFTH GRADE (SENIOR)**

### FALL SEMESTER

- Narrow college choices and begin the application process for each school. If you haven’t visited colleges to meet with an admissions representative and take a tour, do so as soon as possible.
- Be aware of deadlines. Complete any scholarship applications that have a fall deadline. For colleges without application deadlines, submit your application for admission in December.
- Request transcripts, letters of recommendations, and supporting materials to be mailed to colleges. Contact the school to be sure they have received all required information.
- Take or re-take the ACT and/or SAT exams. Request that your scores be sent to the colleges to which you are applying.

## **TWELFTH GRADE (SENIOR)**

### **SPRING SEMESTER**

- In January or soon after, be sure to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Prepare and file taxes as soon as possible. You will need tax information to complete the FAFSA. (See Financial Resources on page 12)
- Review your Student Aid Report (SAR), generated from the FAFSA. Notify schools of any special circumstances that might affect your family's ability to fund your education.
- By April, you should be receiving admission acceptance letters and financial aid packages from colleges. Sign and return financial forms to the college you have chosen to attend.
- Mail or drop off your enrollment deposit to your college no later than May 1. Mail or call the schools that you applied to and will not be attending to inform them of your decision.
- Apply for applicable loans to help cover your Expected Family Contribution (EFC), provided on the SAR, or to fill the gap between your family's cost and EFC.
- Prepare for summer orientation and registration. Research your major(s) of interest. Some schools may require that you declare a major at registration. Other schools may allow you more time before requiring you to declare a major.

***You have brains in your head  
You have feet in your shoes***

***You can steer yourself in  
any direction you choose***

***You're on your own  
And you know what you know***

***You are the guy  
who will decide where to go.***

***Dr. Seuss***

# FINANCIAL AID RESOURCES

Financial aid refers to a wide variety of programs that help families and students pay for college and graduate school. Scholarships, grants, loan programs and work-study are all examples of financial aid programs.

## **STEP ONE:** COMPLETE THE FAFSA

One of the first steps in identifying financial aid is completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. This form will make you eligible for federal student aid consideration. The FAFSA may be filled out beginning January 1 during the school year you will be attending college. It is important to review the section, “Before beginning a FAFSA,” so that you understand what information is needed to complete the FAFSA application. Visit [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) to request a form or to submit the FAFSA online. For more information, call the Federal Student Aid Information Center toll free: 1.800.4.FED.AID (1.800.433.3243).

## **STEP TWO:** CONTACT THE SCHOOL

Every college has its own professional scholarship and loan funds. Contact the office of financial aid at the college you are interested in attending to learn more about specific school scholarship and loan programs.

## **STEP THREE:** SEARCH FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

Explore local financial aid sources with your high school, community, church, or employers, and check out internet scholarship search engines, such as:

- [www.finaid.com](http://www.finaid.com)
- [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)
- [www.alabamamentor.org](http://www.alabamamentor.org)
- [ecampustours.com](http://ecampustours.com)

***You have to expect things of yourself before you can do them.***

***Michael Jordan***

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR MINORITIES

Financial assistance programs for minorities also exist. Listed on the following page are some suggested websites. Note: This is not an exhaustive list.

**The Gates Millennium Scholars Program:** Scholarships and fellowships are available for outstanding low-income African-American, Native American, Hispanic American, and Asian-Pacific American students to attend undergraduate and graduate school. For more information and applications, visit [www.gmsp.org](http://www.gmsp.org).

**The National Hispanic Scholarship Fund:** Scholarship information for undergraduate and graduate students of Hispanic background who will attend college in one of the 50 states or Puerto Rico is available at [www.hsf.net](http://www.hsf.net).

**The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)** offers aid to students who demonstrate financial need, who are at least one-fourth American Indian or Alaskan native, and who are from a federally recognized tribe. For more information, contact the Bureau of Indian Affairs, PO Box 8327, Albuquerque, NM 87198 or visit [www.bia.gov](http://www.bia.gov).

