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Introduction to the Health Professions Office

The Pre-Health Professions program at Wheaton College, desires to provide a distinctive educational opportunity for students interested in the health professions. Healthcare practitioners are needed in the United States and throughout the world to address the needs of those suffering from illness and disease and promote health and wellness to all individuals.

The Health Professions Program provides personalized advising and support services, encouraging students to be intentional and strategic toward the pursuit of a career in the health professions. Such practices help aid the development of character traits and demonstrate the compassionate heart of Christ to others enabling students to become leaders within healthcare fields, building the church and benefitting society worldwide. Ultimately, we aim to enhance your overall development and future success in a healthcare career.

All students regardless of their major are welcome and encouraged to meet with the director and utilize the department resources. Students of any major can attend a health profession graduate program. Some students prefer majors that have the most overlap in required major courses and the pre-requisite courses for the intended health field. Others prefer to study an area outside of the sciences to provide diversity to their understanding of individuals, the general society and the determinants of health.

The Health Professions program offers opportunities for students to discuss current topics within the healthcare field and interact with healthcare professionals, hearing first-hand stories of the challenges and joys of serving others in a variety of healthcare careers. Courses are taught providing unique experiences for students to engage, explore and personally reflect upon various issues within the healthcare environment.

CANDICE EISENHAUER

HEALTH PROFESSIONS DIRECTOR



Candice Eisenhauer, M.Ed., Director, Health Professions, is a member of the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (NAAHP). This is her 11th year at Wheaton College and 21st year advising and counseling college students.

As director, she helps navigate the intricate processes of prerequisites and professional school applications for undergraduates preparing for careers in healthcare. Her conversations with students aim to encourage exploration of not only healthcare careers and issues but also personal strengths and abilities. Ultimately, she works with students allowing them to see the process clearly and take wise next steps.

The Health Professions office seeks to build community and alumni partnerships to aid students in exploring the many options in healthcare—not just medicine and nursing—and foster awareness of global health issues. Candice's goal is to walk alongside students through the process of exploring, choosing and applying to a graduate health profession program. She does this by listening, celebrating successes, sitting with disappointments and providing counsel and helpful information.

When not in the Chicagoland area, you will find her in Minnesota or Delaware taking her nieces and nephews out for ice cream before dinner!

RANDI LITTRELL

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP COORDINATOR

Randi connects students with health-related opportunities within the surrounding community and establishes relationships with organizations to develop essential skills and qualities in pre-health students. Randi also meets with students to discuss various healthcare fields and careers and how a student's strengths and interest may be aligned to a particular area.



CAROL GETZ

OFFICE COORDINATOR

Carol directs students to healthcare resources and upcoming opportunities. She enjoys welcoming the students who pass through the Health Professions Office with a friendly smile, encouraging words, and home baked goodies.



Choosing a Major

All students regardless of their major are welcome and encouraged to meet with the director and utilize the department resources. Students of any major can attend a health profession graduate program. Some students prefer majors that have the most overlap in required major courses and the pre-requisite courses for the intended health field. Others prefer to study an area outside of the sciences to provide diversity to their understanding of individuals, the general society and the determinant of health.

Very few schools, Wheaton College included, offer pre-med/pre-health majors. Students are encouraged to pursue a major in an area of study that is of personal interest to them.

