Healthcare Administration

Department website: https://sps.northwestern.edu/masters/healthcare-administration/index.php

Northwestern’s Healthcare Administration degree prepares students for a variety of leadership roles in the healthcare industry with a focus on the business side of healthcare. Students will engage in coursework which analyzes effective healthcare models and examines how to deliver excellent, innovative, and efficient care while balancing costs. Courses cover strategic planning, leadership, financial management, and human resource responsibilities. Drawing on the strengths of partnerships with faculty and staff at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and Northwestern Memorial HealthCare, along with other national experts in the field, the curriculum offers students the opportunity to build their knowledge in healthcare administration and apply their learning into practical experiences throughout the program. As a part-time and entirely online degree, students from around the world can access a program of this caliber while balancing their personal and professional commitments.

Degrees Offered

- Healthcare Administration, MS (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/sps/graduate/health-care-administration/health-care-administration-terms/)

Healthcare Administration Courses

HCA 401-DL The American Healthcare System: Patient, Payor, and Provider (1 Unit)

This course provides an overview of the healthcare and healthcare systems in the United States. Students will be taught to appreciate the structure and evolution; the interplay of hospitals and physician practices; how performance and funds flow are measured - all from the patient, payor and provider perspective. The course will provide foundational knowledge and allow students to explore major issues facing the healthcare systems through readings, case studies, and class discussions. Students will understand the role of technology, regulation (CDC, FDA, CMS), healthcare finance, federal and state policies’ impact on the system, social determinants of health, and consider innovative ways to improve the current system.

HCA 402-DL Clinical Thinking for Healthcare Administrators and Clinical Managers (1 Unit)

This course provides an overview of the clinical judgment required in healthcare settings and its impact on patient care. Students will gain familiarity with fundamentals of medical terminology, anatomy, body function, and key disease processes. Students will understand the impact of key healthcare data on the clinical thinking process, operational workflows, policy design and implementation and its impact on evidence-based medicine. The course will provide opportunities to address safety and quality through readings, case studies, and class discussions.

HCA 403-DL Change Management and People Leadership in Healthcare (HR1) (1 Unit)

This course provides a foundation of how human resource management is applied in different healthcare settings. It focuses on the major elements of human resource management, as well as the ways in which it can be used in the strategic planning of the organizational performance. Students will learn about current human resources practice and issues from a healthcare perspective such as recruitment, contract/agreement, training/education/support, retention, performance evaluation, compensation, legal and regulatory issues, and strategic planning. Emphasis will be placed on communication techniques, self-analysis, and strategies for best practices in order to effectively implement key leadership and management concepts in dynamic healthcare environments.

HCA 404-DL Financial Management in Healthcare Organizations (Finance 1) (1 Unit)

This course introduces the terminology, theory, concepts and techniques used in the finance functions in healthcare organizations that are relevant to a healthcare administrator. Students gain an understanding of the important role of finance in healthcare organizations and learn various techniques to develop, manage, and control finances. Through case studies, students will interpret financial statements, prepare analyses, calculate Return on Investment (ROI), and conduct break-even analyses. The course provides students with experience in capital and operating budgets, financial forecasts, and business plan preparation. Students will be expected to have a sufficient level of competence in their utilization of spreadsheet applications.

HCA 405-DL Data Driven Healthcare Mgmt (1 Unit)

This foundational course introduces students to the various types of data that healthcare organizations create, manage, and analyze to improve decision-making. Students will learn about key systems used within healthcare organizations and how their computing architectures impact the value generated from the underlying data. Students will gain a working knowledge of fundamental methods for analyzing, interpreting and understanding performance metrics. The course will prepare students to leverage data to analyze processes, communicate information, and improve performance. The course is focused on the applied use of data to become effective leadership consumers and communicators of information.

HCA 410-DL Leading Quality Care and Ethical Compliance (1 Unit)

This course will familiarize students with leading approaches to ensuring clinical quality and patient safety, and the regulatory, payor, and consumer perspectives which influence evaluation of quality and patient safety. The course includes significant attention to leadership, culture and teamwork as vital elements of high-quality and high-reliability care. The course will enable students to conceptualize the synthesis of healthcare quality, safety and equity, compliance and ethics with the demands of an operationally effective healthcare organization.

