

Guide to Get the Most Out of YOUR Health Profession Shadowing

The key to shadowing is learning about, growing in and more fully understanding your field of interest. Make the most of your shadowing experience!

STEP 1: Research and contact different health professionals in your field you want to shadow.

- Be kind, courteous, and most of all show some excitement towards learning and becoming a part of your health profession. Your passion and excitement will leave a lasting impression.
- Find potential opportunities to shadow by:
 - Contacting VCU Alumni: through www.vcualumni.org or via LinkedIn University pages
 - Searching Google: i.e. "Pharmacy listing, 23220"
 - Finding large and small hospitals, as well as private practice, community health centers, free clinics and hospice centers
 - Looking up insurance companies, ex: Aetna, Kaiser Permanente, Humana, etc.
- Contact organizations
 - Send an email, call directly or send a written letter (an example can be found at the end of this document)
 - Keep in mind that private or small practices, such as those involved dental, physical or occupational therapy, or veterinary, will probably be easiest to make and maintain contact due to their size. Hospitals and larger institutions may be busier and require multiple follow up contacts. Don't give up!
 - Confirm dates, times, length of shadowing if possible, and any other details before your first day arrival (check-in procedures, documentation needed, dress code etc.)

STEP 2: It's your first day shadowing! WHOOW! What to expect and what to do.

- Expect
 - To be standing around and watching everything the healthcare professional does.
 - To possibly feel awkward or out of place.
 - The health professional may ask the patient if they are okay with you observing and a patient may say no. Do not take it personally.
- Do
 - Ignore any awkwardness or feeling of being out of place while a procedure or consultation is happening. Everyone who has shadowed has been through it!
Consider it a rite of passage of sorts.
 - Greet everyone and smile. Address everyone formally unless told otherwise.
 - BRING SOMETHING SMALL TO TAKE NOTES ON! Pay attention to:
 - People to observe:
 - The health professional, other employees, patients and their families
 - Work environment factors to observe:
 - Workload and pace, team work and team cohesion, communication styles, attitude and work values
 - Work style factors to observe:
 - Skills required, procedures/interventions being performed, type and length of patient interaction, equipment used, and variety of tasks performed
 - ASK QUESTIONS.
 - Don't interrupt a procedure. Remember you're a guest.
 - Dress business casual, unless directed otherwise.
 - Women: Slacks, blouse or button shirt, blazer, heels or nice flats
 - Men: Slacks, button shirt, blazer, dress shoes

STEP 3: Day one is done. Figure out what you know and don't know about people who work in this profession.

- Do you know about their...
 - Lifestyle
 - Work schedule
 - Reasons to do [a procure, process etc.] a certain way
 - Patient interactions
 - Skills required
 - Office dynamics

STEP 4: Further Shadowing. Show interest and ask questions to find out what you want to know.

- Some good questions are:
 - What do you like best and least about your job?
 - If you had to do it over would you consider the same career?
 - How do you balance your family/personal life with this career?
 - How has the industry changed since you began working in it?
 - What is your advice on applying to, and choosing, a health professions school?
 - What are some trends you see in this profession?
 - How do you continue to grow your education or skills?

STEP 5: Reflect. The key to determining if this is the best career path for you!

- What did you like and dislike about the professional and job you were shadowing:

1 (Hated it!) – 5 (no opinion or don't know) – 10 (absolutely loved it!) = Circle one

○ Work schedule	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○ Patient contact	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○ Stress level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○ Responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○ Professionalism	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○ Environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○ Variety/Routine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
- Based on your experiences, what are your next step(s) to determining the best career path for you?
 - _____
 - _____

*Sample Email

Dear Dr. _____,

I am a (year in school, i.e. junior) studying (major) at Virginia Commonwealth University. I have learned a lot from my academic experience and would now like to learn about (health profession) from the perspective of a health care professional. I am seeking a shadowing opportunity and hope you might allow me to observe your clinical interactions for a few hours on a day and time that works best for you. (*You can include the hours you are free here*). I have completed the HIPPA module on patient confidentiality and have an updated TB screening (*not always required but recommended*). In addition, I have copies of all of the forms that are necessary for shadowing at (i.e. ABC hospital). Attached you will find my resume in case you'd like to review my prior experiences and activities. Please let me know if you are able to accept a student shadow at this time.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Interested VCU Student



616.331.8585 | www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising | C-1-140 MAK

