

Top Ten (10) Fastest Growing Allied Health Careers

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the health care field is the largest industry in the United States today. It employs over 13 million workers in 2007. Of the twenty fastest growing occupations today, eight of them are in health care. It is anticipated that 20% of the new jobs created between now and 2014 will be in the health care industry, and most of these jobs require four years or less of college.

Many of these jobs will be in the area of Allied Health. The term Allied Health is used to identify a cluster of health professions and covers as many as 100 different jobs (but not physicians and nurses).

While all allied health careers anticipate growth in the coming years, these ten health care careers are all expected to grow over 25% annually—meaning that these careers will provide the greatest long-term job security. This top-ten list includes educational requirements and average salaries for each health care job.

For complete listing of schools that have the degree/certification you may be interested in pursuing, please review each school's offerings of allied health careers studies.

1. Medical Assistants:

One of the fastest growing allied health careers, these health care professionals perform administrative and clinical tasks to keep the offices of physicians, podiatrists, chiropractors, and other health practitioners running smoothly. The duties of medical assistants vary from office to office, depending on the location and size of the practice and the practitioner's specialty. Medical assistants perform many administrative duties, including answering telephones, greeting patients, updating and filing patients' medical records, filling out insurance forms, handling correspondence, scheduling appointments, arranging for hospital admission and laboratory services, and handling billing and bookkeeping.

As the health care industry expands because of technological advances in medicine and the growth and aging of the population, more Medical Assistants will be needed. In fact, this is anticipated to be the fastest growing health care job through 2014.

Education Requirements: Most Medical Assistants complete postsecondary programs that last either one year, resulting in a certificate or diploma, or two years, resulting in an associate degree.

Salary: The average salary for Medical Assistants is \$24,610.

Texas Programs:

Academy of Health Care Professions - Houston, TX:

<http://www.ahcp.edu/program-medical-assistant.php>

Arlington Career Institute – Grand Prairie, TX

<http://www.arlingtoncareerinstitute.edu/programs/>

Coleman College for Health Sciences - Houston, TX

<http://coleman.hccs.edu/coleman/a-career-in-health-sciences>

Cisco College – Cisco, TX

<http://www.cisco.edu/s/926/index.aspx?sid=926&gid=1&pgid=286>

El Centro College – Dallas, TX

<http://www.elcentrocollege.edu/Program/>

El Paso Community College – El Paso, TX

<http://start.epcc.edu/search/Directories.aspx?Directory=Academic>

Kilgore College – Kilgore, TX

<http://www.kilgore.edu/programs.asp>

Richland College – Dallas, TX

<http://www.richlandcollege.edu/hp/>

Howard College – Big Springs, TX

http://www.howardcollege.edu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=138&Itemid=610

2. Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians:

One of the most interesting of the fastest growing allied health careers, these health care professionals assist physicians in diagnosing and treating cardiac (heart) and peripheral vascular (blood vessel) ailments. Cardiovascular technologists may specialize in any of three areas of practice: invasive cardiology, echocardiography, and vascular technology. Cardiovascular technologists specializing in invasive procedures are called cardiology technologists.

Technologists prepare patients for cardiac catheterization and balloon angioplasty. During the procedures, they monitor patients' blood pressure and heart rate with EKG equipment and notify the physician if something appears to be wrong. Technologists also may prepare and monitor patients during open-heart surgery and during the insertion of pacemakers and stents that open up blockages in arteries to the heart and major blood vessels.

Rapid employment growth is expected for Cardiovascular Technologists as the population ages, because older people have a higher incidence of heart problems and use more diagnostic imaging, making this an in-demand health care job. Employment of vascular technologists and echocardiographers will also grow as advances in vascular technology and sonography reduce the need for more costly and invasive procedures.

Education Requirements: The majority of Cardiovascular Technologists complete a 2-year junior or community college program, but 4-year programs are increasingly available and will help you earn your spot in this fascinating health care career.

Salary: The average salary for Cardiovascular Technologists is \$38,690.

