HEALTH INFORMATICS // WHY SHOULD I CARE?

WHAT IS HEALTH INFORMATICS?

THIS RAPIDLY GROWING FIELD MEANS NEW JOBS FOR PEOPLE LIKE YOU!

BY STEPHANIE PETIT

The health care industry is always looking for ways to improve the quality of health care while also reducing the high costs. Health informatics can be defined as the application of computers and information technology to solve problems in the field of health care. This includes how health data is collected, stored and communicated, as well as how technology can be used to help make health decisions. It combines computer technologies, information science, clinical practice and business management to create better health care.

Initiatives like Electronic Health Records help ensure a patient’s health history is recorded, saved and accessible, and professionals are needed to create and maintain these systems. CareerBuilder.com ranks health informatics as the No. 1 job opportunity in an emerging industry. According to the American Medical Informatics Association, there are now more than 70 advanced degree programs in the field of health informatics. Most programs combine technical instruction, medical classes and hands-on experience so students are fully emerged in the field. Students learn to identify what information and data are needed by doctors, patients and other health care professionals, and how they are used in order to make effective health care decisions.

Graduates from a degree program in health informatics can work in a variety of environments such hospitals, medical research laboratories, health insurance companies or consulting organizations. Salaries for graduates are typically between $40,000 and $45,000, with some positions offering up to $75,000.

See? You don’t have to be an emergency room doctor to save lives!
3. HEALTHCARE IS LARGELY PUBLIC SPENDING
Health informatics streamlines and makes more efficient the entire healthcare process, so work in this important field has a great effect on many people outside of what you may even consider.

4. HEALTH INFORMATICS (AND ITS DIFFERENT SPECIALTIES) HAS MANY ACCESSIBLE DEGREE OPTIONS
The best way to start your career toward health informatics? Major in it. A simple Google search reveals pages of different online schooling options to pursue both bachelor's and master's degrees. Beyond such programs, some of the nation's top schools have added highly specialized departments for the field—the University of Michigan and the University of Illinois-Chicago are among schools that have recently added these departments.

5. YOU CAN USE CLINICAL KNOWLEDGE
Many interested in healthcare fields start with a desire to actually treat patients. Well, clinical informaticists combine the science of information with a knowledge or understanding of clinicians to better patient care and healthcare communication. AKA, you are able to be involved in patient care without attending medical or nursing school.

6. IT'S A QUICKLY EMERGING FIELD
Not only does the growth of this field mean more opportunities for specialized education programs, but also—and more importantly—it means more jobs. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts 18-percent growth of jobs in this field by 2016, and 22-percent growth by 2022, a rate far faster than average.

7. YOUR WORK STAYS CURRENT
Healthcare is always on the table for discussion—it's hardly a topic that is about to lose steam. And health informatics doesn't just work within current policy outlines, it actually shapes them. The research that these informaticists do is essential to the development of policies, laws and plans.

8. HEALTH INFORMATICS HAS EXPANDED TO GLOBAL PROMINENCE
All over the world, health informatics is a blossoming field. Europe, Asia and Oceania all work within the field to develop their government healthcare programs, providing opportunities for potential candidates to work internationally.

9. YOU'LL WORK WITH CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY
Work in the field capitalizes on technology such as wearable medical devices that include watches, eye glasses and necklaces to monitor ECG, pulse and heart rate. These technological breakthroughs revolutionize the information available to these information-studies, allowing for more holistic knowledge of patients, medical conditions and the healthcare process in general.

10. YOU CAN HELP PEOPLE
Isn't this the fundamental reason to get into all health-related fields?
WHAT WILL I DO?

You are needed in all branches of health, pharmacy and medicine to help scientists and clinicians visualize, analyze and interpret molecular and biological data from tests and research. They do the science, you do the data.

MEDIAN SALARY

$45,000

$46,000

$55,000

$63,000

$67,000

$74,000

$75,000

$85,000

$120,000

$180,000

SCHOOLS THAT TRAIN

• Andrews University
• Northeastern University (see page 121)
• Bates Technical College
• Bangor Community College
• Bartonsville Technical College
• Armstrong State University
• Asbury University
• Axia University
• Aviation Career and Education College
• Bakersfield College
• Barry University
• Barry University in Miami Shores
• Barry University (Miami)
• Barry University (Pembroke Pines)
• Barry University (West Palm Beach)
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