What type of work would I do if I studied Respiratory Therapy?

Respiratory therapists evaluate, treat and care for patients with breathing or other cardiopulmonary disorders. Respiratory therapists, practicing under physician direction, assume primary responsibility for all respiratory care, therapeutic treatments and diagnostic procedures, including the supervision of respiratory therapy technicians.

The National Board of Respiratory Care (NBRC) offers voluntary certification and registration to graduates of programs accredited by CAAHEP or the Committee on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC). Two credentials are awarded to respiratory therapists who satisfy the requirements: Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT) and Certified Respiratory Therapist (CRT). Graduates from accredited programs in respiratory therapy may take the CRT examination. CRTs who meet education and experience requirements can take two separate examinations leading to the award of the RRT credential. The CRT examination is the standard in the states requiring licensure.

What salary can I expect to earn?

Respiratory therapists in Missouri earned an average annual salary of $45,200, according to May 2007 data compiled by the Missouri Department of Economic Development and posted on the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center Web site. In the south-central region, therapists earned an average annual salary of $40,865.

Job opportunities are expected to be very good with employment of respiratory therapists expected to increase faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2016. Although hospitals will continue to employ the vast majority of therapists, a growing number can expect to work outside of hospitals.