## WATCH OUT FOR SCAMS

It is impossible to list all of the scholarship websites available. If you decide to do a scholarship search on the Web, be cautious. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) warns students and parents to be careful and skeptical if scholarship search companies make some of the following claims:

*“This scholarship is guaranteed or your money back.”*

*“You can’t get this information anywhere else.”*

*“I just need your credit card or bank account number to hold this scholarship.”*

*“You’ve been selected by a national foundation to receive some money.”*

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Alabama Student Loan Program at [www.alstudentaid.com](http://www.alstudentaid.com) features a financial aid calculator that estimates your family’s Expected Financial Contribution (EFC) to a college education.

Visit Student Aid on the Web at [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov). This website is a resource for financial aid and has a career section that contains many interactive tools for students and parents. You can also call the Federal Student Aid Information Center toll free: 1.800.4.FED.AID (1.800.433.3243).

# STATE & FEDERAL FINANCIAL PROGRAMS

PROGRAM	OBJECTIVE	UNDERGRADUATE/ GRADUATE	ALABAMA RESIDENCY REQUIRED	APPLICATION PROCEDURES
Federal Pell Grant	To provide non-repayable funds to students for educational expenses	Undergraduate	No	Complete the FAFSA <a href="http://www.fafsa.ed.gov">www.fafsa.ed.gov</a>
FSEOG Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant	To provide nonrepayable funds to students for educational expenses	Undergraduate	No	Complete the FAFSA <a href="http://www.fafsa.ed.gov">www.fafsa.ed.gov</a>
Federal Stafford Loans	To provide low interest repayable funds to students for educational expenses	Undergraduate/ Graduate	No	Complete the FAFSA <a href="http://www.fafsa.ed.gov">www.fafsa.ed.gov</a>
Federal Perkins Loans	To provide low interest repayable funds to students for educational expenses	Undergraduate/ Graduate	No	Complete the FAFSA <a href="http://www.fafsa.ed.gov">www.fafsa.ed.gov</a>
Federal Plus Loans	To provide repayable funds to parents of dependent undergraduate students	Undergraduate	No	Complete the FAFSA <a href="http://www.fafsa.ed.gov">www.fafsa.ed.gov</a>
Federal College Work-Study Program	To provide jobs for students who must earn part of their educational expenses	Undergraduate/ Graduate	No	Complete the FAFSA <a href="http://www.fafsa.ed.gov">www.fafsa.ed.gov</a>
Alabama's GI Dependents Educational Benefit Program	To provide funds to children & spouses of eligible Alabama veterans. Students must attend Alabama public postsecondary institution	Undergraduate	Yes	Applications from: Alabama State Department of Veterans Affairs P.O. Box 1509 Montgomery, AL 36102-1509 Phone: (334) 242.5077 <a href="http://www.va.state.al.us/scholarship.htm">www.va.state.al.us/scholarship.htm</a>

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A collage of crumpled US dollar bills, including \$100 and \$20 bills, with a white banner across the center. The banner has the words "College Fund" written in black, handwritten-style text. A wireframe sphere is positioned over the word "Fund".

College Fund

<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>UNDERGRADUATE/ GRADUATE</b>	<b>ALABAMA RESIDENCY REQUIRED</b>	<b>APPLICATION PROCEDURES</b>
Alabama Scholarships for Dependents of Blind Parents	To provide non-repayable funds to Alabama residents who are from families in which the head of household is blind & has insufficient income to support educational expenses	Undergraduate	Yes	Contact: Debbie Culver debbie.culver@rehab.alabama.gov 1.800.441.7607 1.256.362.0638
Alabama Student Assistance Program	Need-based state/federal grant	Undergraduate	Yes	Complete the FAFSA www.fafsa.ed.gov
Alabama Student Grant Program	To provide funds for Alabama residents attending an eligible independent Alabama college or university	Undergraduate	Yes	Applications are available from the financial aid office of the independent College or University
Alabama Police Officer's and Firefighter's Survivor's Educational Assistance Program	To provide funds for tuition, fees, books and supplies for dependents and spouses of Alabama police and firefighters killed in the line of duty	Undergraduate	Yes	Applications from: Alabama Commission on Higher Education P.O. Box 302000 Montgomery, AL 36130 (334) 242.1998 www.ache.state.al.us
American Legion Auxiliary Scholarship Program	To provide non-repayable funds for Alabama residents who are children or grandchildren of WWI, WWII, Korea or Vietnam veterans	Undergraduate	Yes	Applications: American Legion Dept Headquarters, American Legion Auxiliary 120 North Jackson Street Montgomery, AL 36104 www.americanlegionalabama.org
American Legion Scholarship Program	To provide non-repayable funds for Alabama residents who are children or grandchildren of WWI, WWII, Korea or Vietnam veterans	Undergraduate	Yes	Applications: Department Adjutant The American Legion P.O. Box 1069 Montgomery, AL 36192 www.americanlegionalabama.org



