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CONNECTING TO YOUR FUTURE

This newsletter, by the Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, Inc., was created to provide career and labor market information to educators and students.

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Jobs in Healthcare



The health care industry is expected to provide 19% of the new wage and salary jobs in the U.S. over the next decade, more than any other industry.

Are you trying to decide on a career or even a second or third career? Have you considered health care? With increasing demands from an aging population (the first Baby Boomers turn 60 in 2006) and advances in technology, the health care industry is growing rapidly.

In the past when people thought about health care jobs they only thought about doctors, dentists, nurses and veterinarians. Those fields continue to have widespread needs and even shortages. In fact, the nursing shortage is expected to hit crisis levels in the next decade as the number of registered nurses and LPNs retire and are not replaced.

Beyond these fields, health care offers opportunities with varied backgrounds, skills, talents, and abilities. According to the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, home health aides and personal care aids are 2 of the top 20 fields which will grow the fastest over the next decade. This is because of a growing and aging population which will require more assistance in their homes. In fact 8 of the top 20 occupations (7 of the top 10) expected to grow the fastest over the next decade are health care occupations.

The health care industry was the largest in 2004 with 13.5 million jobs. It is expected that health care will provide more new jobs than any other industry between 2004 and 2014. Most health care jobs require less than 4 years of college education. The exception to this is that the diagnosing and treating practitioners are among the most educated workers in the U.S.

For more information about growing fields in health care see the U.S. Department of Labor website at : <http://www.dol.gov/>.

Helping Hands: Careers in Healthcare

Working in Healthcare (Q&A)

From the Washington Post, September 11, 2006

Washington, D.C.: After the baby boomer generation subsides, will there be a glut in health care providers?

Karen Haller: The shortage of healthcare workers is projected to continue until 2020! Remember that many of us who work in health care are boomers, so we need to replace our numbers as well as staff the increase in demand. The increase in demand is not just attributable to an aging population, but also to increased technology, a rise in infectious diseases, and the need to serve as "first responders" in disasters.



Helping Hands: Careers in Healthcare

Washington, D.C.: Do nurses specialize? Is it worthwhile for them to do that if they have niche interests? Also, a relative of mine is a Physician's Assistant, what are the benefits of that degree besides the ability to prescribe drugs?

Karen Haller: Yes, nurses do specialize. Many pursue advanced graduate degrees (Master's degree or doctorate) in a specialized area. Nurses with interests in "niche areas," as you call them, should specialize and build depth of knowledge in that area. At the end of the day, nurses are "knowledge workers." The more knowledge they develop, the more valuable they are to institutions . . . and to patients! A physician's assistant (PA) is an extender for the physician's practice. They support medical practice and care for patients in many areas (e.g., operating rooms, intensive care units, procedure areas, etc.). They may prescribe drugs. Similarly, nurse practitioners (NP) are nurses with advanced preparation. They may also prescribe drugs, and manage a case load of patients.



Physician's Assistant Occupational Spotlight

In Demand: Medical Assistants
CareerBuilder.com

Sometimes there just aren't enough doctors to go around in rural and inner city clinics. To help ease these workloads, physician assistants step in to provide healthcare services under the supervision of physicians.

If you are interested in a career in medicine, but can't afford the time and expense of medical school, here is an overview of physician assistants from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS):

Overview

Physician assistants (PAs) are formally trained to provide diagnostic, therapeutic and preventative health care services under the watchful eye of a physician. They take medical histories, examine and treat patients, order and interpret laboratory tests, make diagnoses and treat injuries.

In all states but Indiana, Louisiana and Ohio, PAs can write prescriptions for medications. In some rural or inner city clinics, a PA may be a principal care provider. They may also make house calls or go to hospitals and nursing care facilities to check on patients, reporting back to the physician.

Training and Education

In all states, PAs must complete an accredited, formal education program, and most have at least a bachelor's degree. Most programs require at least two years of college and some healthcare work experience.

The Youth Council, acting under the direction of the Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, Inc. (WDB), is working to establish a comprehensive youth development system that provides effective learning environments linking education, employment, leadership development, mentoring, and sustained support for youth to achieve economic self-sufficiency. The WDB is a business-led Board that formulates strategies to address workforce development issues in western Wisconsin. For more information contact Beth Sullivan, Director of Marketing and Planning, at (608) 789-5610, SullivanB@workforceconnections.org, or visit our website at www.wjocenter.org.



Physician's Assistant Occupational Spotlight

PA programs usually last two years and are full-time. Upon graduation, all PAs must pass the Physician Assistants National Certifying Examination, administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants.

PAs need leadership skills, self-confidence and emotional stability.

Opportunities

Many PAs work in primary care specialties; others work in general and thoracic surgery, emergency medicine, orthopedics and geriatrics. Those specializing in surgery provide preoperative and postoperative care and may work as assistants during major surgery.

More than half of PA jobs are in the offices of physicians or other health practitioners. About 25 percent are in hospitals. The rest were mostly in outpatient care centers, the Federal government, educational services and employment services. Some PAs hold two or more jobs.