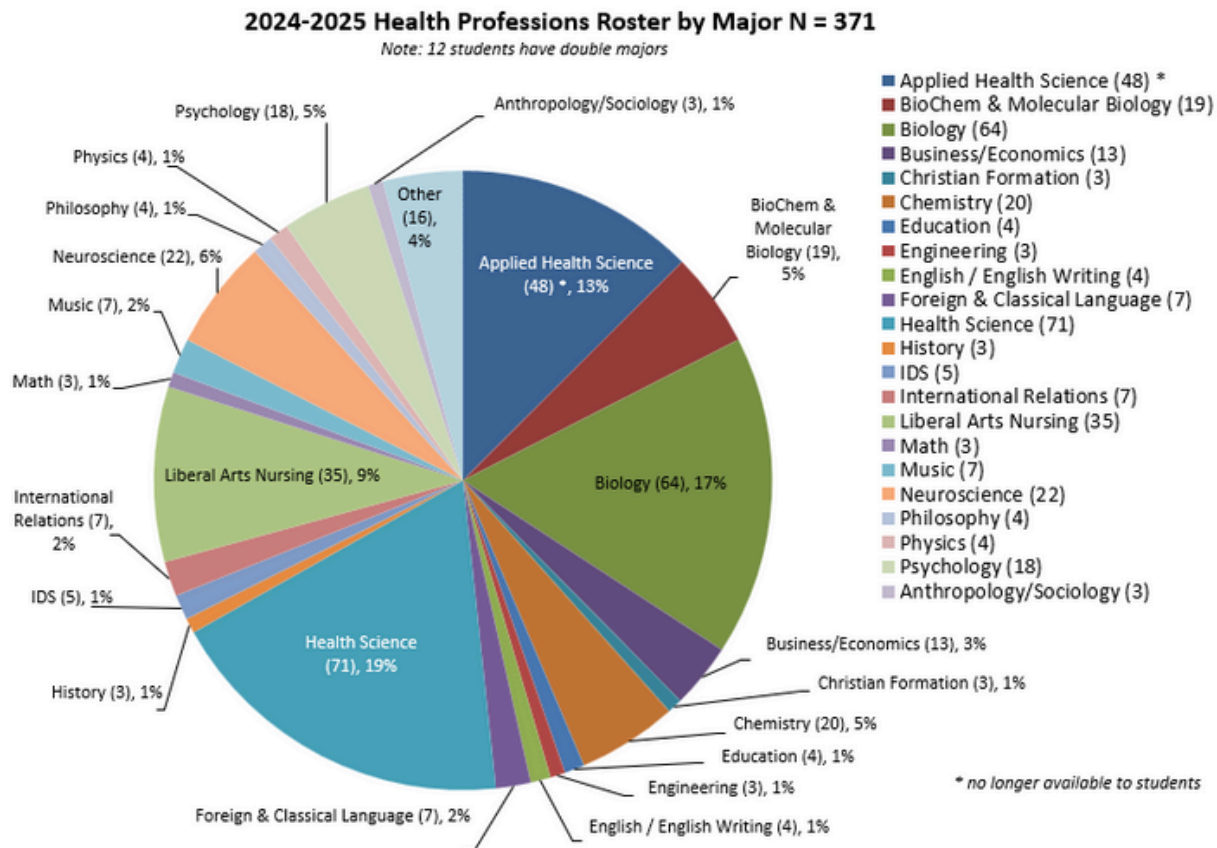
There is the perception that pre-health students must concentrate their studies in math and science and that humanities and social science concentrators are less competitive candidates for health professional school. A strong academic record in math and science will be necessary but you are not required to major in a math or science discipline and there is significant value in embracing a well-rounded liberal arts academic experience. Selecting a major is not required until fall semester of your second year. You should choose a major based on questions like:

- What discipline is most interesting to you?
- Which field will best draw on your talents and abilities?
- What do you want to study in your independent work?

Although, majors in the Biological Health Science department are frequently chosen by pre-health students, it is important to choose the best major for your specific interests and goals. The chart on the following page shares the majors of pre-health students for the past academic year.

2024-2025 Health Professions Student Roster by Major

371 students



Effective Academic Year 2023-2024 (any beyond) the Biological Health Science department offers the following majors:

- Biochemistry & Molecular Biology (offered in conjunction with Department of Chemistry)
- Biology
- Conservation & Ecological Health
- Health Science (similar to Applied Health Science major)
- Neuroscience

Course Planning

One of the most common questions from first-year students is: *What classes should I take?* The answer depends on several factors, including your long-term goals, intended major, prior academic preparation, and any other responsibilities you may have during your first semester.

Lab courses are time consuming. Give careful thought to whether you enroll in one or two lab-based science courses during your first year.

As a pre-health student, you'll likely begin with Biology (BIOL 241) and/or Chemistry (CHEM 231). Your choice should reflect both your intended major and your level of preparation. If you feel well-prepared in at least one subject from your high school coursework, you may choose to take both courses in your first semester. However, many students benefit from starting with just one lab-based science course to allow time to adjust to the academic demands of college.

