

# **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](http://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 to 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**



## *Medical Volunteering/Shadowing Guide*

### **Battle Creek Area**

Bronson Battle Creek

<http://www.bronsonhealth.com/volunteer/volunteer-at-bbc>

(269) 245-8470

\* Must be a current volunteer to shadow.

Oaklawn Hospital

[www.oaklawnhospital.org](http://www.oaklawnhospital.org)

<http://www.oaklawnhospital.org/donate-your-time>

(269) 789-3922

Southwest Rehabilitation Hospital

Website: <http://www.sw-rehab.org>

<http://www.sw-rehab.org/get-involved/volunteer-opportunities/>

(269) 965-3206

### **Detroit Area**

St. John Providence

<http://www.stjohnprovidence.org/Volunteer/>

(248)-849-8806

To Volunteer, Contact: Cindy Boeneman

(313)343-3680

### **Eaton Rapids**

Eaton Rapids Medical Center

[www.eatonrapidsmedicalcenter.org](http://www.eatonrapidsmedicalcenter.org)

(517) 663-9520

### **Grand Haven**

North Ottawa Community Hospital

<http://www.noch.org>

Volunteering: (616) 847-5215

or (616) 847-5612

### **Grand Rapids**

Cherry Street Health Services

(11 locations in Grand Rapids)

(616) 776-2120

<http://www.cherryhealth.org>

Health Intervention Services

(616) 475-8446 ext. 116

[www.hisgr.org](http://www.hisgr.org)

<http://www.hisgr.org/volunteer>

E-mail: Lynne @ [lkuhl@hisgr.org](mailto:lkuhl@hisgr.org)

MetroHealth

[www.metrohealth.net/careers/volunteers](http://www.metrohealth.net/careers/volunteers)

(616) 252-7009

Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital

(616) 242-0300

<http://www.maryfreebed.com>

<http://www.maryfreebed.com/Jobs/Volunteering/Contact-Volunteer-Services>

(616) 493-9752

[volunteer@maryfreebed.com](mailto:volunteer@maryfreebed.com)

Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services

\*Students interested in Psychiatry ONLY

<http://www.pinerest.org>

(616) 281-6308

Saint Mary's Health Services

<http://www.mercyhealthgrandrapids.com/welcometosaintmarys>

<http://www.mercyhealthcareers.com/why-mercy-health/volunteer-services/>

Contact Rachel Selgo at (616) 685-1898

Or at [selgor@trinity-health.org](mailto:selgor@trinity-health.org)

Dr. Todd Chassee, MD, Emergency medicine

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/J5SVM7J>

(616) 391-1680

[tchassee@gmail.com](mailto:tchassee@gmail.com)

Dr. Timothy Thoits, MD, Neurology

Spectrum Health Medical Group

[Timothy.Thoits@spectrumhealth.org](mailto:Timothy.Thoits@spectrumhealth.org)

Jayne Heim, FNP, Dermatology

<http://psoriasisieczemacenter.com/>

616-459-1361

Dr. Stephen Cohle, MD, Medical Examiner

Blodgett Hospital

616 774-7499

Dr. Duane Berkompas, MD, Cardiology

Spectrum Health

616-885-5000

[duane.berkompas@spectrumhealth.org](mailto:duane.berkompas@spectrumhealth.org)

### **Spectrum Health Facilities**

**\*Students interested in volunteering at any of the Spectrum Health locations should apply at:**

<http://www.spectrumhealth.org/Volunteer>

**\*\*Students interested in job shadowing at any of the Spectrum Health locations should apply at:**

<http://www.spectrumhealth.org/jobshadowing>

## *Medical Volunteering/Shadowing Guide*

Gilda's Club of Grand Rapids  
Linden Becker ([lbecker@gildasclubgr.org](mailto:lbecker@gildasclubgr.org))  
616.453.300

Helen DeVos Children's Hospital  
<http://www.helendevoschildrens.org>  
(616) 391-9000

Spectrum Health- Blodgett Campus  
<http://www.spectrumhealth.org/jobshadowing>  
(616) 391-1804 or (616) 774-7649

Spectrum Health- Butterworth Campus  
<http://www.spectrumhealth.org/jobshadowing>  
(616) 391-1804

Zeeland Community Hospital  
[www.zch.org](http://www.zch.org)  
(616) 772-5736

### **Grandville**

Dr. Ryan Madder, MD, Interventional cardiology  
Spectrum Health  
616-608-8300  
[ryan.madder@spectrumhealth.org](mailto:ryan.madder@spectrumhealth.org)

### **Hastings**

Pennock Hospital  
Website: <http://www.pennockhealth.com>  
<http://www.pennockhealth.com/volunteer.html>  
Phone Number: 269-945-1760  
For questions, contact Jan Hawthorne at (269) 945-1212

### **Holland**

Holland Community Hospital  
Website: <http://www.hollandhospital.org>  
<http://www.hollandhospital.org/AboutUs/Volunteers.aspx>  
Phone Number: 616-394-3140  
[volunteers@hollandhospital.org/jobs](mailto:volunteers@hollandhospital.org/jobs)  
Interested students must apply for volunteer opportunities through their job board online.

### **Howell**

McPherson Hospital  
<http://www.mcphersonmemorial.org/volunteers.cfm#volunteer>  
Contact Lori Koehn at (620) 241-2251  
[lorik@mcphersonhospital.org](mailto:lorik@mcphersonhospital.org)

### **Ionia**

Sparrow Ionia Hospital  
<http://www.sparrow.org/?id=702&sid=1>  
(616) 527-4200

Contact Mary Thacker at (616) 523-1425  
or [mary.thacker@sparrow.org](mailto:mary.thacker@sparrow.org).

### **Kalamazoo**

Bronson Methodist Hospital  
<http://www.bronsonhealth.com>  
<http://www.bronsonhealth.com/volunteer>  
(269) 341-7654

Borgess Medical Center

<http://www.borgess.com>  
<http://www.borgess.com/default.aspx?pId=108#.UkMkRNKshcY>  
Call Volunteer Services at (269) 226-4882  
Job Shadow: contact Sharron White at (269)226-7363

### **Lansing**

Ingham Regional Medical Center  
<http://www.irmc.org>  
<http://www.mclaren.org/Lansing/Volunteersgl.aspx>  
Contact Volunteer Services at  
(517) 975-6924

### **Midland**

Mid-Michigan Medical Center- Midland Campus  
<http://www.midmichigan.org>  
<http://www.midmichigan.org/about/VolunteerOpportunities/>  
Contact Volunteer Services at  
(989) 839-3340

### **Muskegon**

Mercy General Health Partners  
[www.mercyhealthmuskegon.com/careers-volunteer-muskegon](http://www.mercyhealthmuskegon.com/careers-volunteer-muskegon)  
For volunteering questions, contact Kathy Daly at 231-728-4711  
For job shadowing questions, contact Kaslena Hussey at 231-728-4089 or [husseyk@mercyhealth.com](mailto:husseyk@mercyhealth.com)

### **Wyoming**

Dr. Randall Duthler, MD, Family Medicine  
[www.metrohealth.net](http://www.metrohealth.net)  
(616) 252-8440  
[jennifer.devries@metrogr.org](mailto:jennifer.devries@metrogr.org)

Dr. Terri Bott-Kothari, MD, Radiation Oncologist  
616-252-8180