“The Other Side of the Bed” – A Paid Summer Service-Learning Experience for End-of First-Year Medical Students

Program Directors: Michael E. Charness, M.D., Chief of Staff; Cecilia McVey, MSN, MHA, CNA, Associate Director for Nursing/Patient Care Services.

This program is designed to give students a paid opportunity to participate directly and intensively in the care of Veterans during the summer after their first year of medical school. Students accepted to this program are hired during the summer as health techs/nurse’s aides at the VA Boston Healthcare System. They undergo three days of intensive orientation and training to learn the skills and responsibilities of a health tech/nurse’s aide on a nursing unit. They are then assigned to nurse mentors on the nursing unit at the West Roxbury campus that best matches their preference, including medical ward, surgical ward, spinal cord injury unit, medical intensive care unit, coronary care unit, surgical intensive care unit, progressive care unit, and emergency department. During their 7 weeks of service, they will engage in direct patient care, learning basic techniques of patient assessment, determination of vital signs, patient hygiene, feeding, repositioning, and wound care, placement and monitoring of catheters, intravenous lines, and feeding tubes, suctioning and respiratory care, and care of tracheostomies. Weekly lectures span a wide array of practical topics from how to talk to dying patients to communication, physician-nurse collaboration, and patient safety. Medical student-health tech/nurse’s aides will learn basic skills in blood drawing and placement of intravenous lines, recording of EKGs, and respiratory therapy by spending time assigned to each of these services.

Most tours of duty will be during day shifts, but occasional evening, night, and weekend shifts will be required as necessary to meet the needs of the nursing unit.

Participation in all seven weeks of the term of this program is expected

Students who complete this program will increase their comfort level in direct patient care, learn valuable skills that are not taught directly in medical school, and gain an increased appreciation of the important role that nurses play as part of a multidisciplinary healthcare team.

US citizenship is required for a paid rotation. Non-citizens may compete for a non-paid rotation.

POSITION DESCRIPTION
MEDICAL/SURGICAL/SPINAL CORD INJURY

Health Technician/Nurses Aide

DIRECT PATIENT CARE
- Measures temperature, pulse, respirations, blood pressure, weights and oxygen saturation (pulse oximetry)
- Documents in the vital signs package
- Performs wound dressing changes
- Performs routine/standardized diagnostic procedures (i.e. electrocardiograms, pulse oximetry, serum glucose monitoring.
- Collects specimens (urine, feces, sputum) and performs surveillance cultures of intact skin
• Assists in turning and feeding of patients.
• Performs general respiratory treatments including chest physical therapy, incentive spirometry, etc.
• Provides tracheostomy care on an established tracheostomy.
• Assists with coughing and deep breathing.
• Inserts and maintains indwelling urinary catheters.
• Applies external (condom) urinary catheters.
• Performs catheter care.
• Gives fleet, soap solutions, tap H₂O enemas and/or glycerin suppositories.
• Performs anal digital stimulation.
• Maintains knowledge and skills through continuing education, journals, and practice.
• Follows a nursing plan for care/comprehensive treatment plan.
• Provides care such as bathing, shaving, shampooing hair, oral hygiene, turning, positioning, skin care, and performs passive exercise including range of motion.
• Remains current in American Heart Association Basic Cardiac Life Support (CPR). Performs cardiopulmonary resuscitation as required.
• Performs post mortem care.

DUTIES
• Performs patient care on assigned unit after completion of orientation and verification of competence by R.N..
• Performs a wide variety of nursing and supportive duties and is flexible in adapting to work demands and numerous assignments
• Demonstrates sensitivity to and knowledge of age-related needs of the adult and older adult veteran in the provision of nursing care.

LOCATION
West Roxbury campus of the VA Boston Healthcare System.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT
Dates: May 25 to July 10; 2016
Salary: ~$16.50-18.00 per hour, depending on position classification; 40 hours per week
US Citizenship required to be eligible for pay. A non-paid medical student rotation is also possible.

APPLICATION PROCESS
Please submit a CV and request for interview to medstudenthealthtech@va.gov before December 11, 2015.