

West Virginia University  
School of Dentistry  
Department of Dental Hygiene

Rural Health Curriculum Requirement

Effective 11/8/95

Revised 2011, 2015, 2018, August 2019

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The West Virginia University School of Dentistry Department of Dental Hygiene curriculum has included a rural health rotation for all students since the 1996-97 academic year. This is a unique opportunity of personal and professional growth and development during an eight-week, rural rotation. This occurs during eight weeks of the Summer Session between the third and fourth year of the curriculum.

The curriculum plan, as designed and set forth by the Department of Dental Hygiene, is focused to give each student the opportunity to spend eight consecutive weeks at a rural site. This provides each rising Senior Dental Hygiene student with the opportunity to practice and apply skills learned in rural health, public health, dental health education, and clinical courses, as well as, knowledge learned in didactic courses of the basic sciences.

A principal goal of the rural rotation is to instill an understanding and appreciation of rural and primary care in health professional students with the practice of the Rural /Community Experience program's vision. The vision is "...a time when all residents of our most underserved rural communities have local access to high quality primary health care provided by well trained, high quality health care professionals." Dental Hygiene students are given an opportunity to become involved in the day-to-day dynamics that uniquely affect the rural private dental practice and community rural health clinics. Adjunct faculty members help the student in meaningful ways by putting into daily practice those clinical and educational skills they have gained in school.

The overall goals of the program can best be met when the adjunct faculty and the area coordinators involve students in as many aspects as possible of clinical practice, and community affairs. Visits to hospitals, primary care centers, community agencies, and attendance at meetings of service clubs, schools, nursing homes, etc are an integral part of the program. This is further enhanced when the visiting students become engaged with their placement sites in the realm of providing community service activities for their communities while living in that same area.

This program continues to be a very positive experience for our dental hygiene students. It is a very unique opportunity and we are delighted that you, as a rising Senior, will have the ability to participate.