

Allied Healthcare Professionals

HEROES OF OUR TIME

Healthcare workers have never been more important and respected! Everyone is applauding our healthcare workers combating the coronavirus. These selfless workers deserve our collective thanks for stepping up to save lives.

Do you have what it takes? Do you have a big heart and want to serve your community? Are you looking for stable employment and the deep joy associated with a helping profession? If so, you, too, can join the ranks of the heroes of our time!

Community colleges are specialists in health fields!

Community colleges have long specialized in training for numerous healthcare careers. Many of those who achieve a bachelor's degree in nursing or pharmacy began at community college. The fact is that graduates with a two-year certification and/or associate degree can make excellent wages in the allied healthcare industry. There are five million allied health care providers in the US who work in than 80 different professions.

Pathways available at your community college can get you started in: radiology, nursing, dental technology, nutrition,

pharmaceuticals, sonography, audiology, cardiology, anesthesiology, medical assisting, healthcare administration, and more.

Jobs are waiting for qualified applicants!

Allied health workers are the vital link which make our healthcare system work. Moreover, the demand from hospitals, doctor's offices and labs for qualified professionals far outstrips the number of applicants in many of these fields. These careers boast nearly full employment.

Experts say this trend will continue into the foreseeable future, long past COVID-19, because of the aging US population. By 2050, the world's population aged 60 years and older is expected

to total 2 billion, up from 900 million in 2015. Already, more Americans are over the age of 65 than at any other time in history. A huge number of healthcare professionals are also at retirement age themselves, creating a need for licensed healthcare professionals.

Career options through community college

Community colleges are highly attuned to the needs of the job market. Our counselors will help you consider your interests, academic strengths, and choose the right program. We have drawn much of our information from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics [<https://www.bls.gov/bls/employment.htm>] and recommend that site for exploring career paths. Another helpful reference is the American Institute of Medical Sciences and Education.

Here are some of the hottest allied healthcare jobs now.

Dental Hygienist

Oral health is more important than most people realize. The condition of your mouth, teeth and gums is a window to your overall health. Dental hygienists educate patients on oral hygiene, provide teeth cleaning and fluoride treatments, as well as examine x-rays. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), hygienists' median salary was \$77,230 as of 2019, making this vital profession among the highest paid within allied health.

Respiratory Therapist

Respiratory therapists care for patients with breathing or cardiopulmonary issues. Working with a physician, they treat patients with many different lung diseases, including asthma. This is another advantageous career choice requiring an associate degree. Median yearly wages are \$63,950. Under the impact of coronavirus, respiratory therapists are playing an invaluable role in saving thousands of lives. While this skill is especially sought-after now,

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it is projected to grow even more. The aging of the population is expected to drive up the employment of respiratory therapists by over 20 percent during the next decade.

Occupational Therapy (OT) Assistant

Do you like to work hands-on with patients? Then you might consider OT or Physical Therapy (below). Occupational therapy assistants and aides work in stand-alone businesses, hospitals, and nursing care facilities. OT assistants and aides learn to set up equipment and, in the case of assistants, provide therapy to patients. Aides have an annual median wage of \$30,000 and require only a high school diploma. However, assistants who complete an associate degree program earn more than double, with a median income of \$61,300 annually. Overall employment of OT assistants and aides is expected to grow a whopping 31 percent.

Physical Therapy (PT) Assistant

Physical therapist assistants typically need an associate degree from an accredited program and a license or certification. It is one of the most in-demand, but relatively unknown, career aspirations. Similar to occupational therapy, PTs improve patients' physical limitations after injury or illness. Working under supervision, PT assistants provide direct care to patients using massage, exercises, and specialized activities such as gait and balance training. Especially with an aging population, PT assistants are needed to keep people moving. The median PT assistant job is nearly \$50,000 a year.

Diagnostic Medical Sonographer

Are you technically-minded and good with advanced instruments?

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Diagnostic medical sonographers and cardiovascular technologists and technicians, including vascular technologists, operate special imaging equipment to create images or to conduct tests. Frequently recognized for their use in obstetrics, sonographers are used in a wide range of other diagnostic testing, including heart disease. Sonographers enter the career with two- or four-year degrees and have a median salary of \$68,750.

Radiological Technician

Technicians are responsible for providing x-rays for diagnosis. They also maintain equipment and records, using machines like a magnetic resonance imager (MRI). Community colleges offer the necessary training and preparation for state examinations. MRI Technologists earn a median salary of \$70,490.

Pharmacy Technician

Technicians in this field are the link between physicians and their patients. This job requires great responsibility and attention to detail. Pharmacy technicians prepare medications for



patients and typically make around \$35,250 a year. In most states, technicians can compound or mix some medications and call physicians for prescription refill authorizations. Pharmacy technicians who work in hospitals often prepare a greater variety of medications, such as intravenous medications. Additionally, they may make rounds in the hospital, giving medications to patients. Community colleges are well equipped to prepare students for the licensing examination. Increased demand for prescription medications is expected to lead to greater than average demand for trained pharmaceutical technicians.

Licensed Practical (LPN) or Vocational Nurse (LVN)

While licensed practical and vocational nursing is not technically part of the allied health fields, nursing at all levels of certification is in high demand. Working in a variety of environments, whether hospital, hospice, nursing home, or schools, nurses are critical in a wide variety of capacities. The duties of LPNs and LVNs can vary depending on work setting and state. For example,



they may reinforce teaching done by registered nurses regarding how family members should care for a relative; help to deliver, care for, and feed infants; collect samples for testing and do routine laboratory tests; or feed patients who need help eating. Average LPN and LVNs are making \$48,500 a year. Your community college will help you gain the skills to pass the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-PN).