Texas Programs:

Alvin Community College – Alvin, TX

<http://www.alvincollege.edu/certificates/>

El Centro College – Dallas, TX

<http://www.elcentrocollege.edu/Program/>

Hill College – Hillsboro & Cleburne, TX

<http://hillcollege.edu/info/departments/>

Lamar Institute of Technology – Beaumont, TX

<http://www.lit.edu/depts/allied/default.aspx>

Sanford-Brown Institute – Dallas & Houston, TX

<http://www.sanfordbrown.edu/Areas-Of-Study/Allied-Health-Diagnostic>

or

<http://www.sanfordbrown.edu/Areas-Of-Study/Allied-Health-Technicians-And-Therapists>

3. Diagnostic Medical Sonographers:

Also known as ultrasonographers or ultrasound technicians, these Allied Health professionals use special equipment to direct nonionizing, high frequency sound waves into areas of the patient's body. Sonographers operate the equipment, which collects reflected echoes and forms an image that may be videotaped, transmitted, or photographed for interpretation and diagnosis by a physician. These technicians are in high demand, making it another of the fastest growing allied health care careers.

As the population grows and ages, increasing the demand for diagnostic imaging and therapeutic technology means incredible growth for this health care job. Additionally, sonography is becoming an increasingly attractive alternative to radiologic procedures, as patients seek safer treatment methods, further increase the demand for sonographers.

Education Requirements: Colleges and universities offer formal training for Diagnostic Medical Sonographers in both 2- and 4-year programs, culminating in an associate or a bachelor's degree. Two-year programs are most prevalent currently for this health care career.

Salary: The average salary for diagnostic medical sonographers is \$52,490.

Texas Programs:

Austin Community College – Austin, TX

http://www5.austincc.edu/directory/inst_dept.php

Coleman College for Health Sciences – Houston, TX

<http://coleman.hccs.edu/coleman/a-career-in-health-sciences>

Del Mar College – Corpus Christi, TX

<http://www.delmar.edu/academics/academicdepts.php>

El Paso Community College – El Paso, TX

<http://start.epcc.edu/search/Directories.aspx?Directory=Academic>

Lamar Institute of Technology – Beaumont, TX

<http://www.lit.edu/depts/allied/default.aspx>

Temple College – Temple, TX

<http://www.templejc.edu/dept/dept.htm>

Tyler Junior College – Tyler, TX

<http://www.tjc.edu/nhp/>

Weatherford College – Weatherford, TX

<https://www.wcinstruction.net/syllabi/course/category.php?id=1>

4. Physician Assistants:

One of the most understaffed careers in health care, these allied health professionals practice medicine under the supervision of physicians and surgeons. Physicians Assistants are formally trained to provide diagnostic, therapeutic, and preventive health care services, as delegated by a physician. Working as members of the health care team, they take medical histories, examine and treat patients, order and interpret laboratory tests and X rays, and make diagnoses.

Physicians Assistants may be the principal care providers in rural or inner city clinics, where a physician is present for only 1 or 2 days each week. Physicians Assistant is an excellent and stable health care job.

Employment of Physicians Assistants is expected to grow much faster than average, ranking among the fastest growing occupations, due to anticipated expansion of the health care industry and an emphasis on cost containment, resulting in increasing utilization of Physicians Assistants.

Education Requirements: Physicians Assistants must complete accredited, formal education program and pass a National exam to obtain a license. Many Physician's Assistant programs usually last at least 2 years and are full time.

Salary: The average salary for physician assistants in full-time clinical practice is \$74,264, making this one of the highest paying health care jobs.

Texas Programs:

Angelo State University – San Angelo, TX

<http://www.angelo.edu/dept/admissions/degreeprograms.html>

Baylor College of Medicine – Houston, TX

<http://www.bcm.edu/alliedhealth/index.cfm?PMID=6154>

LeTourneau University – Longview, TX

http://www.letu.edu/opencms/opencms/_Academics/Arts-Science/pre-professional/

Our Lady of the Lake University – San Antonio, Dallas & Houston, TX

<http://www.ollusa.edu/s/1190/ollu-form.aspx?sid=1190&gid=1&pgid=872>

Texas Lutheran University – Seguin, TX

<http://www.tlu.edu/academics>

Texas Tech University Health Science Center – Ft. Worth, TX

<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/pphc/areas/PA.php>

The UT Southwestern Medical Center – Dallas, TX

<http://www.utsouthwestern.edu/home/alldepts/index.html>

The UT Health Science Center – San Antonio, TX

http://www.uthscsa.edu/schools_roster.shtml

The University of Texas – Pan American – Edinburg, TX

http://portal.utpa.edu/utpa_main/daa_home/hshs_home

UT Medical Branch – Galveston, TX

<http://shp.utmb.edu/pas/>

5. Respiratory Therapists and Respiratory Therapy Technicians:

Another excellent health care career. These Allied Health professionals—also known as respiratory care practitioners—evaluate, treat, and care for patients with breathing or other cardiopulmonary disorders. Respiratory Therapists assume primary responsibility for all

respiratory care therapeutic treatments and diagnostic procedures, including the supervision of respiratory therapy technicians. Respiratory therapy technicians follow specific, well-defined respiratory care procedures under the direction of respiratory therapists and physicians.

