

CTE: HEALTH

DEVELOPING THE CARE WORKFORCE

Career and technical education (CTE) supports America's health care needs by

preparing learners to enter this critical workforce, which employs more than **17 million**¹ people nationwide with approximately **1.9 million**² individuals needed each year to meet demand.

CTE programs in health science develop students' technical, academic and employability skills through work-based and hands-on learning, ensuring that they are prepared to enter a **high-wage, in-demand** career in areas such as allied health, nursing and behavioral health.

This infographic describes a small sample of the career opportunities available in the health care sector.

ALLIED HEALTH



- Allied health professionals who work in disease prevention, diagnostic services and rehabilitation are in high demand: jobs for respiratory therapists are expected to grow by **14%**³ and jobs for occupational therapy assistants by **25%**⁴ through 2031.
- Many people working in allied health earn more than the national median wage, from **\$46,600**⁵ per year for medical records specialists to almost **\$83,000**⁶ for radiation therapists.
- Allied health careers typically require a **postsecondary certificate or degree** as well as a **license** from a state licensing agency.
- People working in support roles, such as occupational therapy assistants, can pursue **additional education** to move into more advanced positions like occupational therapists.

NURSING



- The nursing workforce includes more than **6 million**⁷ registered nurses, licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and licensed vocational nurses (LVNs), with demand for LPNs/LVNs projected to grow faster than supply.⁸
- Nursing has well-established **career ladders** from LPN/LVN to registered nurse (RN) to specialist roles like nurse anesthetist (CRNA), nurse midwife (CNM) or nurse practitioner (NP).
- LPNs/LVNs earn a median salary of **\$48,000**⁹ annually, rising to more than **\$77,000**¹⁰ for registered nurses (RN) and nearly **\$200,000**¹¹ for nurse anesthetists (CRNA).
- **Degrees and specialty certifications** can help individuals elevate their skills to build a fulfilling career in nursing.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



- About **160 million**¹² Americans live in communities with shortages of mental health professionals.
- Counselors who help people with substance abuse and mental health issues are in particular demand, with job openings projected to grow by **22%**¹³ through 2031.
- Median earnings for mental health and substance abuse counselors are **\$48,500**¹⁴ per year, while psychologists can make **\$81,000**¹⁵ annually.
- Bachelor's and advanced **degrees and licenses** are key to career growth in behavioral health.

CTE: DEVELOPING THE HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE

MORE JOBS IN HEALTH CARE

Beyond the previously mentioned careers in health care, CTE prepares youth and adults for these additional occupations:

- Athletic trainer
- Dental hygienist
- Physical therapist
- Optician
- Clinical laboratory technician
- Paramedic
- Phlebotomist
- Audiologist
- Physician
- Patient navigator

The North Dakota State College of Science pharmacy technician program partners with PioneerRx, a pharmacy software system, to simulate the functions of a real pharmacy. Learners also participate in an eight-week internship in a community or hospital setting. The program has had a 100% job placement rate since 1994.¹⁶

HOW CTE PREPARES THE HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE

CTE programs of study and career pathways prepare secondary, postsecondary and adult learners for the health care workforce in many ways:

- **Courses** in emergency medical technology, health care diagnostics, respiratory therapy, biotechnology, medical coding and transcription, sports medicine and more spanning secondary and postsecondary education.
- Opportunities to earn **postsecondary certificates and degrees** in diagnostic medical sonography, health information technology, dental hygiene, registered nursing, medical assisting and more.
- Opportunities to earn **licenses** from state agencies and credentials from organizations like the National Healthcareer Association, among others.
- **Work-based learning** experiences like job shadowing and clinical experiences.
- Competitive events, service learning and leadership development through **career and technical student organizations** such as HOSA–Future Health Professionals and SkillsUSA.
- **Activities** that build technical, academic and employability skills such as teamwork, communication and problem solving.

Citations

- ¹ Kaiser Family Foundation. (N.d.). *Total health care employment: May 2022*. Retrieved from <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/total-health-care-employment>
- ² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022, September). *Occupational outlook handbook: Healthcare occupations*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/home.htm>
- ³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022, September). *Occupational outlook handbook: Respiratory therapists*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/respiratory-therapists.htm>
- ⁴ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022, September). *Occupational outlook handbook: Occupational therapy assistants and aides*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/occupational-therapy-assistants-and-aides.htm>
- ⁵ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022, October). *Occupational outlook handbook: Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/medical-records-and-health-information-technicians.htm>
- ⁶ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022, September). *Occupational outlook handbook: Radiation therapists*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/radiation-therapists.htm>
- ⁷ Smiley, R. A., et al. (2023, April). The 2022 National Nursing Workforce Survey. *Journal of Nursing Regulation* 14(1), S1–S90. Retrieved from [https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/article/S2155-8256\(23\)00047-9/fulltext](https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/article/S2155-8256(23)00047-9/fulltext)
- ⁸ National Center for Health Workforce Analysis. (2022, November). *Nurse workforce projections, 2020–2035*. Retrieved from <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bureau-health-workforce/Nursing-Workforce-Projections-Factsheet.pdf>
- ⁹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022, May). *Occupational outlook handbook: Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/licensed-practical-and-licensed-vocational-nurses.htm>
- ¹⁰ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022, September). *Occupational outlook handbook: Registered nurses*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/registered-nurses.htm>
- ¹¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022, September). *Occupational outlook handbook: Nurse anesthetists, nurse midwives, and nurse practitioners*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/nurse-anesthetists-nurse-midwives-and-nurse-practitioners.htm#tab-5>
- ¹² Counts, N. (2023, May 18). *Understanding the U.S. behavioral health workforce shortage*. The Commonwealth Fund. Retrieved from <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/explainer/2023/may/understanding-us-behavioral-health-workforce-shortage>
- ¹³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022, October). *Occupational outlook handbook: Substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/substance-abuse-behavioral-disorder-and-mental-health-counselors.htm>
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022, September). *Occupational outlook handbook: Psychologists*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/life-physical-and-social-science/psychologists.htm>
- ¹⁶ North Dakota State College of Science. (N.d.). *Pharmacy technician*. Retrieved from <https://www.ndscs.edu/sites/default/files/PDFs/Academic%20PDFs/Fact%20Sheets/Pharmacy%20Technician-Certificate.pdf>

Learn More

This Sector Sheet highlights just a few occupations within the health care workforce. To learn more, please visit the U.S. Department of Labor at www.CareerOneStop.org/ExploreCareers and MyNextMove.org.



Pearson
Proud supporters of ACTE.