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S1: And everyone went around and it was kind of the same thing, it's like I've never heard of this, but I didn't want to be one on one with patients.

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S2: I wanted to be the behind the scenes hero. And that's why this program feels to me so much. I can do all the science. I can come up with the answers I can solve. All the mysteries.

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S3: 70 percent of a doctor's diagnosis is based on our lab results.

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S1: If you've ever been interested in just the hands-on part of science, if the idea of working with a microscope is exciting to you.

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S4: Ninety eight point seven Chat tech we're ninety eight point seven percent of our students are a career, and today's episode we're going to look at the Clinical Laboratory Technology Program. Don't worry if you've never heard of it, a lot of people haven't. That's OK.

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S1: Hi, my name is Leah Hovis. I am a what I guess, third year student at Chattahoochee Tech. Well, we had an orientation about a week before classes started. And it was kind of our professor's chance to give us an idea of what to expect and then kind of to introduce ourselves. So it was kind of like an icebreaker before classes started and everyone went around and it was kind of the same thing. It's like I'd never heard of this, but I didn't want to be one on one with patients. So when I heard about this, it was like it clicked. So we're all kind of in the same boat. We didn't really know it was a thing and it should be talked about more. But it's just it's not.

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S2: My name is Tori again. I am a student at Chad Tech. I am in the middle of my clinical rotations at Cornerstone Hospital. I'm in the clinical lab tech program and I am loving every second of it. The way that I found it is because it was a branch off of nursing. I like the idea of nursing. I like solving problems. I

like the medical aspect of it, but I don't want to deal with patients. What else can I do from here? And then it branches off and you say, Hmm, I'm going to be elastic.

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S3: I am Jennifer Chen. I am the clinical coordinator for the Clinical Laboratory Technology Program. I also instruct a couple of classes in the program as well. There is such a shortage for lab technicians, and like I said, it's it's hard to get filled because not many people know about lab technicians, so they don't even know that that's an option.

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S4: We'll talk with Leah, Tory and Jennifer throughout the episode to find out exactly what this program is and what kind of people do well here.

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S3: Clinical laboratory technology, our lab technicians, we get you ready to be a lab technician in a hospital laboratory or a clinical laboratory, whether it's in a hospital or in a doctor's office or a reference lab. They run tests on blood and body fluids that help the doctor diagnose or monitor therapy or treat patients.

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S1: I mean, growing up, I always wanted to go into medicine, and the first thing people think of is nursing, and the older I got, I realized that I couldn't really handle what nurses have to deal with with the like super like intimate one on one with patients and things like that. But I still wanted to go into medicine. And then someone told me about the lab program and it's like, Hey, you can do all this testing, but you're kind of behind the scenes. You're not really one on one with the patients. And I thought it was a perfect fit.

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S2: I never knew this was an option. If I had, I probably would have gone for it from the get-go. And I've always loved science and wanted to help people, but I've never really wanted to be the caretaker kind, if that makes any sense. I did want to go straight into nursing or have direct contact with the patients. I wanted to be the behind the scenes hero. And that's why this program appeals to me so much. I can do all the science. I can come up with the answers. I can solve all the mysteries without having to directly be with the patients themselves.

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S3: Bless the nurses, OK? They they have to do some stuff that, you know, not a lot of people are up for. But yes, if there's people out there that love helping people, maybe don't and not so good at, you've got weak stomachs or not so good about cleaning messes. And you know, a lot of the dirty stuff that nurses have to do sometimes.

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S1: And it's really funny because not only with the ice breakers that we did before classes started, but from what I've seen in the hospital itself at first. Like when you're meeting people, it's kind of tense, but then you kind of click on that same level of just like, yeah, like we don't have to be face to face with people and we're super happy being back here. And then it's just like it. It's a very like we're all a very similar type of personality. And from what I've seen, everyone gets along really well just because it is such a specific type of personality that goes into this program.

