

B I N T O U C H W I T H B I O M E D I C A L S C I E N C E C A R E E R S P R O J E C T

B I O M E D I C A L S C I E N C E C A R E E R S P R O J E C T

Your Career: Non-Clinical Career Opportunities in Health Care

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BY **STEPHEN M. WEINER MINTZ,**
LEVIN, COHN, FERRIS, GLOVSKY AND
POPEO, P.C.

When you think of health care, more often than not you think of care givers who work with patients directly. But many people trained in very different professions and disciplines contribute to support those who are providing direct care.

Hospitals and other health care providers require trained management, from the chief executive officer through the coordinators of clinical units. Managers do not need to be, and frequently are not, clinicians. But they need to understand the operational aspects of care delivery and assure an organizational environment in which patients are properly cared for. Health care management includes not just the direct responsibility for overseeing functional areas, but skills that range from human resources and employee relations to materials management and purchasing.

Financial management is of utmost importance to providers, especially today, with the growth of managed care. A trained internal finance staff, as well as the resources of outside accounting and consulting firms, are crucial to the survival of many providers.

Speaking of managed care, the insurance industry — including health maintenance organizations (HMOs) and preferred provider organizations (PPOs) — is critically important to care givers and patients alike. Often, insurers have a significant role to play in determining what kind of care is given in what kinds of settings and at what price. Many people employed by insurance companies do not come out of clinical backgrounds, but are skilled in utilization review, claims management, benefit administration, provider relations, customer relations, or actuarial analysis.

Health care has become a complex industry requiring many different skills. In addition to the ones identified above, people involved with the ongoing activities of health care providers have skills in law, banking, strategic planning, real estate development, and many other areas. As you think about becoming involved in "health care" as a profession, you need to be aware of the diversity of backgrounds that contribute to the field. Even if you are not interested in becoming a clinician or a "hands-on" care giver, you can still find many kinds of opportunities to pursue a career in this field.

Your Career: 15 Steps to Employment

BY **PETER BEAUMONT AND BARBARA BALLAN** HUMAN RESOURCES, BLUE CROSS/BLUE SHIELD OF MASSACHUSETTS

It's never too early to begin planning your career. As you head toward graduation from college, graduate, or professional school — even when you are in the midst of your studies — you should be thinking about what you would like to do next, and acting to promote your goals. Following are tips for job hunters that can be applied to the biomedical/science field:

1 Start your job search as early as possible, preferably at the start of your final year of school.

2 Write a resume.

3 Ask a career counselor at your school to review your resume.

4 Ask a few people working in your field of interest to review your resume. You want to make sure you get both the academic and professional perspectives.

5 Research the companies/institutions where you might be interested in working.

6 Register with the Career Resource Center at your school. (**Note:** Most schools have a recruitment period during which organizations conduct on-campus interviews.)

7 Write three or four generic cover letters, each tailored to one type of career you would be interested in exploring. When it comes time to send out a resume and cover letter, you can select one of your generic cover letters and customize it to a specific job opportunity. Include in the letter your skills that match those listed in the organization's job description.

8 Always submit your cover letter and resume on matching paper.

9 Research head hunters. There are organizations out there that can help you find a position at no cost to you. Find out which ones are worth your time, and register with them. Be sure you are clear about the type of position(s) you are looking for and your salary requirements (see number 10).

10 Research starting salaries in your field. This information will help you negotiate your salary when you begin to receive job offers.

11 Call companies that you are most interested in working for and arrange exploratory interviews. Submit a resume, cover letter, and reference list at the interview.

12 Submit a cover letter and resume to all companies at which you would like to work.

13 Review the newspaper, job boards/books at career centers in your area or school, unemployment agencies, career job placement centers, and talk to people you know about companies where they work and opportunities that may be available. Whenever something peaks your interest, submit a resume and cover letter.

14 Go to interviews. Research the organization prior to the interview. If possible, get a copy of the job description also. Once at the interview, convey interest and enthusiasm. Come prepared with questions for the interviewer. At the end of the interview, ask the interviewer for his/her business card, shake his/her hand, reiterate your interest in the position, and thank him/her for the interview.

15 Write a thank-you letter that reiterates your interest in the organization and/or the position available, as well as your relevant skills. Be sure to send the thank-you letter within one day of the interview, noting the time and date of your interview. The thank-you letter should be on resume paper.

Good Luck!

From the Mailbox: Student Letter

Dear Dr. Reede,

Your presentation on October 16, 1996, at the conference on "Environmental Health, Environmental Justice, and Public Health" was stimulating as well as informative. I would like to thank you very much for having me at that conference. The Biomedical Science Careers Project is without a doubt one of the greatest things that has ever happened to me.

I first attended the BSCP conference on February 3, 1996, and met my mentor, William Silen, M.D. Dr.

Silen has done quite a lot for me since then. For a week during my spring break last March, he sent me to Beth Israel Hospital [in Boston] to follow chief resident Edward Mun. This was an exciting experience for me. I attended conferences on surgery, made rounds in the morning with residents, attended lectures, observed more than 20 surgeries, and, best of all, saw patients before and after surgery. I enjoyed every moment I spent at the Beth Israel. Dr. Mun was extremely

helpful, explaining to me everything that I witnessed.

Dr. Silen also allowed me to attend his study group on the "Human Body." I spent a month attending his lectures. When the time was over, I felt I had a far better idea of what to expect when I attend medical school. The BSCP is a great project and I can't wait for the next conference. You have done a lot for me and for other minority students . . .

*Yours truly,
Nilton D. Medina*

Mentor Profile: Deborah Harmon Hines, Ph.D.

