

## What is Allied Health?



Most health care providers working in hospitals nationwide are not doctors or nurses—they are Allied Health Professionals!

Allied health professionals are health care practitioners with formal education and clinical training who are credentialed through certification, registration and/or licensure. They collaborate with physicians and other members of the health care team to deliver high quality patient care services for the identification, prevention, and treatment of diseases, disabilities and disorders.

Allied health providers are experts in a multitude of therapeutic, diagnostic, and preventive health interventions and function in many different roles including disease prevention and control, dietary and nutritional services, mental and physical health promotion, rehabilitation, and health systems management.

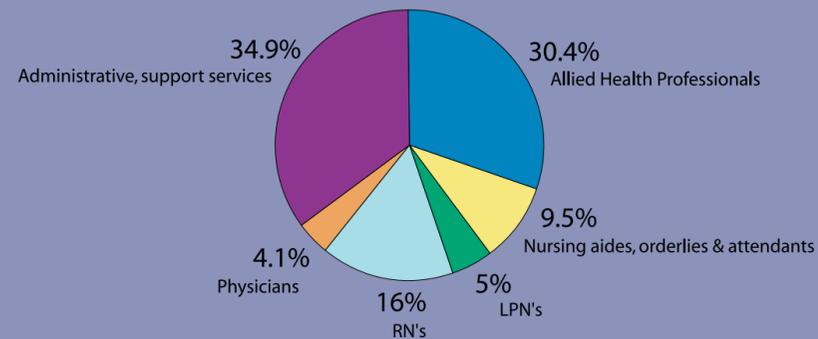
### Allied Health Professionals...

- ▶ Decrease cost and improve quality of patient care
- ▶ Typically attend 2 or 4 year educational programs in community and senior colleges
- ▶ Are educated in over 1,000 programs in the U.S., which are staffed by 3,000 allied health faculty, and enroll over 30,000 students annually
- ▶ Are experiencing a workforce shortage greater than that currently seen in nursing

Allied health professionals, including support services and health administration, make up the majority of the health care workforce - more than doctors and nurses combined!

### Allied Health Professionals

(U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)



Many allied health professions are not included in this data. Administrative and support services personnel are often allied health providers.

## What is HPN?

Health Professions Network (HPN) is a voluntary national group representing over 75 organizations of allied health providers, educators and accreditors interested in interdisciplinary discussion and collaboration. HPN focuses on communication, consensus and advocacy on behalf of allied health professionals. Participants meet at least twice annually to discuss issues relating to health care and to serve as a conduit for interdisciplinary problem solving and preparation for future quality health care delivery.

Professional member groups participating in Health Professions Network include:

- ▶ Association of Schools of Allied Health Professionals, [www.asahp.org](http://www.asahp.org)
- ▶ National Network of Health Career Programs in Two-Year Colleges, [www.nn2.org](http://www.nn2.org)
- ▶ National Society of Allied Health
- ▶ Over 50 professional organizations of allied health providers

Learn more about Health Professions Network  
By visiting [www.healthpronet.org](http://www.healthpronet.org)

### Additional Resources

Health Professions Network  
[www.healthpronet.org](http://www.healthpronet.org)

Allied Health Educational Programs  
[www.ASAHP.org](http://www.ASAHP.org)  
[www.NN2.org](http://www.NN2.org)

Careers in Allied Health: American Medical Association  
<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/2322.html>

Careers in Allied Health: National Institutes of Health  
<http://science.education.nih.gov/LifeWorks>

Careers in Allied Health: Bureau of Health Professions  
<http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/kidscareers/opportunities.htm>

Health Occupational Statistics: Bureau of Labor Statistics  
<http://www.bls.gov>

Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition  
[www.aamc.org/advocacy/hpniec](http://www.aamc.org/advocacy/hpniec)

For a Health Industry Profile from the Department of Labor  
[www.doleta.gov/BRG/IndProf/HealthProfile.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/BRG/IndProf/HealthProfile.cfm)



