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Careers in Medical Physics and the American Association of Physicists in Medicine

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The American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM), a member society of the AIP is the largest professional society of medical physicists in the world with nearly 5700 members. Members operate in medical centers, university and community hospitals, research laboratories, industry, and private practice. Medical physics specialties include radiation therapy physics, medical diagnostic and imaging physics, nuclear medicine physics, and medical radiation safety. The majority of AAPM members is based in hospital departments of radiation oncology or radiology and provide technical support for patient diagnosis and treatment in a clinical environment. Job functions include support of clinical care, calibration and quality assurance of medical devices such as linear accelerators for cancer therapy, CT, PET, MRI, and other diagnostic imaging devices, research, and teaching. Pathways into a career in medical physics require an advanced degree in medical physics, physics, engineering, or closely related field, plus clinical training in one or more medical physics specialties (radiation therapy physics, imaging physics, or radiation safety). Most clinically based medical physicists also obtain certification from the American Board of Radiology, and some states require licensure as well.