

THE RURAL HEALTH CAREER PLANNING GUIDE FOR JR.HIGH STUDENTS



OFFICE OF PRIMARY CARE & RURAL HEALTH
ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
334.206.5436 | WWW.ADPH.ORG/RURALHEALTH

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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?

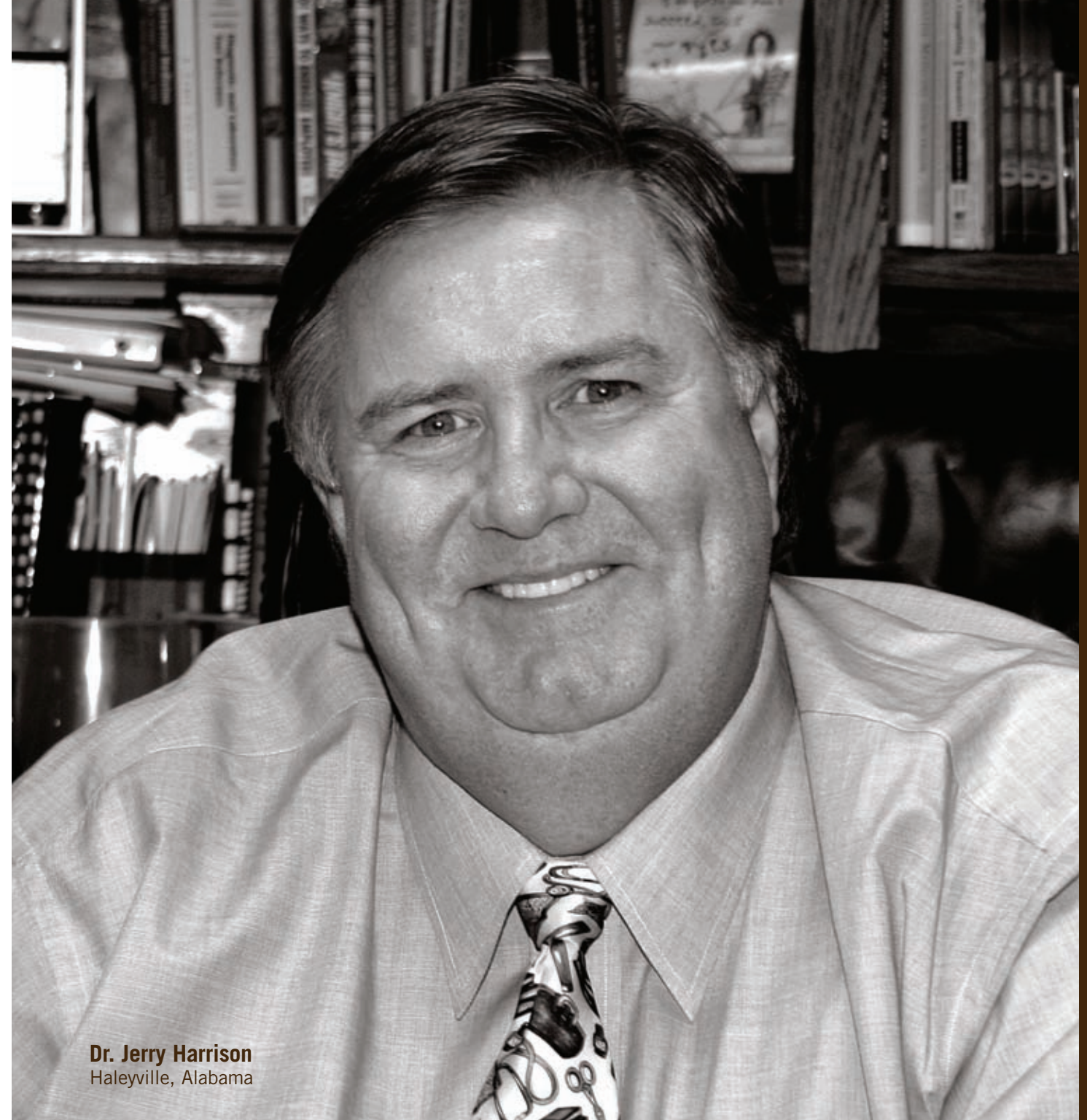
Dr. Harrison looks out his window at the rolling pastures behind his house as he sips his coffee thinking about the day ahead. Mrs. Winston is coming in with her teenage daughter, Caroline. Mrs. Winston was one of Dr. Harrison's first patients when he arrived in Haleyville, a scenic community in northwest Alabama. In fact, he delivered Caroline and many of the other kids in the community. Because he is a family doctor in a rural community, Dr. Harrison's patients are more like family and friends.