Job opportunities in this health care job are expected to be very good, especially for respiratory therapists with cardiopulmonary care skills or experience working with infants. But all areas of Respiratory Therapy expect substantial growth due to the jump in the numbers of the middle-aged and elderly population—a development that will heighten the incidence of cardiopulmonary disease—and because of the expanding role of respiratory therapists in the early detection of pulmonary disorders, case management, disease prevention, and emergency care.

Educational Requirements: An associates degree is required for entry into the field. Most programs award associates or bachelors degrees and prepare graduates for jobs as advanced respiratory therapists.

Salary: The average salary for this health care career of respiratory therapy is \$43,140.

Texas Programs:

Alvin Community College – Alvin, TX

<http://www.alvincollege.edu/certificates/>

Coleman College for Health Sciences – Houston

<http://coleman.hccs.edu/coleman/a-career-in-health-sciences>

Cisco College – Cisco, TX

<http://www.cisco.edu/s/926/index.aspx?sid=926&gid=1&pgid=286>

Howard College – Big Springs, TX

http://www.howardcollege.edu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=138&Itemid=610

Lamar Institute of Technology – Beaumont, TX

<http://www.lit.edu/depts/allied/default.aspx>

McLennan Community College - Waco, TX

<http://www.mclennan.edu/students/admissions/aprog.html>

Midwestern State University – Wichita Falls, TX

<http://academics.mwsu.edu/>

South Plains College – Levelland, TX

<http://www3.southplainscollege.edu/posalliedhealth/>

Temple College – Temple, TX

<http://www.templejc.edu/dept/dept.htm>

The Victoria College – Victoria, TX

<http://www.victoriacollege.edu/programsofstudy>

Tyler Junior College – Tyler, TX

<http://www.tjc.edu/nhp/>

Weatherford College – Weatherford, TX

<https://www.wcinstruction.net/syllabi/course/category.php?id=1>

6. Athletic Trainers:

One of the more unique of the fastest growing allied health careers, these health care professionals help prevent and treat injuries for people of all ages. Their clients include everyone from professional athletes to industrial workers. Athletic trainers are often one of the first health care providers on the scene when injuries occur, and therefore must be able to recognize, evaluate, and assess injuries and provide immediate care when needed. They also are heavily involved in the rehabilitation and reconditioning of injuries.

Job growth for Athletic Trainers is expected to be extensive, and will be concentrated in health care industry settings, such as ambulatory health care services and hospitals, making this a very in demand health care job.

Educational Requirements: A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university is required for almost all careers in health care as an athletic trainer.

Salary: The salary of an athletic trainer depends on experience and job responsibilities, and varies by job setting, but the average salary for athletic trainers is \$33,940.

Texas Programs:

East Texas Baptist University – Marshall, TX

<http://www.etbu.edu/Academics/Majors/>

Hardin-Simmons University – Abilene, TX

<http://www.hsutx.edu/academics/undergraduate/irvin/fitness>

Texas Lutheran University – Seguin, TX

<http://www.tlu.edu/academics>

Texas State University – San Marcos, TX

<http://www.hhp.txstate.edu/>

The University of Texas of the Permian Basin – Odessa, TX

<http://cas.utpb.edu/academic-departments/kinesiology-department/athletic-training/>

University of the Incarnate Word – San Antonio, TX

<http://www.uiw.edu/home/academics/programs/athletictrainingprograminformation.html>

Wayland Baptist University – Plainview, TX

http://www.wbu.edu/academics/undergraduate_programs/pre-professional_programs/pre-athletic/

West Texas A&M University – Canyon, TX

<http://www.wtamu.edu/academics/athletic-training-program.aspx>

West Texas College – Snyder, TX

<http://www.wtc.edu/athletictraining/index.html>

7. Surgical Technologists:

Requiring the shortest course of training, this is a fast track health care career. These Allied Health professionals, also called scrubs and surgical or operating room technicians, assist in surgical operations under the supervision of surgeons, registered nurses, or other surgical personnel. Before an operation, surgical technologists help prepare the operating room by setting up surgical instruments and equipment, sterile drapes, and sterile solutions. They assemble both sterile and non-sterile equipment, get patients ready for surgery, and transport patients to the operating room. During surgeries, Surgical Technologists also observe patients' vital signs, check charts, and assist the surgical team with putting on sterile gowns and gloves.