<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>UNDERGRADUATE/ GRADUATE</b>	<b>ALABAMA RESIDENCY REQUIRED</b>	<b>APPLICATION PROCEDURES</b>
Health Professions Student Loan	To provide low-interest repayable funds to students pursuing a course of study in specified health professions	Undergraduate/ Graduate	No	Contact the school's financial aid administrator for an application.
Nursing Student Loan	To provide low-interest repayable funds to students pursuing a course of study in professional nursing education	Undergraduate/ Graduate	No	Contact the school's financial aid administrator for an application.
State of Alabama Board of Medical Scholarship Awards	To provide scholarships and loans for the study of medicine	Graduate	Yes	Contact: Board of Medical Scholarship P.O. Box 115 Montgomery, AL 36101 (334) 353.4800 www.bmsa.alabama.gov
National Health Service Corps Federal Loan Repayment	To assist in the repayment of educational loans in return for service in Health Professional Shortage Areas	Graduate	No	Go to <a href="http://www.nhsc.hrsa.gov">www.nhsc.hrsa.gov</a> to learn how to apply
National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program	To assist primary care physicians, nurse midwives, family nurse practitioners, physicians assistants, and other health professionals in Health Professional Shortage Areas	Graduate	No	Go to <a href="http://www.nhsc.hrsa.gov">www.nhsc.hrsa.gov</a> to learn how to apply
Alabama Rural Medical Scholars Program	This program begins in the senior year of college. Scholarship and loan opportunities are available on a case-by-case basis	Undergraduate/ Graduate	Yes	Contact Rural Health Program, College of Community Health Sciences, Univ. of Alabama at (205) 348.5892 or Rural Medicine Program, Auburn University College of Science & Medicine at (334) 844.4555

# TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

(Practice MCAT Questions)

**1. Which of the following does not help to make up the cytoskeleton?**

- A: microfilaments
- B: microtubules
- C: intermediate fibers
- D: ribosomes

**2. What is the name for an enzyme secreted in an inactive form?**

- A: cryogen
- B: cytogen
- C: zymogen
- D: zytogen

**3. What is the name of the process whereby prokaryotes divide?**

- A: binary fission
- B: binary fusion
- C: binary collision
- D: binary occlusion

**4. What is it called when a single zygote divides into 2 embryos, resulting in identical twins?**

- A: heterozygotic twins
- B: monozygotic twins
- C: polyzygotic twins
- D: homozygotic twins

**5. What is the name for the rhythmic movements of the involuntary muscles that move food through the body?**

- A: catharsis
- B: peritonitis
- C: peristalsis
- D: sepsis

**6. What is the name of the enzyme produced in the pancreas that hydrolyzes specific peptide bonds and converts chymotrypsinogen to chymotrypsin?**

- A: chymosin
- B: tryptophan
- C: trymsin
- D: trypsin

**7. What is the name of the vein that transports glucose and other sugars that are absorbed in digestion to the liver?**

- A: renal vein                                      C: carotid vein  
B: hepatic occludal vein                      D: hepatic portal vein

**8. What is a heterozygous organism?**

- A: an organism that carries one allele                                      C: an organism that carries no alleles  
B: an organism that carries two different alleles                                      D: an organism that carries two identical alleles

**9. What is the name for the existence of more than one phenotypic forms in a population?**

- A: polymorphism                                      C: homomorphism  
B: heteromorphism                                      D: monomorphism

**10. What is another name for the evolution of a new species?**

- A: individuation                                      C: mass production  
B: devolution    D: speciation

Answer Key

1. D. Ribosomes are part of a cell.  
2. C. It is important to know the names of all the major types of enzymes.  
3. A. Fission means to break apart.  
4. B. Monozygotic literally means 'one zygote.'  
5. C. There are a number of disorders that can disrupt the process of peristalsis.  
6. D. It is important to know the names of all the major enzymes.  
7. D. It is important to know the names of all the major veins.  
8. B. A heterozygous organism carries multiple different alleles.  
9. A. The word polymorphism literally means 'many forms.'  
10. D. The word species is contained within speciation.

