

# HEALTH PROFESSIONS COMPARISON CHART<sup>i</sup>

Profession	Entrance Requirements	Training	Job Outlook	Earnings
<b>Physician &amp; Surgeon</b>	Premedical students must complete undergraduate work in physics, biology, mathematics, English, and inorganic and organic chemistry. Students also take courses in the humanities and the social sciences. Some students also volunteer at local hospitals or clinics to gain practical experience in the health professions. Most schools require the Medical college Admissions Test (MCAT)	It takes many years of education and training to become a physician: 4 years of undergraduate school, 4 years of medical school, and 3 to 8 years of internship and residency, depending on the specialty selected. A few medical schools offer a combined undergraduate and medical school program that lasts 6 years instead of the customary 8 years.	Employment of physicians and surgeons will <b>grow about as fast as the average</b> for all occupations through the year 2010 due to continued expansion of the health care industries.	According to the latest data available from the American Medical Association, median income, after expenses, for allopathic physicians was about \$160,000 in 1998. The middle 50 percent earned between \$ 120,000 and \$240,000 a year.
<b>Podiatrist</b>	Prerequisites for admission to a college of podiatric medicine include the completion of at least 90 semester hours of undergraduate study, an acceptable grade point average, and suitable scores on the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT). All require 8-12 semester hours each of biology, inorganic chemistry, organic chemistry, and physics, and 6 hours of English. The science courses should be those designed for premedical students.	Colleges of podiatric medicine offer a 4-year program whose core curriculum is similar to that in other schools of medicine. During the first 2 years, students receive classroom instruction in basic sciences, including anatomy, chemistry, pathology, and pharmacology. Third- and fourth-year students have clinical rotations in private practices, hospitals, and clinics. Most graduates complete a hospital residency program after receiving a DPM. Residency programs last from to 3 years.	Employment of podiatrists is expected to <b>grow about as fast as the average</b> for all occupations through 2010. More people will turn to podiatrists for foot care as the elderly population grows. The elderly have more years of wear and tear on their feet and legs than most younger people, so they are more prone to foot ailments. Injuries sustained by an increasing number of men and women of all ages leading active lifestyles will also spur demand for podiatric care.	Median annual earnings of salaried podiatrists were \$107,560 in 2000. The middle 50 percent earned between \$77,440 and \$134,900 a year. According to a survey by <i>Podiatry Management</i> magazine, median net income of podiatrists in solo practice, including the self-employed, was \$89,681 in 2000. Those in group practices or partnerships earned median net income of \$96,200 in 2000. Self-employed podiatrists must provide for their own health insurance and retirement.
<b>Dentist</b>	Dental schools require a minimum of 2 years of college-level pre-dental education. However, most dental students have at least a bachelor's degree. Pre-dental education emphasizes coursework in the sciences. All dental schools require applicants to take the Dental Admissions Test (DAT). When selecting students, schools consider scores earned on the DAT, applicants' grade point average, and information gathered through recommendations and interviews.	Dental school usually lasts 4 academic years. Studies begin with classroom instruction and laboratory work in basic sciences, including anatomy, microbiology, biochemistry, and physiology. Beginning courses in clinical sciences, including laboratory techniques, also are provided at this time. During the last 2 years, students treat patients, usually in dental clinics, under the supervision of licensed dentists.	Employment of dentists is expected to <b>grow more slowly than the average</b> for all occupations through 2010. Although employment growth will provide some job opportunities, most jobs will result from the need to replace the large number of dentists projected to retire. Job prospects should be good if the number of dental school graduates does not grow significantly, thus keeping the supply of newly qualified dentists near current levels.	Median annual earnings of salaried dentists were \$129,030 in 2000. Earnings vary according to number of years in practice, location, hours worked, and specialty.  Self-employed dentists in private practice tend to earn more than do salaried dentists. A relatively large proportion of dentists is self-employed. Like other business owners, these dentists must provide their own health insurance, life insurance, and retirement benefits.
<b>Optometrist</b>	Requirements for admission to schools of optometry include courses in English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology. A few schools require or recommend courses in psychology, history, sociology, speech, or business. Applicants must take the Optometry Admissions Test, which measures academic ability and scientific comprehension. Most applicants take the test after their sophomore or junior year. Competition for admission is keen.	The Doctor of Optometry degree requires completion of a 4-year program at an accredited optometry school preceded by at least 3 years of preoptometric study at an accredited college or university (most optometry students hold a bachelor's or higher degree). In 2000, 17 U.S. schools and colleges of optometry held an accredited status with the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education of the American Optometric Association.	Employment of optometrists is expected to <b>grow about as fast as the average</b> for all occupations through 2010 in response to the vision care needs of a growing and aging population. As baby boomers age, they will be more likely to visit optometrists and ophthalmologists because of the onset of vision problems in middle age, including those resulting from the extensive use of computers.	Median annual earnings of salaried optometrists were \$82,860 in 2000. The middle 50 percent earned between \$60,310 and \$111,520. Median annual earnings of salaried optometrists in 2000 were \$89,460 in offices and clinics of medical doctors and \$85,470 in offices of other health practitioners.