# Choose Allied Health...

*The right choice  
For America  
For Quality Healthcare  
For Your Career*



[www.healthpronet.org](http://www.healthpronet.org)



## The Right Choice for America

Health care in America is facing a crisis. Americans are requiring more care but there are not enough workers to provide the quality care that is needed. Significant workforce supply and demand gaps currently exist across the U.S. that affect acute care, long-term care and primary care provider groups. Because of these shortages:

- Nearly 3,000 mostly minority or rural communities throughout the United States do not have enough health care providers to meet basic medical, dental, and mental health needs. (Health Resources and Services Administration)
- There are 50 million people in the United States who are medically "unserved" due to provider shortages and an inability to access health care. (Health Profession and Nursing Education Coalition)

Allied health professionals are an essential part of America's health care safety net, bringing health care services to our under-served communities. Providers in allied health careers enhance the supply, diversity and distribution of the workforce, filling the gaps in the

healthcare workforce not met by traditional careers such as physicians and nurses.

Allied health professionals are the foundation of the nation's health care system.

**The health care industry provides many jobs, the majority of those jobs are in allied health.**

As the largest industry in this country, representing about 6% of the national Gross Domestic Product in 2001, health service provides 12.9 million jobs to Americans. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics the health care industry is predicted to add nearly 3.5 million new jobs between 2002 and 2012, an increase of 30%. A large majority of these new jobs will be in allied health professions.

Of the top 30 occupations from all industries nationwide projected to grow the fastest in the next 10 years, **half** are allied health professions. Nursing is expected to grow approximately 26% in the same time period.

### Fastest Growing Occupations, 2002–2012

(U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Rank	Occupation	% Growth Expected
1	Medical Assistants	59
3	Physician Assistants	49
4	Social and Human Service Assistants	49
5	Home Health Aides	48
6	Medical Records and Health Information	47
7	Physical Therapist Aides	46
10	Physical Therapist Assistants	45
15	Dental Hygienists	43
16	Occupational Therapist Aides	43
17	Dental Assistants	42
18	Personal and Home Care Aides	40
21	Occupational Therapist Assistants	39
28	Physical Therapists	35
29	Occupational Therapists	35
30	Respiratory Therapists	35

## The Right Choice for Quality Healthcare

America prides itself as a world leader in providing state-of-the-art quality health care to its citizens. Technological advances have made many new procedures and methods of diagnosis and treatment possible. People are living longer with a much-improved quality of life thanks to clinical developments such as organ transplants, less invasive surgical techniques, skin grafts, and gene therapy for cancer treatment. Advances in medical technology also have improved the survival rates of trauma victims and the severely ill who need extensive care from therapists and social workers, among other support personnel.

Allied health professionals provide the needed expertise to translate advanced technology into quality patient care. Skills of allied health providers are often very specific and highly technical, leading to the over 200 unique allied health professions. Education and training for allied health professionals is specific and often builds on skills and concepts already mastered. So, as technology advances, educational curriculum and training programs can advance rapidly, producing a practitioner prepared to utilize the new information to its fullest potential.

Allied health professionals provide much of the face-to-face care a typical patient will experience. Consider these interactions with allied health providers:

- An Emergency Medical Technician arrives during a medical emergency
- A Medical Assistant measures blood pressure in the doctor's office
- An Orthopedic Technician applies the cast to a broken bone
- A Phlebotomist draws blood and a Clinical Laboratory Scientist examines and analyzes the sample
- An Art Therapist alleviates fear during a child's hospital stay
- A Pharmacy Technician fills a prescription
- A Health Information Administrator establishes a record of health care
- An Imaging Technologist takes an X-Ray or an MRI, or performs the ultrasound to give the first images of an unborn baby