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S4: Are you interested in the medical field but don't want to interact too much with patients? Do you like solving problems and puzzles and helping people? Would you like to be the hero behind the scenes behind

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S2: the scenes man doing all the work, solving all the problems from behind the scenes? It's on the scenes, man.

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S4: No, not like that. We've talked about this and

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S3: a lot of people are attracted to clinical laboratory technology. If they're interested in the medical field and interested in helping people, but they might not want to be hands on on patient care. So we are behind the scenes, helping doctors figure out what is wrong with the patient and how the doctors can diagnose and treat the patient. We are behind the scenes helping the patients. So a lot of people are attracted to being in the medical field, but not hands-on like nurses or medical assistance. Seventy percent of a doctor's diagnosis is based on our lab results. You know what? The lab work that we do and get to the doctor is crucial for inpatient care. So I'd say I would say getting the word out there about

medical laboratory technology is is very important to know that that's even a career path someone could choose.

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S2: Yeah, I mean, you always know that there is there is a lab when you go to the doctor's office and they take your blood and they say, we're going to send this to the lab for analysis, you know, it's there, but it's never presented as a career option. When you tell people, I love math, I love science. What do you think I should do? They come up with answers like, Oh, you should be a doctor or, Oh, you should be an engineer. They never say you should be a clinical lab technician. And they really should, because there is a huge need for it. All of the doctor's offices, all of the hospitals, all of the medical reference laboratories, everyone needs us. We are the behind the scenes heroes for the whole pandemic. We're the ones who are running all of the tests. We have a big poster in our classroom that I have always loved that says be nice to the lab techs because we keep the doctors from killing you. But they might be the ones who hand out the diagnosis and the medications and the treatment plan, but we're the one that gives them that diagnosis with the information that we gather. So it really it should be a much more highlighted profession. And yet it isn't, and it really baffles me. Just no one ever thinks about the lab techs, and I really wish that it wasn't that way because, like I said, there's a high need and it's a really important job.

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S4: She said it's a high need and a really important job, and it could be your future. But how do you get there? What are the classes like?

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S3: So our classes, you have a lecture portion where you're learning the material and then you have a lab. Question, are you doing hands on learning hands on laboratory skills in the lab, so for each class, you have a lecture portion and a lab for that class. So in the lecture portion, you're learning a ton of material, a ton of methodology for what you're going to actually be doing in the labs we're testing. So you understand the principles and methods of testing that you'll be doing in the laboratory.

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S1: The professors will make PowerPoints and they'll lecture from the book, and they do have us go through the book on our own. So we have a full understanding of what's going on. And then they'll lecture based on PowerPoints and then just kind of talking with anecdotes and things like that. And then there's a lab portion of it where we'll actually go from the lecture classroom, which is just like a normal lecture classroom over to the lab where there's lab benches and there's analyzers and they have samples made up. And depending on what we're doing like during the urinalysis class, for example, they'll have urine samples and we'll have to take them and prepare them to be looked at and then take

a sample of it and put it on a slide and put on the microscope and then look at it. And of we're looking for certain materials, certain cells, certain things that are in it. And then there's like a way to record it that we have to understand the method of reporting. And then there's like a paper aspect to that where we're actually recording our results. And that's just that's just one class, but it's the same idea of basically like we go in the lab and we directly apply the lecture material to what we're doing in a really hands-on way.

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S3: It's very intense. There is a lot to know, a lot to learn in our classes. And then the laboratory skills, you have to know well, how to do correctly to get correct results in the lab. So it's it's very and both parts are very important to make a good lab technician.

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S4: It's a lot, but you won't be alone. There's plenty of help for you here at jet tech.

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S3: We give them objectives which are basically study guides at the beginning of every unit for every class. And these are the points that they need to know to be able to successfully pass the registry that they're going to have to take to become certified medical laboratory technicians. So we give them objectives. We have lectures. We have reviews and study sessions, and they're always able to email us and set up times to meet with us one on one for tutoring sessions if they feel like they're struggling with something. So we try our best, you know, to give them every opportunity to be able to get some clarification with learning this material because it is so much and some of it is really complex. So we we do our best to offer a variety of different ways that we can help them understand and meet with us or get the help that they need if they're struggling to, you know, memorize it or understand it.