Taking one science course can support stronger performance and ease your transition, while taking two may be appropriate if your major is in Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, Chemistry, or Physics, as this aligns with long-term course sequencing. Be sure to consult the [Major Academic Plan \(MAP\)](#) for your intended major to guide your decision. If you find a course challenging, seek support early. Talk with your professor, teaching assistant, or visit the Health Professions office to discuss helpful strategies and available resources.

In addition to major-specific courses, students will complete prerequisite coursework required for their intended professional path (e.g., Medicine, Nursing, Occupational Therapy). Many of these fields share a common set of core prerequisites, though some programs may require additional courses. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they complete all necessary coursework to meet application and entrance exam requirements (such as the MCAT, DAT, or GRE). The following pages (6-9) provide details on various programs, core requirements, and available resources.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FIRST SEMESTER ON CAMPUS

- Meet with your faculty advisor and pre-health advisor – understand your major requirements and how they may overlap with pre-requisite course requirements.
- Remember that your introductory science classes often are content in future entrance exams (MCAT, DAT, etc.). Study for content understanding, not just the upcoming exam.
- Connect with juniors and seniors who are also pursuing pre-health tracks, especially those with similar interests, to learn from their academic and extracurricular experiences.
- Utilize the many resources available to you.

Pre-Requisite Guide for a Variety of Health Profession Fields

Academic & Intellectual Preparation for Medical School

Core Requirements for most medical schools and science subjects of the MCAT (36 credits):

- Introductory Biology (BIOL 241, 242)
- General Chemistry (CHEM 231, 232)
- Organic Chemistry (CHEM 341, 342)
- General Physics (PHYS 221, 222 OR PHYS 231, 232)
- Biochemistry (CHEM 461)

Additional Courses recommended to assist students with the MCAT, however students may self-study concepts and principles

- Introductory Psychology (PSYC 101)
- Introductory Sociology (SOC 115)*
- Statistics (MATH 263, PSYC 268, HS 382)*

Beyond the courses listed as preparation for MCAT 2015, school-specific admissions may require or recommend other courses such as:

- English courses (written composition, advanced or intensive writing courses)
- MATH 235 – Calculus I or Statistics (MATH 263, HS 382)
- Social & Behavioral Sciences (Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology etc.)
- Upper Division Biology Courses: BIOL 326 – Advanced Cellular and Molecular Biology; BIOL 356 – Genetics; BIOL 324 – Microbiology course; BIOL 325 – Immunology; Anatomy & Physiology (BIOL 331 & 332)

Academic & Intellectual Preparation for Dental School

Core Requirements for most dental schools (32 credits, however with additional classes required by some programs 40-48 credits):

- Introductory Biology (BIOL 241, 242)
- General Chemistry (CHEM 231, 232)
- Organic Chemistry (CHEM 341, 342)
- General Physics (PHYS 221, 222)

Beyond the courses listed as core requirements, some dental programs may require other courses such as:

- English courses (written composition, advanced or intensive writing courses)
- MATH 235 – Calculus I, Statistics (HS 382, MATH 263, etc.)
- Social & Behavioral Sciences (Psychology, Sociology, etc.)
- Upper Division Biology Courses: BIOL 322 – Advanced Cellular and Developmental Biology; BIOL 356 – Genetics; BIOL 324 – Microbiology; BIOL/CHEM 461-Biochemistry; Anatomy & Physiology – most likely additional courses

Students are encouraged to consult the dental school web sites or the online (or print) resource: ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools. The Health Professions director also has access to the official guide and other resources to assist students with pre-requisite requirements.

Pre-Requisite Guide for a Variety of Health Profession Fields

Academic & Intellectual Preparation for Nursing School

Core Requirements for many nursing programs:

- Introductory Biology (BIOL 241)*
- Chemistry (CHEM 231, 232)
- Microbiology (BIOL 324)
- Anatomy & Physiology (BIOL 331 & BIOL 332)
- General Psychology (PSYC 101)
- Statistics course

**Required to take Anatomy & Physiology & Microbiology*

Beyond the courses listed above, school-specific admissions may require other courses such as:

- English courses (written composition, advanced or intensive writing courses)
- Social & Behavioral Sciences (additional Psychology, Sociology, etc.)
- Developmental Psychology (PSYC 317)
- Nutrition (HS 368)
- Oral Communication
- CPR and/or medical terminology
- Principles of Organic Chemistry

**Consult individual program web sites to ensure all pre-requisites are completed or in-progress before applying.*

Academic & Intellectual Preparation for Physician Assistant Schools

Core Requirements for most PA schools:

- Intro Biology & Microbiology (BIOL 241, 324)
- Chemistry (requirements vary by school)
- Anatomy & Physiology (BIOL 331, 332)
- Statistics (HS 382, MATH 263, etc.)

