



Eight Medical Jobs On The Rise



Despite a sluggish economy, these eight health careers are picking up steam.

By Terri Williams

Job growth may be stagnant in some industries, but health care isn't one of them. Many careers in the health sector are growing at a much faster rate than the national average, which the U.S. Department of Labor estimates at 14.3 percent from 2010 and 2020. The health care industry added 23,000 jobs in March alone.

So why is the health care industry booming? Well, it's a combination of many reasons.

"Technological developments, politics, our aging population, the economy, and other factors have all impacted the growth of health care careers," says Francine Fabricant, a New York City career counselor and co-author of the textbook, "Creating Career Success: A Flexible Plan for the World of Work."

More good news: You don't have to spend half of your adult life in medical school and residencies to get into one of these fast-growing health professions.

Keep reading to learn about eight sizzling health careers with educational requirements ranging from a high school diploma to a bachelor's degree.

Hot Health Career #1: Registered Nurse



Nursing is the hottest career in the nation's workforce. Why? According to the U.S. Department of Labor, 711,900 new jobs will be created in the profession from 2010 to 2020.

Why It's Booming: Ruth Winden, an international career management consultant in Great Britain, attributes the growth of this occupation to "the health care sector adapting to provide cost-effective care solutions in non-traditional hospital settings" such as outpatient care centers and physician's offices.

And what might registered nurses do in these health care facilities? Registered nurses could provide medicine and treatments, record

medical histories, or educate patients about different health conditions, reports the Department of Labor.

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Education Options: According to the Department of Labor, aspiring registered nurses can choose one of three educational options: a bachelor's of science degree in nursing, an associate's degree in nursing, or a diploma from an approved nursing program. The Department adds that all registered nurses must be licensed as well.

Hot Health Career #2: Diagnostic Medical Sonographer



Talk about hot. Diagnostic medical sonographer jobs are expected to increase by 44 percent, or 23,400 new positions, from 2010 to 2020, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

Why It's Booming: "Technology is responsible for growth in this area," says Fabricant, who isn't surprised by this career's growth projections. "In the quest for efficiency, demand for technology increases, and the need for those who understand how to use it also increases."

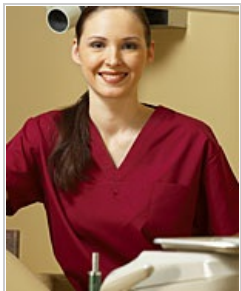
And sonographers sure know how to use technology. According to the Department of Labor, sonographers use imaging equipment to direct high-frequency sound waves inside a patient's body to produce images.

Later, they'll analyze these images and send their preliminary findings to physicians.

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Education Options: To pursue a career as a diagnostic medical sonographer, you'll need formal education, such as a postsecondary certificate or an associate's degree, according to the Department. Many employers might require that you also obtain professional certification.

Hot Health Career #3: Dental Assistant



Dental assisting is another health care career that is expected to see a meteoric rise in coming years. A 31 percent growth rate is projected for dental assistants from 2010 to 2020, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. All told the dental assisting field could see 91,600 new jobs by 2020.

Why It's Booming: "One factor that is impacting the growth of dental assistant jobs is the research finding that oral health positively impacts overall health," says Fabricant.

How so? Investigations have shown a link between periodontal disease and other diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer, according to the American Academy of Periodontology. Which, believe it or not, will motivate more people to go to the dentist, according to Fabricant.

And as dentists' schedules start to fill up, they will hire more dental assistants, who, according to the Department of Labor, prepare patients for procedures, sterilize dentist's tools, and even help dentists with certain procedures.

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Education Options: Some states do not require dental assistants to have formal education, while other states require completion of an accredited program and passing a state exam, according to the Department. Accredited programs may lead to a certificate, diploma, or an associate's degree.

Hot Health Career #4: Medical Records and Health Information Technician

And opportunities in the health care field keep heating up; the U.S. Department of Labor expects 37,700 new jobs to open up for medical records and health information technicians from 2010 through 2020 - a 21 percent increase overall.

