

Business Mastery

§3 Exploring Career Paths

*An Insider's Look at Primary
Healthcare Settings*

By Cherie M. Sohnen-Moe



An Insider's Look at Primary Healthcare Settings

What to Expect

- Key Aspects of Primary Healthcare Settings

Hospitals and Hospice

Medical Clinics



Image Courtesy of GraphicStock

KEY

Terms

- ❑ Acupuncture
- ❑ Care Coordination
- ❑ Case Management
- ❑ Case Manager
- ❑ Chiropractic
- ❑ Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM)
- ❑ Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- ❑ Hospice
- ❑ Hospital
- ❑ Massage Therapy
- ❑ Medical Clinic

KEY

Terms

- ❑ Midwifery
- ❑ Multidisciplinary Team
- ❑ Naturopathic Medicine
- ❑ Osteopathy
- ❑ Primary Care Provider (PCP)
- ❑ Primary Health Care

An Insider's Look at Primary Healthcare Settings

In response to the public's growing interest in CAM therapies, an increasing number of hospitals are establishing adjunct clinics for services such as chiropractic, massage therapy, and acupuncture. Others hospitals integrate CAM programs directly into their operating environments.

- Primary healthcare settings may include hospitals or clinics, medical centers, sports medicine clinics, physical therapy clinics, or an orthopedic physician's office.

What to Expect

- Working in a medical setting requires integration of the CAM therapy into a multidisciplinary team
 - In a hospital setting, you may become a part of the medical team treating trauma patients, amputees, cancer survivors, or burn survivors.
 - Decide what type of medical practice/specialty attracts you.
 - An advantage of working in a medical setting is opportunity to develop ongoing relationships with clients and observe outcomes of care over time.

Key Aspects of Primary Healthcare Settings

- Key considerations for working in any type of primary healthcare setting:
 - Administration
 - Additional Training
 - Care Coordination & Case Management
 - Research Opportunities



Image courtesy of GraphicStock

Overall Success Tips for Working in a Primary Healthcare Setting

- **Interview several wellness practitioners.** Talk with practitioners who work in a hospital or clinic to gain insights into these environments.
- **Educate yourself.** Gain credibility by being well-versed in medical terminology and recordkeeping specific to different types of medical practices.
- **Know the limitations.** Familiarize yourself with current contraindications for medical conditions.
- **Learn proper documentation.** Know how to conduct research and how to measure therapeutic outcomes. Medical settings often rely on funding from agencies that require this type of documentation.
- **Be flexible.** Medical settings often require adaptability and flexibility due to unexpected scheduling twists or changes in client conditions.

Hospitals and Hospice

- Clinical considerations in these environments can vary greatly from other settings
 - Adherence to HIPAA is more strictly enforced, as access to sensitive and detailed medical and health history information is greater.
 - Typical to be working as part of a team made up of a variety of other professionals
 - Hospice work can be emotionally demanding. Honestly evaluate your readiness to undertake such work.

Specific Success Tips for Working in a Hospital or Hospice

- **Ensure you have access** to medical history, care plannings, and impressions recorded by other members of patient care teams.
- **Ask to be included in hospital-wide notifications**, trainings, updates, and Grand Rounds.
- **Offer to provide “in-service” trainings** to the clinicians about the benefits and appropriateness of your services.
- **Connect with the Employee Health Office** to ensure that you have all immunizations and protections in place.
- **Prepare yourself mentally.** Working with seriously ill or dying patients can be emotionally taxing. Many practitioners prefer part-time work.
- **Establish a support system with hospital or hospice-based colleagues.** Many considerations in these settings are unlike those in private practice or other outpatient settings.

Medical Clinics

- Like hospitals, clinics are staffed by professionals who assess, diagnose, and treat patients. Main differences are in terms of scope.
 - A clinic may be headed by a single PCP while a hospital has a complex leadership hierarchy.
 - Clinics have limited hours while hospitals run 24 hours
 - Clinics work on outpatient basis while hospitals have inpatient wards.

Specific Success Tips for Working in a Medical Clinic

- **Ensure you have access** to medical history, care plannings, and impressions recorded by other members of patient care teams.
- **Adhere to clinic policies** for dress code, finances, logistics, practitioner/ practitioner interactions, client/practitioner interactions, and marketing.
- **Build long-term relationships.** It can be very rewarding to track a client's progress over time and tailor ongoing sessions to support the client's and healthcare team's overall goals.
- **Keep detailed records.** Be sure to follow the clinic's guidelines for charting, and follow up as appropriate.
- **Accept direction from medical personnel.** You must be willing to defer to the primary care provider (supervising physician or nurse) for critical care decisions, and sometimes minor decisions as well.

Highlights

A growing number of practitioners provide healthcare-oriented services in clinic settings, working closely with chiropractors, sports medicine physicians, and rehabilitation specialists.

Working in tandem with medical doctors and physical therapists, wellness providers need to be sure of the style of the practitioners with whom they will be working and if it fits their desired pace.

In the primary healthcare setting, there are options to work as an employee or independent contractor. Either way, you're expected to conform to the organization's structure the same as any other employee.

Highlights (*cont.*)

Medical clinics and hospitals offer a growing variety of complementary and alternative services on both an inpatient and outpatient basis. These settings require specialized medical knowledge, case management, and charting skills.

Energy work and gentle touch therapies are often highly effective in easing the pain and anxiety experienced by hospice patients. Some practitioners prefer part-time work with this population as it can be emotionally taxing.

Consider that your only interactions with clients in a medical clinic may be during treatment, but those treatments may be using state-of-the-art equipment you wouldn't have if you were in private practice.