Under the microscope: High school students get sneak peek at med field

By ELLEN BROWN
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SEVIERVILLE — Around 50 local high school students are getting a three-day preview of today’s medical field during East Tennessee State University-Sevier County Partnership’s Health Sciences Career Camp at Sevier County High School.

“We want to familiarize our students with all job opportunities in the medical field,” said Rebekah Atchison, Sevier County Schools transition high school coordinator. “Sometimes they don’t realize that the things they’re already interested in can feed into a medical career. The main thing is to broaden their horizons.”

The camp includes a mock trauma event; small group sessions in nursing, medicine, pharmacy, physical therapy, radiography and public health; a choice of touring LeConte Medical Center or taking an American Heart Association Heartsaver Certification class; and a tour of ETSU, including the College of Pharmacy, College of Medicine Simulation Lab, College of Nursing Simulation Lab and Dental Hygiene Clinic and Lab.

Monday afternoon’s mock trauma was centered around the scenario of a young girl who had been in a car crash while texting and driving.

“We chose an issue that was really pertinent to teens,” said Joy Johnson, research assistant for the Office of Rural and Community Health.

Before the presentation began, Johnson said to the students, “I want you guys to pay attention to this. After seeing this, you’re going to think twice about texting and driving.”
Once the video of the crash was played, different medical professionals portrayed what would happen in the Emergency Room after the victim arrived.

Then, as a paramedic, ER nurse and physician each told the audience about their jobs, their career salary ranges and average length of study for their degrees were shown on an overhead projector.

“When I was in high school, my guidance counselor told me I wasn’t smart enough and I didn’t have the support I would need to become a doctor,” Dr. Connie Stoots, a physician in Johnson City, told the camp’s attendees. “I ended up going into special education — which is a great field — but after a few years, I thought I would see if I could prove my guidance counselor wrong. And I did.”

Students were also given a tour of an Emergency Vehicle on Monday.

“I wanted to see if I would be interested in a medical career,” said Samir Ibrahim, an upcoming sophomore. “I’m interested in maybe becoming an OBGyn. My family is in business, and this is something I wanted to explore myself.”

Dalton Rogers, a rising senior, plans to major in biochemistry.

“I like biology, and I like chemistry — and I want to do both without having to double major,” he explained. “I’d like to become a general physician. If I had to pick a specialty, I’d pick hematology.”

There will be a parents’ meeting will be held from 4-6 p.m. at SCHS today, open to all Sevier County parents — not just the parents of this week’s campers.

Admission representatives from ETSU, as well as all of the school’s health sciences colleges, will be available to answer questions on financial aid and provide other information.