

## Career Profile: Neurodiagnostician

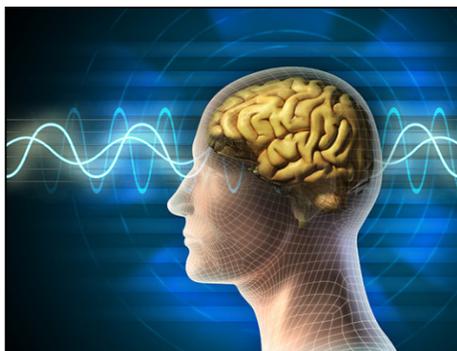
By JENNIFER MCGUIRE, MASCA President-Elect

This summer at the 2017 ASCA Conference in Denver, I had the opportunity to attend a session titled “Careers Your Students Need to Know About.” Even after 16 years as a high school counselor, I am continually amazed by the numbers of careers about which I have very little knowledge. Throughout the 2017-18 school year, I will profile some of the career opportunities that were included in this session, as well as links for additional information. I hope to provide you just enough information about a particular career so that you might follow up and learn more on your own.

This month's career, neurodiagnostician, stood out to me because there are so many different career opportunities within the health field. I encounter many students who are interested in entering this industry, and while the majority are interested in nursing, it is nice to have additional pathways to share with students.

Neurodiagnosticians monitor the nervous system, recording electrical activity from the brain, spinal cord, and peripheral nervous system using complex diagnostic equipment. This might be a great fit for an individual who enjoys science and technology and also likes working with people. Individuals in this field do everything from preparing patients, calculating results, and maintaining equipment. Neurodiagnosticians have direct interaction with patients, including taking medical histories and comforting them during procedures, which range from 20 minutes to 8 hours. For this reason, is it important to possess people skills as well

as technical skills. Settings include doctors' offices, hospitals, and clinics. In some cases, technicians may work in the operating room! Individuals in this field must be able to work as part of a healthcare team and possess good communication skills.



The most well-known procedure conducted by a neurodiagnostician is the EEG, or Electroencephalogram. This is a recording of electrical activity of the brain and is used as part of the diagnostic procedure for epilepsy, among other neurological symptoms. Other common but less well known procedures include long-term monitoring, intraoperative neuromonitoring, the polysomnogram, evoked potential studies, and nerve conduction studies.

According to ASET, The Neurodiagnostic Society, an associates degree is a minimum requirement for this field. However, my search for institutions of higher education found that programs range from one to two years. Laboure College offers a 29-credit certificate in Neurodiagnostics. However, it's program is completely online, so the fact that Laboure is in Massachusetts is irrelevant. What may be of more value to our students is the one year program in Electroneurodiagnostic

Technology offered at Boston Children's Hospital.

Of course, students are always interested in their earning potential. According to ASET, the average salary nationally in 2006 was \$48,173, with those technologists holding professional credentials and college degrees earning the most. This information is consistent with what I found for Massachusetts, with an average salary of approximately \$50,000.

Parents are often more concerned about the job market. The good news for this field is that the job market for Neurodiagnosticians is expected to grow by more than 20 percent between 2014 and 2024. A quick search for job postings on Sokanu yielded six positions in Boston and surrounding areas, most of them listed as EEG Technicians. The states with the highest concentration of Neurodiagnosticians are California, Florida, and Illinois.

In closing, choosing a career as a Neurodiagnostician sounds like a great fit for an individual who likes technology and wants to work in the health field, but who may prefer something shorter than a four-year college degree, at least to enter the job market. ASET, The Neurodiagnostic Society, provides a wealth of information online at [www.aset.org](http://www.aset.org). In addition to the ASET website, I used [www.sokanu.com](http://www.sokanu.com) as well as the websites from Laboure College and Boston Children's Hospital to gather information about this career. In my research, the terms Neurodiagnostic Technologist, Neurodiagnostic Technician, and Neurodiagnostician appear to refer to the same career.