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<b>Physician Assistant</b>	Admission requirements vary, but many programs require 2 years of college and some work experience in the healthcare field. Students should take courses in biology, English, chemistry, math, psychology, and social sciences. More than two-thirds of all applicants hold a bachelor's or master's degree. Many applicants are former emergency medical technicians, other allied health professionals, or nurses.	PA programs usually last at least 2 years. Most programs are in schools of allied health, academic health centers, medical schools, or 4-year colleges; a few are in community colleges, the military, or hospitals. Many accredited PA programs have clinical teaching affiliations with medical schools.	Employment opportunities are expected to be good for physician assistants, particularly in areas or settings that have difficulty attracting physicians, such as rural and inner city clinics. Employment of PAs is expected to <b>grow much faster than the average</b> for all occupations through the year 2010 due to anticipated expansion of the health services industry and an emphasis on cost containment.	Median annual earnings of physician assistants were \$61,910 in 2000. The middle 50 percent earned between \$47,970 and \$73,890. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$32,690, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$88,100. Median annual earnings of physician assistants in 2000 were \$64,430 in offices and clinics of medical doctors and \$61,460 in hospitals.
<b>Physical Therapist</b>	Courses useful when applying to physical therapist educational programs include anatomy, biology, chemistry, social science, mathematics, and physics. Before granting admission, many professional education programs require experience as a volunteer in a physical therapy department of a hospital or clinic.	According to the American Physical Therapy Association, there were 199 accredited physical therapist programs in 2001. Of the accredited programs, 165 offered master's degrees, and 33 offered doctoral degrees. By 2002, all physical therapist programs seeking accreditation are required to offer degrees at the master's degree level and above, in accordance with the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education.	Employment of physical therapists is expected to <b>grow faster than the average</b> for all occupations through 2010. Federal legislation imposing limits on reimbursement for therapy services may adversely affect the job market for physical therapists in the near term. However, over the long run, the demand for physical therapists should continue to rise as a result of growth in the number of individuals with disabilities or limited function requiring therapy services.	Median annual earnings of physical therapists were \$54,810 in 2000. The middle 50 percent earned between \$46,660 and \$67,390. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$38,510, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$83,370.
<b>Pharmacist</b>	Colleges of pharmacy require at least 2 years of college-level prepharmacy education. Entry requirements usually include mathematics and natural sciences, such as chemistry, biology, and physics, as well as courses in the humanities and social sciences. Some colleges require the applicant to take the Pharmacy College Admissions Test.	In 2000, 82 colleges of pharmacy were accredited to confer degrees by the American Council on Pharmaceutical Education. Pharmacy programs grant the degree of Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.), which requires at least 6 years of postsecondary study and the passing of the licensure examination of State board of pharmacy. The Pharm.D. is a 4-year program that requires at least 2 years of college study prior to admittance. This degree has replaced the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree, which will cease to be awarded after 2005.	Employment of pharmacists is expected to <b>grow faster than the average</b> for all occupations through the year 2010, due to the increased pharmaceutical needs of a larger and older population and greater use of medication. The growing numbers of middle-aged and elderly people-who, on average, use more prescription drugs than do younger people-will continue to spur demand for pharmacists in all practice settings.	Median annual earnings of pharmacists in 2000 were \$70,950. The middle 50 percent earned between \$61,860 and \$81,690 a year. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$51,570, and the highest 10 percent, more than \$89,010 a year. According to a survey by <i>Drug Topics</i> magazine, published by Medical Economics Co., average starting base salaries of full-time, salaried pharmacists were \$67,824 in 2000. Pharmacists working in chain drug stores had an average annual base salary of \$71,486 while pharmacists working in independent drug stores averaged \$62,040 and hospital pharmacists averaged \$61,250.
<b>Chiropractor</b>	In 2000, there were 16 chiropractic programs and institutions in the United States accredited by the Council on Chiropractic Education. All required applicants to have at least 60 semester hours of undergraduate study leading toward a bachelor's degree, including courses in English, the social sciences or humanities, organic and inorganic chemistry, biology, physics, and psychology..	During the first 2 years, most chiropractic programs emphasize classroom and laboratory work in basic science subjects such as anatomy, physiology, public health, microbiology, pathology, and biochemistry. The last 2 years stress courses in manipulation and spinal adjustments, and provide clinical experience in physical and laboratory diagnosis, neurology, orthopedics, geriatrics, physiotherapy, and nutrition.	Job prospects are expected to be good for persons who enter the practice of chiropractic. Employment of chiropractors is expected to <b>grow faster than the average</b> for all occupations through the year 2010 as consumer demand for alternative healthcare grows.	Median annual earnings of salaried chiropractors were \$67,030 in 2000. The middle 50 percent earned between \$44,030 and \$105,520 a year. Self-employed chiropractors usually earn more than salaried chiropractors. According to the American Chiropractic Association, in 2000, the average income for all chiropractors, including the self-employed, was about \$81,500 after expenses.

<sup>i</sup> Source: Occupational Outlook Handbook, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics; (<http://stats.bls.gov/oco/home.htm>)