Beyond the courses listed as core requirements, school-specific admissions may require other courses such as:

- English courses (written composition, advanced or intensive writing courses)
- Calculus I (Math 235)
- Organic Chemistry (CHEM 341/342 or CHEM 241*) and/or Biochemistry (CHEM 461)
- Introduction to Psychology (PSYC 101) and other social/behavioral science classes
- Medical Terminology, Public Speaking (COMM 101)
- Introductory Biology (BIOL 242)
- Upper Division Biology Courses: BIOL 356 – Genetics, BIOL 326 – Advanced Cellular & Molecular Biology
- Physics (PHYS 221, 222)

**Consult individual program web sites to ensure all pre-requisites are completed or in-progress before applying.*

Pre-Requisite Guide for a Variety of Health Profession Fields

Academic & Intellectual Preparation for Physical Therapy Programs

Core Requirements for most PT programs:

- Introductory Biology (BIOL 241, 242)
- General Chemistry (CHEM 231, 232)
- Anatomy & Physiology (BIOL 331 & 332)
- General Physics (PHYS 221, 222)
- General Psychology (PSYC 101)
- Statistics course (HS 382, MATH 263, etc.)

Beyond the courses listed above, school-specific admissions may require other courses such as:

- English courses (written composition, advanced or intensive writing courses)
- MATH 235 – Calculus I
- Social & Behavioral Sciences (additional Psychology, Sociology, etc.)
- Upper Division Biology Courses or additional chemistry

Students are encouraged to consult the physical therapy program web sites or the [PTCAS directory online](#) for a list of the pre-requisite requirements.

Academic & Intellectual Preparation for Occupational Therapy Programs

Core Requirements for most OT programs:

- Introductory Biology (BIOL 241)*
- Anatomy & Physiology (BIOL 331 & 332)
- General Psychology (PSYC 101)
- Developmental Psychology and/or Intro to Psychopathology (PSYC 317 and PSYC 348)
- Statistics course (HS 382, MATH 263, PSYC 268)

**Required to take Anatomy & Physiology*

Beyond the courses listed above, school-specific admissions may require other courses such as:

- English courses (written composition, advanced or intensive writing courses)
- Social & Behavioral Sciences (additional Psychology, Sociology, etc.)
- Additional biology or chemistry courses
- Medical Terminology (can often be taken online – the course is not offered at Wheaton)

Students are encouraged to consult the occupational therapy program web sites for a list of the pre-requisite requirements.

Pre-Requisite Guide for a Variety of Health Profession Fields

Academic & Intellectual Preparation for Optometry Programs

Core Requirements for most optometry schools and science subjects of the MCAT (36 credits):

- Introductory Biology (BIOL 241, 242)
- Microbiology (BIOL 324)
- General Chemistry (CHEM 231, 232)
- Organic Chemistry – at least one course
- General Physics (PHYS 221, 222 OR PHYS 231, 232)
- General Psychology (PSYC 101)
- Mathematics (Calculus and/or statistics)

Most programs recommend Anatomy & Physiology and Biochemistry. A guide for ASCO programs and requirements is found [here](#).

Pre-requisites for other health professional programs can be found on the national web site or individual school pages. Wheaton students apply to Podiatry, Speech Language Pathology, Public Health, etc. programs.

Frequently Asked Questions

I'm an entering freshman, what classes should I take and in what order for my course of study?

During the summer orientation /advising process, you will receive information from the Academic Advising office regarding the major you listed on your application. The choice of classes is a blending of college and major requirements and those needed for graduate professional health study. In many cases, some classes will be requirements for both the college major and health professional school pre-requisites.

How do I get an appointment with a Pre-Health Advisor during the semester?

If you are interested in scheduling an appointment with Candice Eisenhower, Health Professions Director, please email health.professions@wheaton.edu or stop into the office in Meyer Science Center, 104 to setup a meeting.