In the 1950s and '60s, when Deborah Harmon Hines, Ph.D., was growing up in Memphis, girls studied home economics and boys chose either science or shop. Furthermore, in those days girls were told they couldn't do certain things — like math and science. But Hines recalls, "I was smarter than most of the boys I knew. And I *liked* science." So when it came time to select high school courses, Hines always managed to "sneak and sign up for a science course."

The next hurdle came when it was time to apply for college. "I was black. I was a girl. And my parents weren't educated," Hines explains. "I faced all the problems that come from racism, sexism, and classism." But she never gave up. Today Hines, who is one of only 20 black people in the U.S. to hold a Ph.D. in Human Anatomy, is Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Services at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center (UMass) in Worcester.

Hines is also a repeat guest at the Biomedical Science Careers Conference, where every year she serves as a mentor to a different student, and has kept in touch with all of them, through letters, phone calls, e-mail and visits. On being a mentor, Hines says, "I personally get a big charge out of doing it, especially as I see people progress and move through the system."

One area of Hines' responsibility is outreach programs on behalf of the Medical Center for students from kindergarten through graduate and professional schools, and for outreach programs geared toward minority students. At the elementary and secondary school levels, her department sends medical, nursing, and graduate school faculty members to schools throughout central Massachusetts to talk to children about what they do and how they became interested in science. They also hold summer enrichment programs for high school students in July.

During the summer, the department runs a program that allows 10 - 12 college students to spend the month of June on campus, "enhancing their skills. We take students who show promise but who might have a little trouble getting into medical or graduate school, and we groom them for a more rigorous process — the application to professional school," Hines explains. The school also hosts a highly selective NIH-sponsored summer research program for undergraduate minority students, many of whom go on to publish papers based on their research.

Throughout the year, Hines and her staff meet with minority students at colleges and universities around the country and arrange for groups of them to come to UMass. "We show them around, and faculty members talk to them about what motivated them to get into medicine or science, and what barriers they had to overcome."

A key piece of advice Hines always gives students who are interested in biomedical sciences is: "One cannot be timid. There are so many programs out there at colleges, universities, and medical schools. You just have to find out where they are, march up to the door and say, 'I'm interested in science.'"

For information on programs at UMass Medical Center, you can contact Dr. Hines at (508) 856-2444.



Deborah Harmon Hines talks to a student at a BSCP conference

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First-Person Account: Working through the BSCP

BY YANI S. BRINSON

My ambition in life is to become a medical doctor. When I graduated from Spelman College in Atlanta last May, I decided that in order to best serve my goal, I should expand my laboratory knowledge and experi-



Yani S. Brinson

ence before going on to medical school.

As a Jackie Robinson Scholar, I was fortunate to meet and discuss my career concerns with Dr. Joan Reede, a Scholarship Committee member and president of the Biomedical Science Careers

Project (BSCP). She described the mission and goals of the BSCP and emphasized its benefits. In brief, the program is structured to enhance the capabilities of minority students interested in pursuing careers in medicine and biotechnology.

Thanks in large part to the BSCP, I have been employed by the Dana Farber Cancer Institute (DFCI) for the past three months, under the direction of Dr. James Ferrara, a renowned pediatric oncologist. My responsibilities include technical assistance in experiments pertaining to Graft versus Host Disease; cell cultures, fluorescent-activated cell sorter (FACS) analysis; and extraction of murine bone marrow for transplantation. In this environment, I am able to interact with and acquire tremendous amounts of information from medical professionals, i.e., post-doctoral fellows and research technicians. They are exceptionally informative and accommodating to my overall learning process.

BSCP Conferences

The Business of Health Care Career Conference

Sponsored by the Biomedical Science Careers Project

For students, particularly minority students, interested in exploring non-clinical career opportunities in health care and biotechnology

- Law
- Information Management
- Consulting/Strategic Planning
- Financial Management
- Operation Management

DATE: Saturday, February 22, 1997, 8:30AM - 3:30PM

LOCATION: Conference Center, Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Massachusetts
100 Summer Street, Boston

REGISTRATION: Contact Lise D. Kaye, Executive Director, BSCP
(617) 432-0552 (phone), (617) 432-3834 (fax)

There is no fee for registration.

Summer Opportunities

NIH RESEARCH INTERNSHIPS FOR FACULTY AND STUDENTS

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) offers summer research internships for under-represented minority students. The program provides supplements to existing NIH research institutions throughout the country.

To get a list of NIH-supported investigators at specific institutions, or for more information, contact: Dr. Anthony A. Rene, Room 2AN-18F, 45 Center Drive MSC 6200, Bethesda, MD 20892-6200. Or call (301) 594-5855.

PROJECT SUCCESS

Project Success is a summer program that matches under-represented minority high school students from Boston and Cambridge with basic science or clinical investigators in settings — such as basic science laboratories, teaching hospitals, community and biotechnology sites — within the Harvard Medical School and medical community. Students selected for the program receive stipends for 8 weeks of research. This summer, the program will run from July through August.

Applicants must have completed their sophomore, junior, or senior year of high school by June, 1997; demonstrate an interest and ability in science; have an interest in attending college and pursuing a biomedical science career; and have maintained a Grade Point Average of at least B-.

For more information, or to apply, contact the Minority Faculty Development Program Office at Harvard Medical School, at (617) 432-1601. The deadline for applications is March 7, 1997.

My position at DFCI is a two-year post. This summer, I will take the MCATs and apply to medical schools for entrance in the fall of 1998. Whatever reservations I may have had about delaying medical school to par-

ticipate in this program have totally dissipated. Being a member of the Biomedical Science Careers Project, and working as a lab assistant, are crucial to my goal — and I am enjoying my work immeasurably.