Potential Careers

NMU’s Respiratory Therapy Program prepares students for employment in the following careers:

Occupations
- Respiratory Therapist
- Respiratory Therapist Technician

For Career Planning and Opportunities:
Academic & Career Advisement Center
3302.1 C.B. Hedgcock
906-227-2971
103 Jacobetti Complex
906-227-2283
www.nmu.edu/acac

School of Clinical Sciences
3515 West Science
906-227-2885
www.nmu.edu/cls

For Job Search, Resume and Career Information:
Career Services
3302.3 C.B. Hedgcock
906-227-2800
www.nmu.edu/careers

For Information about NMU Student Organizations Associated with this Major Contact:
Center for Student Enrichment
1206 University Center
906-227-2439
www.nmu.edu/cse

Internet Resource Links:
www.careers.org
www.careerresource.net

For Career Information with National Organizations:
www.aarc.org American Association for Respiratory Care
www.nbrc.org National Board for Respiratory Care
www.caahep.org Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs

Current as of Fall 2014
Provided by:

The Academic & Career Advisement Center
Respiratory Therapy

Respiratory Therapists are the hands-on interface between highly sophisticated technology and patients requiring mechanical assistance to breathe. Patients range from premature infants in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit to critically ill adults in the ICU. Respiratory Therapists give a variety of treatments to patients with asthma and chronic obstructive lung disease. Respiratory Therapists respond to all cardiac and respiratory arrests in the hospital.

R.T.’s also work in the Pulmonary Function and the Sleep Labs performing diagnostic tests. Many respiratory departments also perform EKG’s, stress tests, Holter monitoring, and EEG’s. R.T.’s may have to respond to many interruptions or changes in their work flow during their day according to patient needs. If you enjoy helping people, are able to work independently, and want to be challenged to put “book knowledge” and clinical skills together, R.T. may be the field for you.

Skills and Competencies

Respiratory Therapists must be able to work well under pressure and apply sound clinical judgment in the sometimes fast paced world of critical care. Respiratory Therapists must be skillful in using ventilators to help patients who are too sick to breath on their own. They also use a variety of therapeutic techniques to treat patients with asthma and chronic lung disease. Respiratory Therapists assess patients’ breathing and lung function as part of the health care team. Good communication skills are essential in interactions with patients, families, and other health care professionals. Respiratory Therapists treat patients of all ages and all cultural backgrounds and must be sensitive to all people’s values.

Course Work

This degree includes the following courses as part of the program requirements, and specific major requirements along with liberal studies and graduation requirements.

Respiratory Therapy Core
- RSP 106 Introduction to Respiratory Therapy (1 cr.)
- RSP 271 Introduction to Oxygen Therapy (3 cr.)
- RSP 272 Respiratory Pharmacology (2 cr.)
- RSP 273 The Cardiopulmonary System (4 cr.)
- RSP 274 Essentials of Neonatal Respiratory Care (4 cr.)
- RSP 275 Cardiopulmonary Diagnostics (4 cr.)
- RSP 276 Therapeutic Modalities (4 cr.)
- RSP 277 Respiratory Care Clinical Experience I (4 cr.)
- RSP 371 Common Acute Pulmonary Problems (3 cr.)
- RSP 372 Airway Care (3 cr.)
- RSP 373 Positive Pressure Therapy (4 cr.)
- RSP 374 Respiratory Care Clinical Experience II (2 cr.)
- RSP 375 Mechanical Ventilation I (3 cr.)
- RSP 376 Mechanical Ventilation II (3 cr.)
- RSP 377 Respiratory Care Clinical Experience III (2 cr.)
- RSP 378 Issues in Respiratory Care (2 cr.)
- RSP 379 Special Populations Assessments and Management (2 cr.)

Other Required Courses
- BI 111 Introductory Biology: Principles (4 cr.)
- BI 201 Human Anatomy (3 cr.)
- BI 202 Human Physiology (5 cr.)
- CH 105 Chemical Principles (4 cr.) or CH 109 Introductory Organic & Biochemistry (4 cr.)
- CLS 204 Clinical Microbiology (2 cr.)
- HL 101 Medical Terminology for Health Educators (1 cr.)
- MA 104 College Algebra with Applications in the Sciences and Technologies (4 cr.)

Detailed course descriptions can be found at www.nmu.edu/bulletin.

Career Development

You should begin the resume-building process as soon as you can. The Academic and Career Advisement Center can assist you with career planning, while Career Services will help you fine tune your resume and look for jobs related to your field. In the meantime, the more hands-on experience you have, the better the chances are that you will find a job. Becoming involved in a professional related internship is a way to develop your professional skills and gain experience. Your academic course work is important as well, so be sure to maintain a high grade point average.

Additional Considerations

Respiratory therapy is an Associate of Applied Science degree that requires 91 credits to complete. This should take approximately three years to finish all required classes.

An associate degree is required as the minimum for entry into the field, but a bachelor’s or master’s degree may be required for additional advancement, requirements and benefits.

All state, except Alaska and Hawaii, require Respiratory Therapists to be licensed. This degree can be used towards the Clinical Health Science bachelor’s degree.

Job Outlook

Respiratory therapy is expected to grow at a 28% increase over the next decade. The larger number of middle-aged and elderly citizens should benefit more positions in the field. The average salary of a respiratory therapist currently stands at $54,280, though the overall range is from $39,990 to $73,410.