

Children's Wisconsin begins supporting youth health care apprenticeships in the Northeast

In 2025, Children's Wisconsin began partnering with the Department of Workforce Development and local high schools to engage youth apprentices in key health care roles at Children's Wisconsin.

Youth apprentices gain valuable work experience in high demand health care careers while still in high school. At Children's Wisconsin, youth apprentices work as clinical assistants where they learn to work collaboratively as part of the medical team. They work alongside mentors and staff who orient and train them to provide high-quality, pediatric-focused care. Children's Wisconsin supports their salaries while they learn and prepare for careers after high school.

Pediatric care requires a unique set of skills and approaches focused on helping our youngest patients heal, grow and thrive. Youth apprentices learn the importance of working alongside kids and their families in order to provide the best care and address the needs most important to them.

"Apprenticeships allow us to shape the development and training of future talent for critical positions in our health care system," said Julie Okoro, workforce development manager at Children's Wisconsin.

When Bella, now a nursing student at Fox Valley Technical College, attended Freedom Area High School, a school coordinator told her about the youth apprenticeship program at Children's Wisconsin. Bella was already working at a nursing home and interested in health care and wanted to experience working with kids. She participated in the youth apprenticeship program during her senior year, spending approximately half the day at Children's Wisconsin's Appleton Clinic and half the day at school. Bella learned alongside medical assistants and other Children's Wisconsin team members as she rotated through more than 12 specialties at the Appleton Clinic. She learned how to take vital signs, use electronic health records and communicate with kids of all ages and their caregivers. She also had opportunities to shadow other health care providers.

At the end of her senior year, she was hired part time at Children's Wisconsin as a clinical assistant supporting patients seen by the Cardiology team. Bella shared that Children's Wisconsin was flexible and accommodating with her school and college schedules and the managers were very supportive in providing her with appropriate training for her skill level. The apprenticeship gave Bella valuable unique, pediatric patient experience while continuing her education.

Children's Wisconsin is committed to preparing people for careers in health care, helping current team members grow professionally and building a pediatric-focused workforce with a broad range of experiences, backgrounds and perspectives to meet the needs of our

system and the kids and families we serve. Children's Wisconsin is proud to partner with many educational institutions, schools, and community and state and federal partners in our shared goals of promoting career pathways and building the health care workforce.