# HEALTH CAREER WEBSITE RESOURCES

[www.adph.org/recruit](http://www.adph.org/recruit) provides an on-line version of this guide.

[www.alabamahealthcareers.com](http://www.alabamahealthcareers.com) is a comprehensive site providing information on health professions and scholarships offered through Alabama hospitals.

[www.cchs.ua.edu/crm/rural-health-programs](http://www.cchs.ua.edu/crm/rural-health-programs) from the University of Alabama's College of Community Health Sciences (CCHS) offers a review of Alabama's rural health programs, including the Rural Health Scholars Program, the Minority Rural Health Pipeline Program and the Rural Medical Scholars Program. Contact information and program descriptions are available for students interested in pursuing a career in a medical health profession.

[www.auburn.edu/cosam/ruralmedicine](http://www.auburn.edu/cosam/ruralmedicine) provides information on the Rural Medicine Program at Auburn University.

[www.summerscrubs.com](http://www.summerscrubs.com) is an intensive career exploration opportunity for rising 10th, 11th and 12th grade students in Mobile and Baldwin counties who are considering careers in healthcare.

[www.uab.edu/cord](http://www.uab.edu/cord) from the University of Alabama-Birmingham (UAB) provides information on UAB's summer science camps for middle and high school students.

[www.usahealthsystem.com/educationpipeline](http://www.usahealthsystem.com/educationpipeline) A medical education pipeline for minorities interested in biomedical research.

Envision 2020, an effort to improve quality of life in the 5 county River Region, has developed a new partnership aimed at recruiting and retaining physicians. As part of this project, one major goal is to better prepare young Alabama students for their medical careers. For more information visit [www.Envision2020.org](http://www.Envision2020.org) or contact Hannah Chadee at [Hannah@Envision2020.org](mailto:Hannah@Envision2020.org).

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FUTURE  
**DOCTOR**



*To accomplish great things, we must not only act but also dream not only plan but also believe.*

*Anatole France*

[www.ed.gov/students](http://www.ed.gov/students) from the United States Department of Education provides college information.

[www.amec.uwa.edu](http://www.amec.uwa.edu) from the Alabama Medical Education Consortium provides information for those students who wish to attend medical or dental school for osteopathic medicine.

[www.samc.org/index.php/ourhospital/acom.html](http://www.samc.org/index.php/ourhospital/acom.html) provides information on the new Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine. The college strives to address the severe shortage of primary care physicians in Alabama. Enrollment will begin in the fall of 2013.

[www.explorehealthcareers.org](http://www.explorehealthcareers.org) provides a Career Explorer section that covers an extensive number of health care professions.

[www.science.education.nih.gov/lifeworks](http://www.science.education.nih.gov/lifeworks) from the National Institutes of Health's Office of Science Education offers information on health and medical science careers.

The Tuskegee Area Health Education Center provides summer programs for high school seniors and undergraduate college students. These programs are aimed at increasing and preparing minority students to work in the health field, while also growing access to health care in underserved areas of Alabama. To learn if you qualify, visit [www.tahec.net/index.html](http://www.tahec.net/index.html).

[www.adea.org](http://www.adea.org) from the American Dental Education Association provides a resource for exploring dental schools and careers.

The UAB Huntsville Pre-Med Internship Program is an eight-week summer program for pre-medical students from rural areas. Contact [colemamb@uasom.edu](mailto:colemamb@uasom.edu) for more information.

Rising Rural Scholars – A nonprofit organization that provides schools and communities with science partnerships and resources that link health, career, and community. For more information, please email [info@risingruralscholars.org](mailto:info@risingruralscholars.org)





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