Dentist Shadowing Opportunities

Dr. Dean R. Argo, D.D.S.
4489 Byron Center SW
Wyoming, MI 49519
616-534-8554

Burton Dental Associates
2013 Eastcastle Dr., Suite D
Grand Rapids, MI 49508
616-455-9900
<http://www.burtondental.com/>

Coopersville Dental Services
Dr. Scott Robinson, D.D.S.
701 West Randall Street Suite E
Coopersville, MI 49404
616-837-9704
<http://www.scottrobinsondds.com/>

Partners in Dental Care
Dr. John VanDerKolk, D.D.S.
2565 Forest Hill Drive SE, Suite 200
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
616-949-0230
www.pidcgr.com

Grandville Endodontics, P.C.
Dr. Brian J. Licari, D.D.S.
Dr. Paul F. Korte, D.D.S.
4050 Del Mar Dr SW #A
Wyoming, MI 49418-8870
616-531-0780
www.grandvilleendodontics.com

Meade Zolman Family Dentistry
Dr. Tim R. Meade, D.D.S.
Dr. Jere Booth Meade, D.D.S.
Dr. Ryan P. Zolman, D.D.S.
11301 Commerce Road
Building 1 Suite C
P.O. Box 409
Allendale, MI 49401
616-895-7199
<http://www.smileallendale.com/>

Dr. Steven Hall, D.D.S.
Dr. Aaron Clark, D.D.S
1915 Georgetown Center Dr., Suite 101
Jenison, MI 49428
616-457-6800
<http://www.jenisonsmiles.com>

Ivanrest Family Dentistry
Dr. Thomas M. Tysse, D.D.S.
Dr. Robert L. Eggleston, D.D.S.
3100 Ivanrest SW
Suite 105
Grandville, MI 49418
616-538-3060

Smiley Family Dentistry
3299 Clear Vista Ct. NE, Suite A
Grand Rapids, MI 49525
616-361-0654
www.smileydds.com

Grand Valley Dentistry
Dr. Kevin Krass D.D.S
4868 Lake Michigan Dr Suite A
Allendale, MI 49401
616-895-7415
<http://allendaledentist.com/>

Frey Family Dentistry
Dr. John T. Frey, D.D.S.
6220 Jupiter Ave.
Belmont, MI 49306
616-222-0202
www.freydental.com

Georgetown Dental Professionals
Dr. Cristin Zuiderveen, D.D.S.
1864 Georgetown Center Dr.
Jenison, MI 49428
616-457-9191
<http://www.gdpsmiles.com/index.php>



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Dentist Shadowing Opportunities

Trusted Dentist
Dr. Yvette Weir
2755 Fuller Ave. NE, Ste. 3
Grand Rapids
616-363-1136
<http://www.bowtiedental.com/>

Dr. David Cramer, D.D.S.
4320 44th St. SW
Grandville, MI 49418
616-534-0550
<http://www.drdavcramer.com/>
*Interested students should contact Dr. Cramer at dave@dr.davcramer.com

Oral Surgeons

Palm & Panek D.D.S.
4349 Sawkaw Drive NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525
800-762-0365
<http://www.palm-panek.com/>

OMSA of West Michigan
2140 Lake Michigan Dr. NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
616-791-9600
*Interested students can contact Melissa Donavon at 616-735-2827
<http://www.omsaofwm.com/>

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Associates of Western Michigan
Dr. Jeffrey Brooks, D.D.S., MD
2140 Lake Michigan Dr. NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
616-791-9600
<http://www.omsaofwm.com/index.html>

Pedodontics

Dr. Robert Payne, D.D.S.
1179 East Paris Ave SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
616-942-9840
<http://pediatrictoothdoc.com/>

Grandville Pediatric Dentistry
Dr. Michael Demeter, D.D.S.
Dr. Sally Kotani, D.D.S.
3131 44th St. SW
Grandville, MI 49418
616-531-3430
<http://www.grandvillepediatricdentistry.com>

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Orthodontists

Kessel & Bouwens Orthodontics
Dr. James A. Kessel, D.D.S.
11160 WJ Presley Parkway #400
Allendale, MI 49401
616-892-7878
<http://www.kbortho.com/>

Dr. Mark L.M. Powell, D.D.S., M.S.D.
2076 Baldwin Dr.
Jenison, MI 49428
616-457-5866
<http://www.powellortho.com/>