### Examples of Allied Health Professions

Anesthesia Technologist/Technician	Embryologist	Medical Records and Health Information Technologist	Personal and Home Care Aides
Anesthesiologist Assistant	EMT/Paramedic	Medical Secretary	Pharmacist
Athletic Trainer	Environmental Engineer	Medical Transcriptionist	Pharmacy Technicians
Audiologist	Environmental Engineer Technician	Medical/Health Service Manager	Physical Therapist
Biological/Medical Scientists	Environmental Scientist – Health Genetic Counselor	Microbiologist Technologist	Physical Therapist Aides
Blood Bank Technologist	Health Advocate	Nuclear Medicine Technologist	Physical Therapist Assistant
Cardiovascular Interventional Technologist	Health and Safety Engineers	Nutritionist	Physician Assistant
Chiropractor	Health Educators	Occupational Health and Safety Specialists	Podiatrist
Clinical Lab Scientist	Health Information Administrators	Occupational Therapist	Polysomnographic Technologist
Clinical Lab Technologist	Health Information Technicians	Occupational Therapist Aides	Psychiatric Technicians
Counselor	Health Managers	Occupational Therapist Assistant	Psychologist
Creative Arts Therapist	Home Health Aides and Psych Aides	Ophthalmic Dispensing Optician	Radiation Therapist
Dental Assistant	Hornicultural Therapist	Ophthalmic Lab Technician	Radiologic Technologist
Dental Hygienist	Kinesiotherapist	Ophthalmic Medical Technologist	Recreation Therapist
Dental Lab Technician	Low Vision Therapist	Ophthalmic Medical Technician	Rehabilitation Counselor
Dentist	Massage Therapist	Optometrist	Rahabilitation Teacher
Diagnostic Medical Sonographer	Medical Appliance Technician	Orientation & Mobility Specialist	Respiratory Therapist/Technician
Dietetic Technician	Medical Assistant	Orthoptist	Science Technician
Dietitian	Medical Equipment Preparers	Orthotist and Prosthetist	Social Worker
Electroneurodiagnostic Technologist	Medical Illustrator	Pathologist Assistant	Speech-Language Pathologist
		Perfusionist	Sports Medicine
			Surgical Technologist

## The Right Choice for Your Career

There is something for everyone in the health care field. Physicians and nurses are only two of hundreds of different health care professions available. Health care careers vary greatly in interests, education level, location, abilities, and compensation.

**If you like helping people and making a difference, any allied health career is right for you!**

Education levels vary among allied health professions. Several programs provide specialized training for jobs in health services right after high school. Students preparing for health careers can enter programs leading to a certificate or a degree at the associate, baccalaureate, professional, or graduate level.



### A Few Allied Health Options

If you like. . .	Try This
Athletics, Hands-on Activities	Athletic Trainer, Kinesiotherapist, Physical Therapist, Recreational Therapist
Cultural Arts	Music Therapist, Dance Therapist, Medical Illustrator, Art Therapist
Computers and Technology	Health Information Technician, Radiologic Technologist, Cardiovascular Technologist, Electroneurodiagnostic Technologist
Surgery	Surgical Technician, Anesthesiologist Assistant, Perfusionist, Surgical Assistant
Investigating and Problem Solving	Medical Laboratory Technologist, Pathologist Assistant, Nuclear Medicine Technologist
Talking and Communication	Genetic Counselor, Family Therapist, Social Worker, Speech Language Pathologist

Because there is a critical shortage of health care providers—currently and predicted for years to come—there are many opportunities available for those looking for an allied health career. Some hospitals provide training or tuition assistance in return for a promise to work at their facility for a particular length of time after graduation, and many employers offer sign-on bonuses and are paying for continuous education for entry-level employees.

The need for health services at all levels of education and training will continue to grow for several reasons. The number of people in older age groups, with much greater than average healthcare needs, will grow faster than the total population between 2002 and 2012, increasing the demand for health services, especially home healthcare and nursing and residential care. Advances in medical technology will continue to improve the survival rate of severely ill and injured patients, who will then need extensive therapy and care.