

# HEALTH CAREER PROFILES

The Health Care industry offers a wide variety of careers, which encompass a broad range of skills and education. Most health care professionals have highly specialized knowledge; and the education needed to enter different roles ranges from a high school diploma and some technical training, to a college education with multiple post-graduate degrees.

This exciting industry is also poised to continue to be a stable and growing place to work. As demographic trends reflect an increasingly older population, and more and more life prolonging interventions are developed the need for health care professionals will continue to grow.



Case Management

Health Care is also an industry that is continuously changing, with new developments in medicine, procedures and patient care. This makes health care careers stimulating, and a career pathway for continued learning. Most health care professionals share an element of caring for others, and being a part of the healing process for patients. Getting an opportunity to help others can be personally very rewarding.

Some of the main categories of Health Careers include:

- **Therapy**
- **Nursing**
- **Administrative**
- **Dietary**
- **Health Information Management**
- **Mental Health Services**
- **Clinical and Diagnostic Laboratory Technology**

Below is a brief overview of the different Health Care Careers, the entry level and salary potential of each field, and the amount of education required for each career pathway. For more information on the schools that provide this training please reference: [www.alabamahealthcareers.com](http://www.alabamahealthcareers.com).

## Administrative



Health Unit Coordinator

Position	Entry Level	Salary Potential	Education Required
<b>Health Care Administrator</b> A health care administrator encompasses individuals in many different positions who plan, organize, coordinate, and supervise the delivery of health care. They are also concerned with community outreach, planning, policy making, and complying with government regulations.	\$47,000	\$250,000	A 4 year bachelor's degree in health administration, business administration, health policy and administration, or a related field. Most organizations require a master's degree in health care administration, or business administration.
<b>Security Officer</b> Security Staff are responsible for making employees, patients, and visitors feel protected throughout the hospital campus. The Director of Security plans, organizes, and directs the hospital's security system in consultation with administration. This professional may also direct and supervise parking facilities. The Hospital Security Staff can range from parking lot attendants to detectives and highly trained professional law enforcement officers.	\$20,280	\$33,500	High school graduate or GED and additional certification. Academic prerequisites are often comparable to or higher than those of city police academies.
<b>Health Unit Coordinator/ Medical Secretary</b> This role assists in the overall processing of patients in health care facilities. Some of the duties for this role include, processing of patients records, scheduling appointments, taking dictation, filling out forms, organizing and maintaining files, and assisting patients	\$20,280	\$33,500	High school graduate or GED and additional National certification

## Therapy

Position	Entry Level	Salary Potential	Education Required
<b>Occupational Therapist</b> Occupational therapists not only help patients improve basic motor functions and reasoning abilities, but they also help them adjust to permanent loss of function (such as people who become paralyzed). The therapist's goal is to help patients have independent, productive and satisfying lifestyles. For those with permanent functional disabilities, such as spinal cord injuries, cerebral palsy, or muscular dystrophy, therapists provide such adaptive equipment as wheelchairs, splints, and aids for eating and dressing. They also design or make special equipment needed at home or at work.	\$55,598	\$91,728	4 year degree from a program at a colleges and universities, there are also entry-level master's degree programs and programs for those who already have a degree in a related field. Students must complete six months of supervised fieldwork prior to graduation. All states require occupational therapists to graduate from an accredited program and pass the American Occupational Therapy Certification Board examination.
<b>Physical Therapist</b> Physical therapists improve mobility, relieve pain, and prevent or limit permanent physical disabilities of patients suffering from injuries or disease. To do so they evaluate a patient's medical history, test and measure their strength, range of motion, and ability to function, and develop and implement treatment plans. Therapists also teach and motivate patients to use crutches, prostheses, and wheelchairs to perform day-to-day activities and show them exercises to do at home.	\$55,598	\$91,728	4 year degree obtained through a university with an emphasis on the sciences. To become a licensed physical therapist, students must earn a master's degree and pass a certification examination.
<b>Speech Pathology</b> Speech/Language Pathologists assess and treat patients with speech, language, voice, and fluency disorders. Most Speech-Language Pathologists provide direct clinical services to individuals with communication disorders. In medical facilities, they may work with physicians, social workers, psychologists, and other therapists to develop and execute a treatment plan.	\$46,675	\$77,022	6 year Masters Degree in speech-language pathology, including 375 hours of supervised clinical experience, is the minimum educational requirement for speech-language pathologists. After completing a 9-month full-time postgraduate fellowship and passing the national examination administered by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, one is awarded Certification of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology (CCC-SLP).
<b>Sports Therapist/ Athletic Trainer</b> Sports Therapists focus on treating athletes to help them with all their physical needs. Skilled in all areas of athletic activity, an Athletic Trainer assists with the prevention of injuries through proper conditioning, recognition and evaluation of injuries, emergency care and even rehabilitation. Other responsibilities may include nutritional planning and understanding of the emotional needs of an injured athlete. Employment for the Sports Therapist may come from hospitals, high schools, colleges and universities, sports medicine clinics, and dance companies.	\$29,536	\$48,755	4 year degree in athletic training, exercise science or physical education is usually the minimum requirement. Certified programs include academic courses such as anatomy, physiology, biomechanics and psychology, as well as 1,500 hours of supervised clinical experience.