In the summer prior to your enrollment, questions are usually best addressed via email.

What professional connections and support are available through the Wheaton College Health Professions office?

The Health Professions office provides an array of support services and opportunities to enhance and facilitate the students' formation of a pathway to the health profession of their choosing. One-on-one advising, small group workshops, and events are aimed to help explore and understand the healthcare environment. We also host mock interview opportunities with local alumni to help hone communication skills. When it comes time to apply to health professions schools, we will be there to help.

We regularly bring in Wheaton alumni from healthcare fields to share their experience, and resources are provided to help students find volunteer opportunities in the community.

The Pre-Health Ministry Team is a student group, which connects students with ways to serve in health professions environments (clinics, etc.) and prepare for professional school and other scientific fields. The club offers students unique opportunities through mentoring, volunteer opportunities within the surrounding community, and events each year designed to provide students with the resources and skills necessary to succeed in their chosen field of study.

Frequently Asked Questions

What kinds of skills and experiences are professional schools looking for in a competitive candidate?

Students may begin as early as freshman or sophomore year volunteering and/or shadowing professionals in their field of interest. Professional programs will be looking for students with good problem solving and critical thinking skills, and effective oral and written communication. Working in healthcare is very collaborative, therefore it is essential to have experience working successfully together with others. It is important to demonstrate you have the intellectual (or academic) ability to handle the demands of a graduate level health program AND personal qualities that enable you to interact well with patients, their families and other healthcare professionals.

When should I apply to professional school?

Wheaton College provides four full years of undergraduate support to prepare students for applying to professional school. The decision to apply includes a variety of factors. In some cases, students apply between the junior and senior year of undergraduate study. However, many students choose to take a GAP year (or more) for a variety of reasons. Your application timeline can be discussed with your pre-health advisor. Alumni are welcome to utilize the Health Professions office as well.

Considerations for Graduate Health Education?

Academics

Many schools will report the average GPA and test scores of their admitted students. If your scores suggest that you may not be competitive for that particular program you may want to schedule some time with your pre-health advisor to discuss options and/or other programs. Your academic profile is only part of the whole picture when it comes to being a competitive candidate. Most programs are looking for well-rounded individuals who have a strong personal motivation for the profession, meaningful service practices, experience interacting with others – specifically those from a variety of backgrounds and engagement with the healthcare field.

Service

Working in the Healthcare field requires a service orientation and mindset. Demonstrating that you care about others, specifically those outside of family and friends is important. You will have many opportunities throughout your undergraduate education to participate in service initiatives. The Health Professions office offers lists of opportunities for you to review. Some of these opportunities are on-campus, some are off-campus and some are virtual. Take some time to review the opportunities, seek out experiences that align with your values and interests and look for opportunities that will broaden your awareness of social and cultural factors that can influence health and/or access to healthcare.

Health-Related Experience

Because you are considering a career in healthcare you should have experiences demonstrating your commitment to helping those in medical need. Admissions committees are looking for students who have a genuine interest in the field of study they are applying to and the best way to demonstrate that interest is through volunteering and/or shadowing in that field. Some programs require hands-on experience and direct patient contact, some programs require only observation. Please review the healthcare experience requirements carefully for your program of choice and get an early start on looking for opportunities to fulfill your experiential learning hours. The Health Professions office has a comprehensive list of summer shadowing and internship opportunities for your review. Summer is a great time to concentrate on service and observation experiences as you likely have more time to invest in such efforts.

Aspects of the Application

Research

Research is another way you can deepen your personal and professional experience. Many Natural Sciences faculty members offer research opportunities for students. You can reach out to faculty directly to inquire about opportunities and express interest in working with them in field research. This may feel intimidating at first, but this action can demonstrate you are a mature student who takes initiative and seeks out new challenges. Think about ways you can prepare before the conversation as well. Take some time to review the faculty web pages to learn about the type of research conducted. You are welcome to seek out non-science faculty and those outside of Wheaton College as well. There are several opportunities each summer for students to engage in research outside of Wheaton. Some programs seek students with more experience and others are designed for first- and second-year students. The HP office will share updated opportunities in December each year for the upcoming summer. Research is about understanding what is known and thinking about what is unknown. What can be discovered? What questions do we want to ask about what we know and do not know yet?