Why It's Booming: "With paperless offices, the need for technicians who understand how to enter data, update records, and process information is critical," according to Fabricant. And medical records and health information technicians know just how to do that.

In fact, according to the Department of Labor, these professionals might spend their day

electronically recording patient data, maintaining clinical databases, and coding patient information.



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Education Options: Although medical records or health information technicians might have an associate's degree, typically they need a postsecondary certificate for entry-level positions, says the Department of Labor. Certification is also required by many employers.

Hot Health Career #5: **Medical Assistant**



Medical assistants should see their numbers grow significantly in coming years. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the profession should expect 31 percent growth from 2010 through 2020, an increase of 162,900 new jobs.

Why It's Booming: An aging population is also fueling jobs in this area. According to Winden, "aging baby boomers create a greater demand for primary health care, and medical assistants are taking on more regular medical and administrative tasks to free up physicians' time to consult patients."

And what tasks do they take care of? Well, according to the Department of Labor, they might schedule appointments and record patients' personal information, as well as help doctors with examinations.

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Education options: Although in most states there are no formal education requirements to pursue a career as a medical assistant, some medical assistants graduate from formal education programs, which employers prefer, says the Department of Labor. These programs could lead to a certificate, diploma, or an associate's degree.

Hot Health Career #6: **Pharmacy Technician**



Hold onto your prescriptions, a spike in pharmacy technician positions is expected. With projected growth of 32 percent, this occupation is expected to add 108,300 jobs from 2010 to 2020, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

Why It's Booming: Growth in this occupational field is the result of several factors: "Medical advances, new drug discoveries, and a higher demand for prescription drugs by an aging population all contribute to the demand for pharmacy technicians," according to Winden.

Which makes sense, as the Department of Labor says, pharmacy technicians are the ones who fill prescriptions after counting tablets and mixing medications.

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Education Options: Usually a high school diploma or the equivalent is required to pursue a career as a pharmacy technician, according to the Department of Labor. However, most states regulate technicians in some way and might require candidates to complete a "formal training program" or pass an exam.

Hot Health Career #7: **Physical Therapist Assistant**

No cooling off here, as employment of physical therapist assistants is expected to increase by 46 percent while creating 30,800 new jobs from 2010 to 2020, says the U.S. Department of Labor.

Why It's Booming: The need for physical therapy assistants will increase, says Winden, because "the aging population has a higher risk of heart attacks, strokes, and chronic diseases." Not only that, but "medical advances may also result in a higher number of trauma patients and surviving infants with birth defects, who will require physical therapy treatment," she says.



Physical therapy assistants play a big role in delivering physical therapy treatment, since according to the Department of Labor, they are the ones who observe patients during therapy and help patients do different types of exercises to help them regain movement.

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Education Options: According to the Department of Labor, in most states, an associate's degree from an accredited physical therapy program is required to pursue a career as a physical therapist assistant.

Hot Health Career #8: Medical and Health Services Manager



Job opportunities for these health care administrators are on fire. In fact, the U.S. Department of Labor projects a 22 percent job growth that will create 68,000 new medical and health services managers from 2010 to 2020.

Why It's Booming: Winden attributes the growth to "higher life expectancy rates and greater demand for general and more specialized health care provision for the aging baby boomer generation." And as the demand for health care provision increases, so does the number of facilities and the number of health care administrators needed to manage them, says the Department of Labor.

Medical and health services managers, who manage an entire facility or a particular clinical area or department, may represent the facility at investor meetings, supervise assistant administrators, or take care of the facility's finances, adds the Department.

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Education Options: Although "prospective medical and health services managers have a bachelor's degree in health administration," the Department adds that "requirements vary by facility. However, it is also common for these professionals to have master's degrees in health services, business administration, public health, long-term care administration, and public administration.

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