## Health Information Management

Position	Entry Level	Salary Potential	Education Required
<b>Medical Transcriptionist</b> Medical Transcribers use headsets and transcribing machines to listen to recordings by physicians and other healthcare professionals. These workers transcribe a variety of medical reports about emergency room visits, diagnostic imaging studies, operations, chart reviews, and final summaries. After reviewing and editing for grammar and clarity, the Medical Transcriber types the dictated reports and returns them in either printed or electronic form to the dictator for review and signature, or correction. These reports eventually become part of the patient's permanent record.	\$20,280	\$33,467	2 year degreed program in transcription
<b>Coding Technician</b> Coding Technicians are professionals skilled in classifying medical data from patient records, generally in the hospital setting. These coding practitioners review patients' records and assign numeric codes for each diagnosis and procedure. These codes, along with special computer programs, are then used to determine insurance reimbursement. Often the work of the Coder can significantly affect the patient and hospital reimbursement amounts from insurance providers. Organization and accuracy are essential to the profession of Medical Coding.	\$34,174	\$56,388	High school diploma plus a 12 week - 1 year program and certifying test by The American Health Information Management Association

## Mental Health Services



Social Worker

Position	Entry Level	Salary Potential	Education Required
<b>Social Worker/ Discharge Planner</b> Medical social workers help patients and their families cope with chronic, acute, or terminal illnesses and handle problems that may stand in the way of recovery or rehabilitation. They also advise family caregivers, and counsel patients and help plan for their needs after discharge by arranging for home health services.	\$31,200	\$54,600	4 year bachelor's degree in social work
<b>Licensed Professional Counselor</b> Counselors assist people with personal, family, and career decisions and problems. Rehabilitation Counselors help people deal with the personal, social, and vocational effects of disabilities. They counsel people with disabilities resulting from birth defects, illness or disease, accidents, or the stress of daily life. They evaluate the strengths and limitations of individuals, provide personal and vocational counseling, and arrange for medical care, vocational training, and job placement.	\$40,560	\$70,990	5-6 year masters degree program