Transcripts

Professional schools utilize undergraduate transcripts to verify your degree and GPA and to ensure you have completed all prerequisite coursework. Transcripts can be ordered through the registrar's office. Most (if not all) programs require transcripts from all institutes of Higher Education you have attended or have credit from (dual enrollment classes in high school).

Application Fees

Application fees vary by application and institution. In most cases, there is a fee for each program you apply to in the central service. At times, the individual programs will also apply a fee. Prepare early for the cost of the application process. For students who demonstrate financial need many application services and some programs waive or reduce the cost of application fees.

Admission Exams

Almost all health professional schools require entrance exams as part of the application process. In some cases, there is a limited number of test dates so watch dates carefully and be sure to schedule your test date with enough time to prepare and retake if necessary. However, best practice is to prepare well and take the exam once. Each attempt is tracked and programs see each attempt's score.

Application Process and Requirements

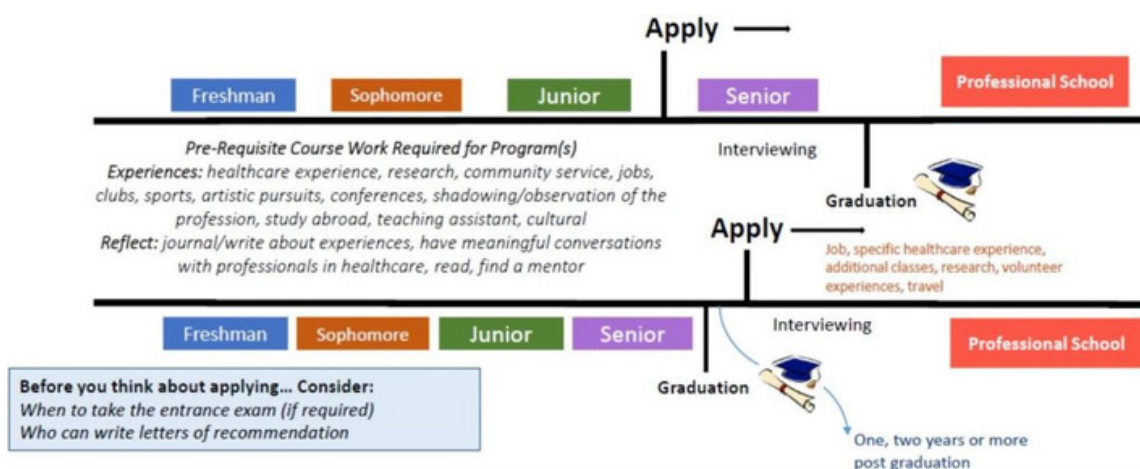


Most professional programs utilize an application service to facilitate the initial process to apply to their program. These systems are similar to the Common Application for college admissions.

AACOMAS:	American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service
AACPMAS:	American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine Application Service
AADSAS:	Associated American Dental School Application Service
AMCAS:	American Medical College Application Service
CASPA:	Central Application Service for Physician Assistants
OptomCAS:	Optometry Central Application Service
OTCAS:	Occupational Therapist Centralized Application Service
PTCAS:	Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service
SOPHAS:	Schools and Programs of Public Health Application Service
TMDSAS:	Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service
VMCAS:	Veterinary Medical College Application Service

Each application will request information regarding your academic performance, service/volunteer experience and experiential learning/shadowing experience. Specific requirements and timelines are detailed on the Central Application site and/or program website. It is your responsibility to pay close attention to application requirements and timelines. It's never too early to start keeping track of your own meaningful experiences and thinking about how these experiences have prepared you well for a career in healthcare so you can articulate them well when you apply to your program of choice.

Professional School Application Timelines



Exploring Health Professions

The Health Professions office is available to help students investigate their healthcare interests. The program web site provides links to helpful videos and national organizations for a variety of healthcare fields. Also, the [Explore Health Careers](#) site is a free, multi-disciplinary, interactive health careers website designed to explain the array of health professions and provide easy access to students seeking information about health careers.

We are here to support you!

Additional information about the Health Professions office can be found at <https://www.wheaton.edu//healthprofessions/>

We look forward to meeting and working alongside you as you explore health professions.

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