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S1: They were always definitely willing to. If you needed extra help or you needed like really anything extra, they really just want you to come to them and talk to them and let you know or let them know if you're struggling or if you need extra help with something. All three of my professors were very, very clear about wanting us to genuinely succeed, not just as like students they're pushing through, but as people going into this workforce that they themselves have worked in and they love and they want to see, grow and succeed. And you could really tell. And I know it gets really intense sometimes and sometimes like if everyone's not doing super great, it can get kind of spirits are low or something like that, but it's definitely like a team effort. And like when if us as a class are struggling, our professors know, and they'll kind of take a step back and be like, OK, what do you guys think will help understand this better? What can we do to slow down and focus on this more with the time that we have available?

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S2: The teachers do a really good job of making sure that it is as digestible as possible, but it is a lot of information. It's very fast paced. It's definitely a challenge. And if you're not ready for it, it can throw you for a whirlwind.

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S4: The same is pretty cool, doesn't it? And there are a lot of jobs out there.

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S1: The great thing about this program is from what I've been told and what I've heard from, like past students, is it's a 100 percent job placement rate within six months of graduation. So that is fantastic. That's extremely reassuring.

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S4: OK, hold up. Just so you and I are clear, we can't guarantee anything,

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S3: but everybody has to go to the doctor at some point. And when they draw, your blood goes to the lab. We do that lab work and send it back to your doctor so your doctor knows what's going on without lab technicians. The doctors only have so much information to go on on how to treat you, how to, you know, monitor your therapy. And once that's done in the laboratory, there is such a shortage for lab technicians. And like I said it, it's hard to get filled because not many people know about lab technicians, so they don't even know that that's an option. So the job security is very secure.

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S4: Do you think the clinical laboratory technology program is a good fit for you if

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S1: you've ever been interested in just the hands-on part of science? If the idea of working with a microscope is exciting to you, the idea of working with like tubes of blood or anything like that, I mean centrifuges and pipe headers and things like that. If that excites you or that piques your interest, that's all this is. That's all you'll be doing all day, every day

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S2: that it's not that we don't like people or that we don't want to take care of them. It's that we don't want to have to put on the brave face. We don't want to have to look at the struggle. And that's not that's not a bad thing. It's not a sign of weakness. There's definitely a certain person that that is drawn towards nursing that strong towards taking care of people. That's drawn towards being the reason why they smile every day when you walk into that room. That, I think, is what really draws people to nursing is being the person that makes their stay at that hospital a little bit more bearable. And as much as I think that would be great. That's not what I'm there for. I'm there to help the doctors come up with a solution to come up with the reason why they're there in the first place. I want to be there to solve the problem.

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S4: Let's recap. Do you like science? Do you want to be in the medical field? But you know yourself well enough to say that you don't want to spend your days interacting with patients? Do you like solving problems? Do you want an in-demand job? Is this the program for you?

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S3: Yeah, I would say if they are problem solvers, like to solve problems into mysteries. You know, the thing that kind of got me is because I went through this program personally here at CTC. And what hooked me is I was actually thinking about going into nursing and thinking at the same time, I don't know if I want to be so involved with the patient aspect. I want to help people, but I don't know if I want to do everything that the nurses have to do honestly. So what got me was the director of this program had sent out an email when she was starting the program because I was a very first class in the very first class that CTC offered here for this program. And she sent out an email like, Are you interested in? Do you love NCIS and crime shows like that? Do you like problem-solving but also like helping people? Then this might be a program that you're interested in.

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S4: So what are you waiting for? Get online and check out the Clinical Laboratory Technology Program at Chattahoochee Tech. Find out everything you need to know. A Chattahoochee Tech Dot Edu. This podcast is a production of BG Ad Group. Darren Sutherland, executive producer. Jeremy Powell, Creative Director. Jacob Sutherland, Director. All rights reserved.