Because the number of surgical procedures is expected to rise as the population grows and ages, job prospects for Surgical Technicians are extremely good, making Surgical Technologists an excellent health care job.

Educational Requirements: Surgical technologists receive their training in formal programs offered by community and junior colleges, vocational schools, universities, hospitals, and the military. Entering this health care career is the first step toward a long and stable health care job.

Salary: The average salary of surgical technologists is \$34,010.

Texas Programs:

Amarillo College – Amarillo, TX

<http://www.actx.edu/contact/index.php?module=article&id=69>

Austin Community College – Austin, TX

http://www5.austincc.edu/directory/inst_dept.php

Coleman College for Health Sciences – Houston

<http://coleman.hccs.edu/coleman/a-career-in-health-sciences>

Cisco College – Cisco, TX

<http://www.cisco.edu/s/926/index.aspx?sid=926&gid=1&pgid=286>

Del Mar College – Corpus Christi, TX

<http://www.delmar.edu/academics/academicdepts.php>

El Paso Community College – El Paso, TX

<http://start.epcc.edu/search/Directories.aspx?Directory=Academic>

Houston Community College – Houston, TX

<http://www.hccs.edu/hccs/business-community/career-technical-education-workforce/surgical-technology/>

McLennan Community College - Waco, TX

<http://www.mclennan.edu/students/admissions/aprog.html>

North Central Texas College – Gainesville, TX

http://www.nctc.edu/What_We_Teach/whatsoffered.html#vocational

South Plains College – Levelland, TX

<http://www3.southplainscollege.edu/posalliedhealth/>

Temple College – Temple, TX

<http://www.templejc.edu/dept/dept.htm>

Tyler Junior College – Tyler, TX

<http://www.tjc.edu/nhp/>

Vernon College – Vernon, TX

<http://www.vernoncollege.edu/surgtech/>

Wharton County Junior College – Wharton, TX

http://www.wcjc.edu/ed_programs_n/divisions.asp

8. Clinical Laboratory Technologists:

If donning a white coat sounds good, this is the health care career for you. These Allied Health professionals—also referred to as clinical laboratory scientists or medical technologists—perform most of the clinical laboratory tests that play a crucial role in the detection, diagnosis, and treatment of disease. Clinical laboratory personnel examine and analyze body fluids, and cells. They look for bacteria, parasites, and other microorganisms; analyze the chemical content of fluids; match blood for transfusions; and test for drug levels in the blood to show how a patient is responding to treatment. Technologists also prepare specimens for examination, count cells, and look for abnormal cells in blood and body fluids.

In the coming years the number of job openings in this health care career is expected to continue to exceed the number of job seekers, particularly as the volume of laboratory tests continues to increase with both population growth and the development of new types of tests.

Educational Requirements: Medical and clinical laboratory technicians generally have either an associate degree from a community or junior college or a certificate from a hospital or a vocational and technical school. The usual requirement for an entry-level position as a clinical laboratory technologist is a bachelor's degree with a major in medical technology or in one of the life sciences.

Salary: Average salary for medical and clinical laboratory technologists is \$45,730.

Texas Programs:

Angelo State University – San Angelo, TX

<http://www.angelo.edu/dept/admissions/degreeprograms.html>

Coleman College for Health Sciences – Houston, TX

<http://coleman.hccs.edu/coleman/a-career-in-health-sciences>

Lamar State College - Orange, TX

http://www.lasco.edu/Academics/AlliedHealth/AlliedHealth_main.htm

McLennan Community College - Waco, TX

<http://www.mclennan.edu/students/admissions/aprog.html>

South Plains College – Levelland, TX

<http://www3.southplainscollege.edu/posalliedhealth/>

The University of Texas of the Permian Basin – Odessa, TX

<http://cas.utpb.edu/academic-departments/kinesiology-department/athletic-training/>

