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WA Student Medical Program Turning Passion into Practice

Aspiring health sciences students will get their first taste of hospital life this month with the opportunity to put their learnings in to practice as part of the 'Future Health Professionals' program.

The intensive week-long health sciences program, running from 20 – 24 January, includes practical workshops at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital as well as a series of lectures at the Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research.

Scitech, in partnership with Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, offers the program via competitive application process to 30 Western Australian (WA) students in Years 11 and 12 from metropolitan and regional schools. Successful applicants are selected based on their demonstrated passion to pursue medicine and their performance in school.

Scitech also provides a scholarship opportunity for a regionally or remotely schooled or home-schooled student. This year's successful student comes from Saint Joseph's School in Northam and volunteers as a Country Youth Ambulance Officer with Saint John Ambulance.

Kalien Selby, Chief Executive Officer Scitech, says "The 'Future Health Professionals' program uses an integrated science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) learning approach to assist in the development of knowledge and skills necessary to participate in the modern workforce."

"At Scitech we strive to foster industry and education links that have real impact as they simultaneously promote the skills that are needed to create a sustainable economy for the state, while also creating relevant, engaging and inspiring experiences for students."

Providing students with a unique learning experience in the varied fields of health sciences, the 'Future Health Professionals' program delivers a 40-hour week of hands-on demonstrations from a wide range of professionals including midwives, dentists, plastic and reconstructive surgeons, nurses and paramedics.

The program has gone from strength to strength and 2020 will be the second-year participants gain valuable in-hospital experience.

Dr Hadley Markus, Director of Postgraduate Medical Education at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, explains how the opportunity to partner with Scitech in developing this program has resulted in a unique exploration of medical care in the 21st century.



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“This bird’s-eye view of health care will provide students with a rare chance to peek into the world of medicine, and the multidisciplinary nature of health care within pre-hospital and hospital settings.”

“Students are exposed to a wide spectrum of training environments including the traditional classroom to hands on teaching in a state-of-the-art simulation centre, through to medicine in the wilderness taking place in an immersive outdoor setting,” Dr Markus said.

Some of the 2020 program highlights include:

- A session with Professor Fiona Wood discussing the plastic surgery journey for burn care and linking interdisciplinary research to drive improved outcomes.
- A hands-on suturing workshop using pig trotters to teach students the different techniques of suturing.
- A practical skills workshop in the hospital showing students the different areas and educating them about the equipment and situations they could potentially be presented with.

Since ‘Future Health Professionals’ began in 2017, students have reported increased confidence in their desire and ability to pursue a career in health sciences, an increased understanding of what is required to work in the various fields as well as the ability to identify careers in health sciences they had not previously considered.

A program participant who attended the ‘Future Health Professionals Program’ in 2018, previously known as the ‘Future Doctors’ program, credits the program with making her realise there are many medical related careers out there that don’t necessarily mean becoming a doctor.

“As a result of this, I decided to study Forensic Biology and Toxicology as well as Criminology, majoring in Crime Science at Murdoch University. I am so grateful for the program which allowed me to realise what my true calling really was, a career that involves helping people whilst solving problems and working in a team.” she said.

The program also features a career counselling session to answer student questions about the courses and pathways available at each tertiary institution.

**Media interviews with Scitech, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, program participants and a former program participant available upon request. Program schedule can also be provided.*