Nursing Spotlight

Nurses are hands-on health care givers who provide highly personalized care to their patients. The employment of registered nurses was projected to grow 16% from 2014 to 2024, much faster than other occupations, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. According to Explore Health Careers.org, "nurses promote health, educate patients and communities to prevent disease, and help patients cope with illness." Trained nurses have a unique scope of practice and can work independently, although they are usually part of a medical care team and provide the care needed by each patient as an individual per the physicians' care plan. Nurses also advocate for their patients and patients' families. They develop and manage nursing care plans and instruct patients and their families in proper care to promote a timely recovery. Nursing roles vary depending on the working environment and they are part of the innovation that takes place in the medical environment.

Nationwide, there is a push to require all nurses to hold a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree (BSN). Hence, an increasing number of nursing schools are offering accelerated bachelor's and master's degree programs. You can also find more options for RN-to-Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) and MSN-to-doctoral programs, designed to increase the number of highly skilled nurses in the workforce.

Reflective of other health professions, once you are a professional nurse, you might choose to focus on a specialty. There are several options each of which has specific requirements regarding further education and certification. The highest paying position is for the nurse anesthetist at $150,000-200,000 and next is the nurse practitioner at approximately $103,000.

References: Nursing Drives Transformation, ExploreHealthCareers.org, American Association of Colleges of Nursing