

HEALTH CAREER PREP CHECKLIST



MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Begin taking more challenging courses in math, science, communications and start thinking about which courses in high school will help prepare you for a health career
- Begin exploring health careers...talk to people you know who work in the health profession, check out the library or the Internet.
- Make a connection with the Area Health Education Center in your region.
- Develop strong study skills
- Get to know your schools' VSAC Outreach Counselor
- If you have the opportunity to choose among high schools or among different programs within one high school, investigate your options and determine which ones will help you further your health career interests and open doors to more options
- Start saving for college. Check out different ways to save such as buying a US Savings Bond, opening a savings account in a bank or investing in mutual funds

FRESHMAN YEAR

- Enroll in the classes that are designed to prepare you for college. Take the most rigorous courses you can handle successfully, and get help from the teacher when the "road gets rocky."
- Set up at least two appointments with your high school counselor, preferably in the early fall and spring, to schedule your classes and to talk about careers, professions, or studies that interest you
- Visit your local Department of Employment and Training (DET) office to talk with a career counselor
- Learn who the VSAC Outreach Counselor is at your school and meet with him or her to discuss career and educational goals
- Do some volunteer community services
- Continue to explore health careers
- Make the connection with the Area Health Education Center in your region
- Attend MEDQUEST!
- Keep saving for college

SOPHOMORE YEAR

- Take more classes designed to prepare you for college – English, math, science, history, foreign languages, economics.
- Continue exploring health careers – talk to people you know who work in health careers
- Volunteer at your local hospital or nursing home
- Make appointments in October and January with your high school guidance counselor and VSAC Outreach Counselor to discuss career and educational plans
- Read about college opportunities and talk to college representatives when they visit your region. Find out what they offer to someone interested in a health career.
- Keep in touch with AHEC!
- Attend MEDQUEST if you haven't already!
- Continue to save for college

JUNIOR YEAR

- Keep taking those challenging courses
- Learn about the admission requirements for the colleges and universities that interest you
- Confirm that you are taking appropriate courses to meet college entrance requirements
- Meet with your counselors (Guidance and VSAC Outreach)
- Attend College Day programs
- Attend meetings concerning financial aid or college admissions held in your region
- Register for and take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test and the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), usually given in October
- Set up a calendar for taking tests and completing college applications
- Discuss your family's financial resources and review plans for financial aid. Work with your VSAC Outreach Counselor to develop financial aid plan
- Think about people who might write you a recommendation; start with teachers, counselors, and employers
- In the spring, register for and take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), Achievement Test, or the American College Test (ACT)
- Research financial aid, scholarships, grants and fellowships to help pay for college – use the library, the Internet, local businesses and community organizations
- See your guidance counselor about available Summer Enrichment Programs. Look for summer enrichment programs within your community as well
- Ask for letters of recommendation from the coordinator/supervisor of your volunteer experience
- Consider other people to ask for recommendations – teachers, counselors, employers
- Look into attending National Leadership Forums on Medicine
- Attend Advanced MedQuest!
- Save \$\$ for college!

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SENIOR YEAR

July and August

- Write to the colleges you are considering to request application forms, catalogs, and financial aid information
- If possible, visit the college campuses you selected; talk to graduates and students at the institutions

September

- Maintain or improve academic grades. College officials look unfavorably upon failing grades and reduced or less rigorous academic loads during the senior year
- Check with your counselor and use the Career Center to determine which tests are required and the deadlines for applying to colleges
- Set up a calendar for taking tests and completing college applications. **PAY ATTENTION TO DEADLINES!**
- Make sure to fulfill application requirements. Check early-decision deadlines. See your counselor when you have questions and need help
- Talk with college representatives when they visit your school
- Begin meeting regularly with your VSAC Outreach Counselor

October and November

- Attend College Day/Night programs
- Apply to colleges with different admission requirements (least selective to more selective)
- Ask your counselor to look over your application form and discuss the next steps in applying to college
- See your counselor about completing the Financial Aid Form (FAF). Colleges require that students requesting financial aid provide the FAF, including the part that explains any unusual financial circumstances
- Check your school's newspaper or bulletin boards for testing deadlines and scholarship information
- Mail completed forms to colleges
- Check Military Academy and ROTC application and scholarship deadlines if appropriate.

December

- Send all applications and copies of high school grades to the colleges before Christmas, unless a college indicates otherwise
- Give your guidance counselor all required forms at least two weeks before they are due since November and December are very busy months for counselors
- Take the Achievement Test required by some colleges.

January

- Mail the Financial Aid Form (FAF). Some colleges accept outstanding candidates during this month
- Take the College Board Achievement Tests if required by the colleges and if you have not taken them previously

February

- Ask your counselor to send your first semester's grades to the colleges, along with any other information not already forwarded. Some colleges provide forms for this purpose and some do not

March

- Recheck college catalogs and see your counselor to make sure that you have taken all of the necessary tests. If you haven't, make sure you register to take the tests in May.

April, May and June

- Keep a record of acceptances, rejections, and financial aid awards
- Reply promptly to colleges to notify them of your decision
- Reply promptly when you are notified that you have been awarded a financial aid package.
- Tell the college whether you are accepting or refusing the award
- Meet the reply deadline or you may lose the admission acceptance or financial aid you have earned
- Before you leave school in June, see your counselor to request that a final transcript be sent to the college or university of your choice

Things to Save

- Copies of guidance office newsletters
- Cancelled checks or money order receipts
- Admission tickets to tests and correction forms
- All test score reports
- Transcripts of high school grades
- Work copy of the FAF and all other financial aid forms
- College Scholarship Services acknowledgment form
- Copies of all correspondence sent to or received from schools, including applications and acceptance

Visit www.vvac.org for more planning tips for high school freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The Vermont Student Assistance Corp. (VSAC) website also offers a great section on Career Pathfinders that includes various careers in health care. Check it out at <http://services.vvac.org/ilwvcn/connect/VVAC/Library/Pathfinders/>