

Questions & Answers about the Health Sciences Major

Why haven't I heard much about a Health Sciences degree?

The BS in Health Sciences is a new degree so that's why you haven't heard much about it yet. The University of South Dakota developed the Health Sciences major with input from a variety of professionals directly involved with all aspects of health care.

USD implemented this new major the Fall of 2009 and it has grown from 70 students in the very first class to well over 350 students enrolled in Health Sciences coursework in the spring of 2011, including coursework delivered on-campus in Vermillion, face-to-face classes at University Centers in Sioux Falls and in Rapid City, and distance coursework delivered online.

*There has been consistent growth this past year with 59 declared Health Sciences majors in May 2010, 123 majors October 2010, and 159 declared majors in December 2010. As of April 15, 2011, there are **179 declared USD Health Sciences Majors - an increase of almost 300% in one year!** We are growing quickly.*

I don't want a clinical occupation. What type of jobs can a person look for with a BS in Health Sciences?

The great thing about this degree is that it is flexible and will lend itself to many different areas and types of jobs. Often a student is limited in what type of job they can apply for because their course of study was so specific. A Health Sciences degree opens up possibilities limited only by your own ability to show a potential employer how you can benefit their workplace.

The degree provides the flexibility to choose a minor in those areas of study of greatest interest to you. For example, if you wish to pursue a job in a business office within a health care agency, it would be beneficial to minor in Health Services Administration and perhaps also the Business Administration Minor for Non-Business Majors or Civic Leadership Studies. Other minors that could be of interest and of benefit are Alcohol and Drug Studies, Statistics, Spanish or you may wish to earn a certificate in Health Care Coding. We will work with you to help you decide which courses best prepare you for your area of interest in a health care setting.

Where would I find a job with a BS in Health Sciences?

You could work in hospitals, health clinics, surgery centers, insurance companies, dental offices, pharmaceutical sales, and medical equipment business/sales to name a few places. Basically, any non-clinical administrative support position in the healthcare industry could potentially be a place for you to work.

What type of positions would be available at a hospital?

Administrative support positions in a hospital might be found in the accounting/finance office/medical billing, a medical staff coordinator, health information management area, home health coordinator, human resources, information technology, tumor registrar, business management, athletic training, wellness center, cardiac rehab, marketing/public relations, social services, quality control, volunteer coordinator, and foundation office. It takes a lot more folks to keep a large facility running than just clinical professionals.

I'm still not sure. Why should I choose this degree?

This is the perfect time to begin this type of study; get in on the ground level. Health care jobs are projected to be in demand for the next 50 years because of the aging baby boomer population.

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010) says ten of the twenty fastest growing occupations are related to health care and that wage and salary employment in the health care industry is projected to increase 22% through 2018. In South Dakota, only the health care industry has continued to add new jobs during the last 2 years. No wonder college students are deciding to enter this career.*

It will take a variety of individuals to assure people get access to the health care services that they need. Health Sciences graduates with this degree will be in demand for hire because graduates will have the educational background and the ability to contribute the moment they start their position.

Jenny Rice, an Anatomy and Physiology teacher from Gayville-Volin High School, commented about the USD Health Sciences major after a recent trip to campus in April 2011. She states,

“My work experience outside of teaching has always been in a clinic setting. Letting the students learn about other aspects of healthcare besides the science seems like a long overdue, but fantastic idea. I do believe it will give the future leaders in healthcare a glimpse into and a greater appreciation of the vast support network that makes a healthcare system succeed.”

**Career Guide to Industries 2010-2011 Edition <http://www.bls.gov/oco/cq/cqs035.htm>*