## Nursing



Nurse

Position	Entry Level	Salary Potential	Education Required
<b>Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)</b> entry-level nurses who work directly with patients under the supervision of a registered or licensed practice nurse. They have a variety of duties depending on the type of facility and the type of patient. These may include taking and recording pulses, temperatures, and blood pressures, as well as bathing, feeding and giving massages and assisting doctors in examinations. Many people become Nursing Assistants as a first step toward nursing, medicine and other patient care careers.	\$19,240	\$31,740	High/ GED plus completion of a specialized training program related to basic patient care, interpersonal/communication skills, safety measures, infection control, medical terminology, nutrition, basic anatomy, vital signs, CPR, and employability skills.
<b>Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA)</b> Nurse Anesthetists are registered nurses who have completed additional, specialized education and training in administering anesthetics to patients under the supervision of physicians, anesthesiologists, or dentists. In the delicate science of anesthesia, this Nurse is involved before, during, and after the surgical procedure to ensure patient comfort and safety.	\$124,800	\$166,400	4 year program and licensure as a Registered Nurse (RN) and then an additional anesthesia programs last from two to three years. Graduates become certificated by passing a national CRNA exam.
<b>Emergency Medical Technician (EMT/ Paramedic)</b> Emergency medical technicians (EMT's)/Paramedics give immediate care at the site of a medical emergency and then transport the sick or injured to medical facilities. Following instructions from a dispatcher, EMT's determine the nature and extent of the patient's injuries or illness while also trying to determine whether the patient has epilepsy, diabetes, or other pre-existing medical conditions. These caring and skilled technicians are employed by hospitals, ambulance services and fire departments and can attain several levels of proficiency, based on levels of training and experience.	\$21,320	\$35,172	2 year program
<b>Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)</b> Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN's) care for the sick, injured, convalescing, and handicapped, under the direction of physicians and registered nurses. Most LPN's provide basic bedside care. They take vital signs such as temperature, blood pressure, pulse, and respiration. They help patients with personal hygiene, feed them, and record food and liquid intake and output, keep them comfortable, and care for their emotional needs.	\$28,080	\$46,342	2 year program
<b>Nurse Practitioner</b> Nurse Practitioners are registered professional nurses who function in an advanced nursing practice role and a delegated medical role. Nurse practitioners have acquired additional knowledge and skills in an advanced nursing practice specialty and collaborate with physicians to deliver medical care.	\$65,000	\$90,000	6 years
<b>Registered Nurse – Associate/ Baccalaureate</b> Nursing is an art and science directed at the promotion of health, prevention of disease and care of the sick. Today's nurse operates and interprets intricate life-saving equipment and understands, administers and evaluates the effects of a wide range of medications. Nurses also participate in patient care evaluation, discharge planning and patient education. The nurse is responsible for assisting the patient in lifestyle changes and promoting self-care for patients with chronic self-limiting health concerns.	\$37,960	\$69,680	2 year associates degree; or 4 year bachelor's degree at a College of Nursing

## Dietary

Position	Entry Level	Salary Potential	Education Required
<b>Dietetic Technician</b> A dietetic technician assists in managing food service and providing nutritional care. Dietetic technicians may screen patients to identify nutritional problems. Dietetic technicians educate and train patients, develop menus, supervise food service personnel, and purchase and control inventory.	\$17,680	\$29,182	18 month an ADA-approved program
<b>Registered Dietician</b> Dieticians supervise the production of food, plan menus and diets for therapeutic treatment, and manage personnel and food purchases. They scientifically evaluate clients' diets and suggest modifications such as less salt for those with high blood pressure or reduced fat and sugar intake for those who are overweight.	\$32,960	\$57,324	4 year bachelor's degree program

## Pharmacy

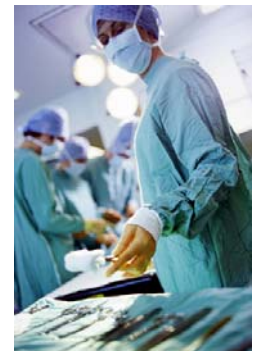
Position	Entry Level	Salary Potential	Education Required
<b>Pharmacist</b> The pharmacist's advanced knowledge of medications and therapies makes this profession a valued advisor of physicians and patients alike. Though the primary responsibility of the Pharmacist is to dispense drugs prescribed by physicians and other health practitioners, they are becoming more and more involved in drug therapy decision making and patient counseling. Aside from patient advice, pharmacists play a role in educating all health practitioners on the selection, dosages, and side effects of medications. Pharmacists must understand the use, composition, and effects of drugs.	\$90,000	\$115,000	6 years: 2 pre-pharmacy, and 4 years PharmD

