

A guided path to a career in health care

Research Associate - Chief Research Associate - NARAP Alumni

A **guided path to a career in health care** is about a journey students might consider in first determining and then supporting their pursuit of a career in health care. The journey includes three complementary opportunities - Research Associate, Chief Research Associate and NARAP Alumni. Belonging to NARAP Alumni Association requires the successful completion as a Research Associate or Chief Research Associate.

Research Associate

The National Alliance of Research Associates Programs (NARAP) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that offers pre-health professional students ("pre-meds"), called Research Associates (RAs), the opportunity to volunteer as data collectors enrolling patients and their visitors as participants in clinical research. Each RA serves one 4-hour shift per week in one of NARAP's Affiliates located in hospital emergency departments across the United States.

This experience is often the first opportunity for students to work in a professional setting alongside of doctors and nurses and learn the fundamentals of interacting with patients while serving to advance clinical research. With patients and their visitors in the emergency department, RAs identify potential participants for clinical studies, enroll or pass them along to senior investigators as appropriate, and share health wellness information with emergency department patients and their visitors focused on screening and prevention.

As part of the clinical research experience, RAs receive training, mentoring, mid-term and final evaluation for their discernment, qualification and development as a future health care professionals. This opportunity is often a key factor in helping students to decide whether they have what it takes to pursue a health care career. This is also a positive addition to the student's resume. Many RAs volunteer more than one semester with NARAP adding to their proficiency and honing their patient interaction skills. Some also decide to move on to the supervisor role of Chief Research Associate.

Chief Research Associates

Chief Research Associates (CRAs) are post-baccalaureate students ("post-bacs") who assist Affiliate Program Directors.

Affiliate Program Directors are emergency medical physicians or senior members of the hospital team who lead the NARAP RA Program in their hospital. Due to their busy schedules, these individuals rely on the dedication and support of CRAs to help them carry out the Affiliate's RA Program effectively.

CRAs volunteer 20-hours per week in one of five roles (Senior / NARAP Liaison, Recruiting, Personnel, Communications or Database Chief). In addition to their individual

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responsibilities, the CRAs are collectively responsible for training, mentoring and evaluating the RAs. These diverse leadership responsibilities are invaluable for CRAs in applying for medical school, and more importantly, jumpstarting their professional careers.

NARAP Alumni

The goal of the NARAP Alumni Association is to bring together thousands of former Research Associates and Chief Research Associates from across the country who have successfully completed the NARAP RA Program. Ranging from students who are just starting an RA semester to others currently in health professional school or advanced training to those having successfully assumed their careers as physicians or other health care professionals.

At the heart of the NARAP Alumni Association is an Internet based Forum allowing Alumni members to network with one another, engage in a one-on-one mentoring program, participate in a broad range of ongoing educational opportunities or connect with fellow researchers in communities of practice.

Making the Decision

Ever wonder if a career in health care is something that you should pursue? Do you have what it takes to be a physician, physician assistant, nurse, researcher or other health care professional. Well becoming a NARAP Research Associate and/or Chief Research Associate might just be the ticket for you to find out.

Your experience as an RA and/or CRA leading to your membership in the NARAP Alumni Association will serve you well. It will build your resume and application credentials with clinical research, enlighten your pathway and ignite opportunities capitalizing on your NARAP time as you pursue your career in health care.

If you're looking for a career track to health care, this just might be the one to take.