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Future doctors often start as ER scribes

Someday they'll be doctors, but right now they're ER scribes

BY JIM HALL

Date published: 4/15/2012

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Emily Alberto smiles now as she recalls what happened last year prior to her interview for admission to medical school.

Alberto was on a tour with about a dozen other applicants at the Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk when a school official introduced the group to a mock patient. The official wanted someone in the group to take the patient's medical history.

"Who'd like to give it a try?" the official asked.

Alberto had taken hundreds of patient histories as a scribe in the emergency department at Mary Washington Hospital, so she raised her hand to volunteer.

She moved quickly through the questions she uses at the hospital, questions designed to reveal the possible reasons for a patient's distress.

"It went great," she said. "It was a situation we see here all the time."

A graduate of Stafford High School, Alberto is a full-time biology student at the [University of Mary Washington](#) and a part-time scribe at the hospital.

She suspects that her experience at the hospital strengthened her application to Eastern Virginia. She was accepted and will begin medical school there this fall.

Alberto and her fellow scribes--20 to 25 in all--hope someday to become doctors or physician's assistants. In the meantime, they are paid minimum wage to help the ER doctors compile the patient's chart.

All of the scribes are in their 20s. About half are students at UMW.

Some, like Chris Fuller, Patrick and Sean Ober and Kellyn Schlessinger, are the children of local providers.

Fuller's dad, Dr. Philip Fuller, is a longtime Fredericksburg physician. Schlessinger, a recent graduate of the program, worked with her ER dad, Dr. James Schlessinger. The Obers are the sons of Peter Ober, a physician's assistant in the ER.

Other scribes are recent college graduates, awaiting the start of medical school. Adam Goodreau, for example, graduated from William & Mary last year and will start medical school at VCU this fall.

Goodreau was on duty at Mary Washington last week when Sharon Yushko arrived.

Yushko, 49, had a sharp pain in her left hip. Dolores Yushko, her mother, sat beside her bed in the exam room. She told Goodreau that her daughter screamed when she tried to get out of bed.

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Mary Washington Hospital scribe Adam Goodreau takes notes on pains that patient Sharon Yushko is experiencing while her mother, Dolores Yushko, shows him a rash on her foot. Goodreau will start medical school at VCU this fall.
SUZANNE CARR ROSSI/THE FREE LANCE-STAR

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