Pros and Cons

Becoming a licensed physician assistant requires far less education than it would take to become a doctor. PAs usually work in comfortable offices, and work fewer hours than physicians, usually around 40 hours per week. As they become more experienced, PAs generally receive higher pay.

However, by the nature of the job, PAs will always be supervised by physicians. They also may have to work weekends, nights or early morning shifts, and are sometimes on call.

Salary

Median annual earnings of physician assistants were \$64,670 in 2002, according to the BLS. Income varies by specialty, practice setting, geographical location and years of experience.

Job Outlook

As the healthcare industry continues to expand, employment of PAs is projected to grow much faster than the average for all occupations through 2012. The BLS expects physicians and institutions will employ more PAs to provide primary care because they are cost effective and productive.

PAs should find a growing number of jobs in institutions like hospitals, academic medical centers, public clinics and prisons. Opportunities will be best in states that allow PAs a wider scope of practice.

Healthcare: Calling All Nurses

If you're really looking for long-term job security in the healthcare industry, consider going into nursing. Three out of five new RNs will take jobs in hospitals with others going into specialized care. Many people begin careers by serving the geriatric population as school-trained nurse's aides, physician assistants, and orderlies while they return to college part-time or through online programs to pursue nursing degrees.

Nursing schools and other healthcare college programs are scrambling to meet the demands of training qualified professionals. According to The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), 44 states will face a severe shortage of nurses by 2020 because, currently, the population of registered nurses is growing at the lowest level in 20 years. Further, the AACN reports, "the ratio of potential caregivers to the people most likely to need care, the elderly population, will decrease by 40% between 2010 and 2030."

No wonder, the BLS identifies registered nursing as the second fastest-growing of all occupations for job growth through 2012. If you're considering entering a college nursing program, consider that the aging population of nurses approaching retirement is growing faster than the number of newly minted recruits to assume those jobs. Working nurses are rapidly joining the population of boomers requiring healthcare. The American Hospital Association reports that RN openings go unfilled, and 75% of hospitals today are finding it more difficult to recruit nurses than in the past. Some facilities are offering \$30,000 sign-on bonuses to entice experienced nurses away from other employers.

Retrieved from <http://www.worldwidelearn.com/healthcare/article/healthcarejobsserving-baby-boomers-promises-sustained-growth.php> on 4/30/2007.



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The BSN: A Higher Degree of Nursing Care

A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association and reported by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing found that surgical patients treated by a greater percentage of nurses holding bachelor's degrees had a "substantial survival advantage" over those that didn't.



In fact, a 10% increase in nurses with BSN degrees decreases the risk of patient death and failure to rescue by 5%. While the nation's overall nursing shortage is acute, a clear lack of nurses holding bachelor's degrees is a problem.

Why Earn a BSN?

There are several paths to becoming a registered nurse. The first is an associate's degree in nursing (ADN), the second is a diploma program administered directly by a hospital, and the third is the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. While all three offer training that prepares graduates to be registered nurses, a BSN offers a broader scope of the field. As such, there are more opportunities available to those with a BSN degree.

Many career paths, including administrative, research, consulting, and teaching positions are only available to those with at least a bachelor's degree. In fact, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, all four advanced practice nursing specialties (clinical nurse specialist, nurse anesthetist, nurse midwife, and nurse practitioner) require at least a bachelor's degree in nursing. It's also required for military nursing, case management, public health nursing, forensic nursing, and school nursing. A BSN program stresses critical thinking and communication skills, and offers more clinical experience in non-hospital settings. Anyone wishing to eventually hold a management position must hold a BSN in order to pursue the required graduate degree in nursing or health care administration.

RN-to-BSN

The health care industry will face a shortage of 800,000 nurses by the year 2020. The aging Baby Boomer population (a large percentage of whom are nurses themselves) as well as an increased life span have the health care industry looking for ways to add to their nursing staffs. The results include huge signing bonuses of up to \$14,000 or more, as well as flexible scheduling and accelerated degree programs, which are meant to get nurses out of the classrooms and into the field as quickly as possible. This is where the RN-to-BSN program comes in.

Because of the advancement opportunities available to those with BSN degrees, the RN-to-BSN program is an appealing option that allows registered nurses to continue working in the field while earning their bachelor's degrees at an accelerated pace. Many of these programs are offered online, allowing working RN's to work a schedule that is convenient for them while continuing their education. Such online programs can be completed in about a year to 18 months, and by taking advantage of a program with a local practicum, bachelor's degree candidates get hands-on experience in a local hospital setting that may open doors to future advancement opportunities. Working nurses enrolled in an RN-to-BSN program may also receive tuition reimbursement by their employers.

Upon completion, a nurse with a BSN may earn a significantly higher salary than an RN. According to the American Nurses Association, hospital staff nurses may earn around \$35,000 per year, while those with advanced education and specialization may earn \$45,000 per year or more, depending on the specialty. Plus, the expanded advancement opportunities mean the sky's the limit for those with a bachelor of nursing degree.

Sources
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Nursing Shortage Fact Sheet (www.aacn.nche.edu)
Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)

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