



Training for a Job in the Growth Industry of Health Care

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Healing the nation's sick and injured brings together people from varied backgrounds and diverse interests using not only cutting edge technology and sophisticated medical techniques, but intrinsic values such as compassion and caring.

The health care industry provides 11 million jobs for Americans -- a number that continues to grow.

The U.S. Department of Labor projects that jobs in health care will increase 26 percent by 2008, **which translates into 2.8 million new jobs.** For those interested in a career in health care, the choices are unprecedented in the nation's history.

According to the latest figures, the national average nursing salary is \$45,000, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that **jobs for RNs will grow 23 percent by 2008.** A registered nurse needs an associate degree in nursing and if working in a hospital, is usually assigned to an area such as surgery, maternity, pediatrics, emergency room, intensive care, oncology or rehab.

Vanderbilt University professor Peter I. Buerhaus, a health care economist, recently predicted that a **current nursing shortage of about 100,000 nurses could grow to eight times that size by 2020.**

"Just as the legion of baby boomers is about to swell the need for quality health care, America's hospitals and other institutions need more nurses, especially those who deliver specialized care," states a report by Sigma Theta Tau International, the honor society of nursing.

Other health care areas include radiology, which uses X-rays in diagnosing medical problems, and lab positions. The growth of HMOs has created many positions in outpatient services, at-home care and preventive medicine. In tandem, there is a need for health care administrators and managers, as well as patient reps, chief financial officers and managers with a business or finance background.

Adding to the health care crunch is an anticipated shortage of people entering the field. Recognizing this critical need, especially in light of studies pointing to the correlation between the level of patient care and the adequacy of hospital staffing, health care advocates are promoting the positive aspects of nursing and other related areas to students.

If you're interested in a health care position, experts say that education and experience are key. They suggest:

- **Obtaining a part-time job** at a clinic or nursing home to see whether its geriatrics or pediatrics that fulfills you.
- **Volunteering** at a hospital or doctor's office to see whether a faster or slower pace of work suits you.
- **Trying again** if the experience is not positive.

Once you're working, you can expect lots of on-the-job training, as well as the necessity for continuing education courses to stay up-to-date on the latest medical and technological advances.

While hospitals, physician offices and health care settings have changed dramatically in the past few decades, **some elements of the profession have remained constant -- the feelings of compassion and caring that motivate graduates to enter the profession.**

