

HEALTH CARE

Teens get paid while learning about health care careers

By [Jada Ojii](#), Daily Memphian

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Jennifer White (left) talks with local teens Friday, July 7, 2023, during a tour of Methodist University Hospital to learn more about a career in health care. (Brad Vest/Special to The Daily Memphian)

Dozens of local teens interested in health care gathered at Methodist University Hospital on Friday, July 7.

As part of the Career Launch Academy, teens toured the hospital.

Part of Memphis Medical District Collaborative's Hire Local initiative, the annual summer program launched in 2022 and has been providing young Memphians an

opportunity to discover different health care-related career opportunities since.

“It’s basically an on-ramp for them to get access to jobs, but we call it our Career Launch Academy because we spend a lot more dedicated time with them than we do typically with the adult population,” Latasha Harris, a MMDC program director, said. “In the summer, it gives us a chance to really get them thinking about what they want to do and to help them to start working on credentials.”

Bartlett summer internships offer real-world experience

The program ran from Monday, June 5, until Friday, July 7, with about 15 hours of programming each week.

“We want to help them to find a career that’s meaningful to them,” said Dexter McKinney, Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare’s director of talent planning and strategies. “We really want to help grow our community, and so by doing that, we want to invest in our youth.”

The aspiring young health care workers hail from various schools in Memphis and Shelby County. Many were able to tour departments at the Methodist University Hospital, including the intensive care unit, pharmacy department, histology department and more. They also received advice and had the opportunity to ask questions to staff members throughout the Friday tour.



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One of those teens, Eleyceil Gilliam, a 17-year-old senior at Freedom Preparatory Academy High School, hopes to pursue pediatrics post-graduation.

“First of all, we don’t have a lot of Black doctors,” she said. “And then we don’t have a lot of Black pediatricians. I love kids. ... I feel like that’s my calling. I feel like God has placed that on my heart. For a long time ... I’ve been saying I want to be a pediatrician.”

[U of M executive leaving position for UTHSC](#)

Gilliam received her CPR license last week as part of the academy. The program, which pays students \$15 per hour throughout its duration, has also allowed her to

learn about emotional intelligence and developing listening skills, all things she thinks will serve to help her in her career.

The Career Launch Academy also offers a certified nursing assistant (CNA) training class and certification course to recent high school graduates.

“Those students in the next three weeks will take their certification tests,” Harris said. “We’ll be working on them with mock interviews and professional branding. And they’re gonna come back and interview at Methodist, or interview with Baptist (Memorial Health Care) or whatever other employer partners, and so we’re super excited about that.”

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