By the time he reaches his office, the waiting room is full. The patients don't seem to mind the wait. They enjoy catching up with neighbors and friends. What is really special about Dr. Harrison's work is that in a rural practice, patients see their physician not only as their doctor, but also as their friend and a valued member of the community.

During the course of the day Dr. Harrison sees people from all age groups and deals with a wide variety of problems, ranging from high blood pressure, diabetes, and skin conditions to a new pregnancy, an eye problem, unexplained headaches, and abdominal pain.

A career in rural health 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.

This resource is a guide to help you determine if a career in rural healthcare is right for you. Check out the recommended websites and take advantage of the job-shadowing opportunities. Planning for a healthcare career should start early. The Office of Primary Care and Rural Health, Dr. Harrison, and many other healthcare providers in Alabama are here to help you in choosing a career in rural health.



Dr. Jerry Harrison
Haleyville, Alabama

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.



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 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
- www.fastweb.com
- www.alabamamentor.org
- ecampustours.com

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.

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.

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.

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 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. 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).

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

Michael Jordan

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 www.fafsa.ed.gov
FSEOG Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant	To provide nonrepayable funds to students for educational expenses	Undergraduate	No	Complete the FAFSA www.fafsa.ed.gov
Federal Stafford Loans	To provide low interest repayable funds to students for educational expenses	Undergraduate/ Graduate	No	Complete the FAFSA www.fafsa.ed.gov
Federal Perkins Loans	To provide low interest repayable funds to students for educational expenses	Undergraduate/ Graduate	No	Complete the FAFSA www.fafsa.ed.gov
Federal Plus Loans	To provide repayable funds to parents of dependent undergraduate students	Undergraduate	No	Complete the FAFSA www.fafsa.ed.gov
Federal College Work-Study Program	To provide jobs for students who must earn part of their educational expenses	Undergraduate/ Graduate	No	Complete the FAFSA www.fafsa.ed.gov
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 www.va.state.al.us/scholarship.htm

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PROGRAM	OBJECTIVE	UNDERGRADUATE/ GRADUATE	ALABAMA RESIDENCY REQUIRED	APPLICATION PROCEDURES
Alabama Prepaid Affordable College Tuition (PACT) Program	A prepaid contract for future tuition	Undergraduate	Yes	Contact: State Treasurer's Office Room S-106 State Capitol Building Montgomery, AL 36130 (334) 242.7514 (800) ALA.PACT
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	Applications from: Alabama Dept. of Rehabilitation Services 2129 East South Blvd Montgomery, AL 36116-2455 Toll free (800) 441.7607 www.rehab.state.al.us
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 are available from: American Legion Dept Headquarters, American Legion Auxiliary 120 North Jackson Street Montgomery, AL 36104

PROGRAM	OBJECTIVE	UNDERGRADUATE/ GRADUATE	ALABAMA RESIDENCY REQUIRED	APPLICATION PROCEDURES
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 are available from: Department Adjutant The American Legion P.O. Box 1069 Montgomery, AL 36192
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
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	Contact the National Health Service Corps for an application, 1-800-221-9393
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	Contact the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program Branch for an application, 1-800-638-0824
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

EXPERIENCE REAL LIFE TEACHING THROUGH JOB SHADOWING

One of the best ways for middle and high school students to learn about the rural health care workforce is by job shadowing.