HCA 411-DL Leadership Development and Organizational Behavior (HR2) (1 Unit)

This course will help students appreciate and identify various individual leadership talents in handling organizational challenges, such as leading organizational change, building strong culture, developing effective teams, resolving conflicts, problem-solving and implementing effective motivational systems. Key values that guide a leader’s personal and professional behavior and influence overall effectiveness will be explored, as well as their impact on overall leadership styles. Introduction to organization theory and behavior with focus on health services organizations, facilitated by reading and class discussion. Woven among these elements will be understanding and applying the difference between management and leadership. Individuals will understand the importance of corporate values, leading change management, and strengthening collaboration.

Prerequisite: MHA 403.

HCA 412-DL Healthcare Value and Revenue Cycle Management (Finance 2) (1 Unit)
This course introduces healthcare administrators to information directly related to a modern healthcare revenue cycle and the impact that this process has on the financial viability of all healthcare organizations. Students will discuss and apply economic analyses to the health services sector; topics of discussion include the concept of efficiency and distribution of health services, health insurance, government programs, healthcare personnel, and health services organizations. Students will learn about emerging reimbursement trends and payment models within the regulatory parameters. Prerequisite HCA 404-DL.

HCA 413-DL Healthcare Organizations: Operations and Performance Improvement (1 Unit)
This course introduces the tools and techniques of contemporary project management. The course will address time management and the difference between management of ongoing operations and new projects, as well as the need for a disciplined approach when planning and executing projects. Specific topics will include continuous quality improvement and re-engineering, demand forecasting, facility location and design models, decision analysis techniques, and patient access models. Students will understand the language, applications, and limitations of quantitative models with regard to decision making and problem solving in healthcare organizations. Students will define variations and methods and tools to differentiate among Process and Performance Improvement, Project Management and the intersection of utilizing data and research to maximize outcomes. Prerequisite HCA 405-DL.

HCA 420-DL Operating in the Patient-Centric Healthcare Environment and Structures (1 Unit)
The course will focus on enhancing students’ effectiveness as healthcare leaders by expanding their capabilities in organizational structure and leadership, and within the ever-evolving health ecosystem. The course will develop student skills in observation and reflection on individual behavior, group processes, and healthcare systems. Students will understand the importance of personal leadership and lifelong learning. Course will discuss legacy organizational structures in academic and community settings, as well as current patient-centric approach via key service lines (oncology, women’s, cardiovascular, neuro, and musculoskeletal). Additional learnings will include developing and executing creative ways to review and improve the patient-centered care model. Prerequisite HCA 401-DL.

HCA 430-DL Defining Value in a Market: Strategic Management & Healthcare Innovation (1 Unit)
This course aims to integrate the knowledge and skills developed during the foundational course of study in the program in the context of strategic management of healthcare organizations. Learning is supported by individual and team analysis of complex health management cases. Students will be aware of approaches to managing and marketing health services from a strategic perspective including the regulatory landscape. The marketing process and patient behavior are examined in relationship to the unique and changing aspects of the health services industry. Techniques for determining strategies for unique services, integration of strategy, structure, and administrative systems will be discussed. This course provides an overview of the principle components of healthcare innovation, including business planning, raising philanthropic funds, and innovation.

HCA 498-DL Capstone - Final Business Project and Program Development (1 Unit)
This course provides students with opportunities to apply the fundamentals of strategic planning and marketing, human resources, finance, analytics, and operations acquired in previous courses to approach practical problems and decisions faced by real healthcare systems and may include policy or product development. Students will be expected to work on the project with a colleague. The project will address an applicable and current issue in the student’s current organization such as problem-solving a crisis management issue. Students apply techniques of situational assessment, data analysis, strategy development, problem solving, and critical thinking. Prerequisite: Students may take one other course simultaneously with HCA 498. All other core course requirements must have been completed prior to the commencement of this course.