The Victoria College – Victoria, TX

<http://www.victoriacollege.edu/medicallaboratorytechnology>

Tyler Junior College – Tyler, TX

<http://www.tjc.edu/nhp/>

9. Medical and Health Services Managers:

If you'd rather deal with paperwork than bodily fluids, this is the allied health care career for you. Health care is a business and, like every other business, it needs good management to keep it running smoothly. These Allied Health professionals—also referred to as health care executives or health care administrators—plan, direct, coordinate, and supervise the delivery of health care. Medical and health services managers include specialists and generalists. Specialists are in charge of specific clinical departments or services, while generalists manage or help manage an entire facility or system. Increasingly, medical and health services managers will work in organizations in which they must optimize efficiency of a variety of related services—for example, those ranging from inpatient care to outpatient follow-up care.

As the health care industry continues to expand and diversify, job opportunities for Medical and Health Services Managers will be especially good in offices of health practitioners, general medical and surgical hospitals, home health care services, and outpatient care centers.

Educational Requirements: A master's degree in health services administration or business administration is the standard credential for most positions in this field. A bachelor's degree is adequate for some entry-level positions in smaller facilities, at the departmental level within health care organizations, and in health information management. This is by far the segment of health care that hosts the fastest growing allied health careers.

Salary: The average salary for medical and health services managers is \$67,430, but can go as high as \$117,990.

Texas Programs:

Richland College – Dallas, TX

https://www1.dcccd.edu/cat1011/programs/degree.cfm?degree=med_front_ofc_asst_msa

Hill College – Hillsboro & Cleburne, TX

<http://hillcollege.edu/info/departments/>

Howard College – Big Springs, TX

http://www.howardcollege.edu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=138&Itemid=610

Midwestern State University – Wichita Falls, TX

<http://academics.mwsu.edu/>

Northwood University – Dallas & Ft. Worth, TX

<http://www.northwood.edu/adults/academics/>

Our Lady of the Lake University – San Antonio, Dallas & Houston, TX

<http://www.ollusa.edu/s/1190/ollu-form.aspx?sid=1190&gid=1&pgid=872>

Trinity University – San Antonio, TX

<http://web.trinity.edu/x1170.xml>

University of the Incarnate Word – San Antonio, TX

<http://www.uiw.edu/home/academics/programs/athletictrainingprograminformation.html>

10. Dietitians and Nutritionists:

In a health care job that emphasizes the health in health care, these Allied Health professionals plan food and nutrition programs and supervise the preparation and serving of meals. They help to prevent and treat illnesses by promoting healthy eating habits and recommending dietary modifications. Dietitians also manage food service systems for institutions such as hospitals and schools, promote sound eating habits through education, and conduct research.

The increasing emphasis on disease prevention through improved dietary habits, along with the growing and aging population, will boost the demand for meals and nutritional counseling in hospitals, residential care facilities, schools, prisons, community health programs, and home health care agencies, making this another one of the fastest growing allied health care careers. Public interest in nutrition and increased emphasis on health education and prudent lifestyles also will spur demand, especially in management.

Educational Requirements: Dietitians and nutritionists need at least a bachelor's degree in dietetics, foods and nutrition, food service systems management, or a related area.

Salary: The average salary for dietitians and nutritionists is \$43,630.

Texas Programs:

Abilene Christian University- Abilene, TX

<http://www.acu.edu/academics/cehs/programs/exsc/degrees/nutrition.html>

Baylor University – Waco, TX

<http://www.baylor.edu/fcs/index.php?id=62108>

Prairie View A&M University – Prairie View, TX

<http://www.pvamu.edu/pages/982.asp>

Stephen F. Austin State University – Nacogdoches, TX

<http://www.sfasu.edu/429.asp>

Texas A&M University – College Station, TX

<http://nfs.tamu.edu/>

Texas State University – San Marcos, TX

<http://www.fcs.txstate.edu/degrees-programs/nutr.html>

The University of Texas – Austin, TX

<http://www.he.utexas.edu/ntr/ungradinfo.php>

University of Houston – Houston, TX

<http://www.uh.edu/academics/catalog/colleges/edu/majors/nutrition/index.php>

University of the Incarnate Word – San Antonio, TX

<http://www.uiw.edu/home/academics/programs/athletictrainingprograminformation.html>