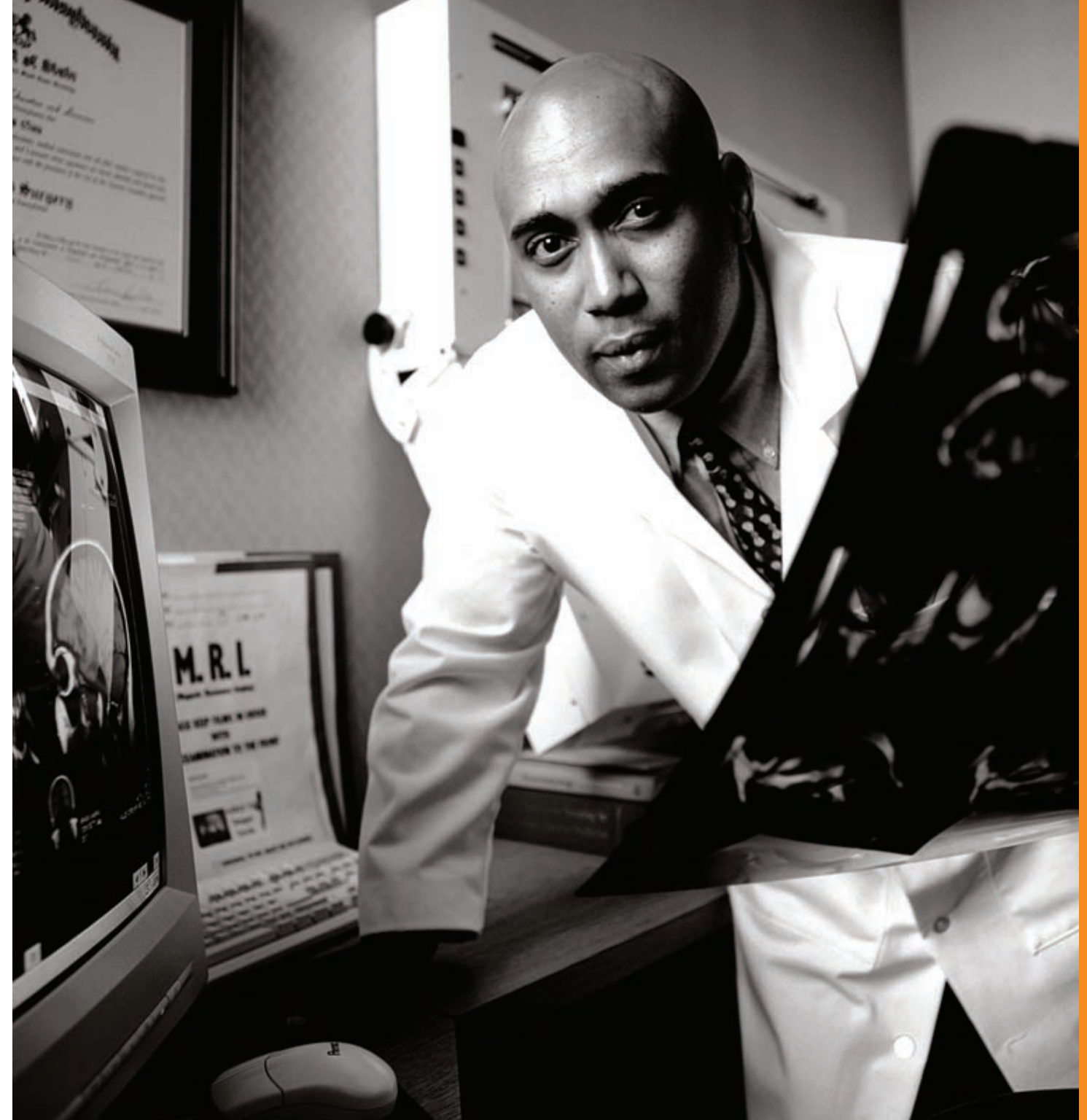
By “**shadowing**” someone on their job for a day, you get a first-hand appreciation of what that person’s day-to-day responsibilities include. Think of job shadowing as a mini-apprenticeship.

- Job Shadowing allows you to explore careers you are interested in and to ask questions.
- You can observe and gain insight into the day-to-day challenges and rewards of the job.
- You can find out if the job is something you would really like to do.

WANT TO SHADOW A RURAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL?

Go to the Alabama Department of Public Health Rural Health website: www.adph.org/recruit and fill out the contact form for job shadowing.

A member of our staff will assist you in finding a job-shadowing healthcare opportunity in your community.



HEALTH CAREER WEBSITE RESOURCES

www.adph.org/recruit provides an on-line version of this guide. If you would like to job shadow a health professional in your community, please complete the contact form and we will assist you in finding an opportunity.

www.alabamahealthcareers.com is a comprehensive site providing information on health professions and scholarships offered through Alabama hospitals.

www.cchs.ua.edu/rural_programs/index.cfm 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/academic/science_math/cosam/students/rural_med/index.html provides information on the Rural Medicine Program at Auburn University.

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 from the University of Alabama-Birmingham (UAB) provides information on UAB's summer science camps for middle and high school students.

www.southalabama.edu/com/summerprogram.shtml from the University of South Alabama (USA) provides information on USA's summer programs, including the Biomedical Enrichment and Recruitment (BEAR) Program for pre-medical students interested in a career in medicine.

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www.ed.gov/students from the United States Department of Education provides college information.

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.explorehealthcareers.org provides a Career Explorer section that covers an extensive number of health care professions.

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.

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 **colemanb@uasom.uab.edu** for more information.

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

Anatole France



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