# Clinical & Diagnostic Laboratory Technology

Position	Entry Level	Salary Potential	Education Required
<b>Phlebotomist</b> Phlebotomist is trained to collect blood samples and works under the supervision of the Clinical Laboratory Scientist. Training is typically on-the-job and is available when there is an employment need in a particular facility.	\$19,240	\$31,740	High school graduate or GED and complete a 6 week or 6 month Phlebotomy Program from a hospital or technical school
<b>Laboratory Technician</b> With the goal of medical advancement, Laboratory Technologists perform tests and laboratory procedures. Technicians may also prepare specimens, operate automatic analyzers, or perform manual tests following detailed instructions.	\$25,376	\$41,870	2 year associates degree To be certified as a medical laboratory technologist, individuals must have an associate degree from an accredited college that includes clinical education & pass an exam given by the board registry.
<b>Medical Technologist</b> Medical technologists perform complex chemical, biological, hematological, immunologic, microscopic, and bacteriological tests. They also type and cross-match blood samples for transfusions. Technologists in small laboratories perform many types of tests, while those in larger laboratories generally specialize.	\$31,720	\$55,515	4-5 year degree from an accredited college that includes clinical education
<b>Cardiovascular Technologist</b> Cardiovascular Technologists prepare patients for invasive procedures like open-heart surgery, pacemaker implantation and tests like heart catheterization. In addition, they work to monitor patients' blood pressure and heart rate during the procedure. The Cardiovascular Tech may also monitor the heart's condition during noninvasive stress tests.	\$25,376	\$41,870	2-4 year degree Cardiovascular technologists usually complete a 2-year training program. One year is dedicated to core courses, followed by a year of specialized instruction in invasive, noninvasive or noninvasive peripheral cardiology.
<b>Radiologic Technologist</b> Technologists take pictures of the internal structures of human bodies with magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), CT, Sonograms and other complex imaging techniques. Radiologic Technologists in all fields blend knowledge of human anatomy and physiology with patient relation skills. They must understand the complex equipment and be able to make quality control judgements based on the results of the tests they perform.	\$33,280	\$58,240	2-4 year degree Three options are available for an education in radiologic technology. A 4 year bachelor's degree, a two year associate degree, or a diploma/certificate program is offered by vocational-technical schools and hospitals. The American Registry of Radiologic Technologists administers voluntary registration examinations.
<b>EEG Technician</b> Electroneurodiagnostic Technologists are people who obtain interpretable recordings of patients' nervous system. In addition to performing the EEG test, the Electroneurodiagnostic Technologist manages medical emergencies in the laboratory and prepares a descriptive report of recorded activity for the Electroencephalographer.	\$20,280	\$33,467	12-18 month technical program
<b>Sonographer/ Ultrasound Technician</b> Sonographers use advanced imaging procedures to help in the diagnosis of a patient. Sonographers transmit high frequency sound waves into areas of the patient's body from which specialized equipment then collects reflected echoes to form an image. The image is viewed on a screen used for interpretation and diagnosis by physicians. Sonographers select and set up appropriate equipment for the test, explain the procedure to patients, help patients to assume the correct physical position, and put patients at ease.	\$34,320	\$60,070	1-4 year degree
<b>Radiation Therapy Technologist</b> Radiation Therapy Technologists work with specialized equipment and compassion to assist in the preparation of both the patient and their affected area before radiation treatment. They may also administer radiation therapy to cancer patients with equipment such as the Linear Accelerator. Radiation Therapy Technologists have the responsibility of keeping the patient's exposure to radiation as low as possible while ensuring that precision and care is constant.	\$42,640	\$74,630	2-4 year degree
<b>Pharmacy Technician</b> The Pharmacy Technician, under supervision, plays an important role in both treatment preparation and patient care. Duties include ordering, stocking, packaging, and preparing medicine, maintaining patient records, preparing insurance claim forms, and managing the register. In the hospital pharmacy Technicians may even administer, assemble and deliver patient medications.	\$22,464	\$37,065	Up to 2 year technical degree
<b>OR/ Surgical Technician</b> The Surgical or OR Technician provides support to physicians and nursing staff in the operating room environment. Duties include sterilizing and preparing operating instrumentation, draping the patient, supporting surgeons and OR nurses throughout the surgical procedure, and restoring the operating room after a surgery.	\$28,600	\$50,044	Up to 2 year technical degree
<b>Respiratory Therapist (Certified)</b> Respiratory Therapists, also known as Respiratory Care Practitioners, evaluate, treat, and care for patients with breathing disorders. To evaluate their patients, these therapists test the capacity of the lungs and analyze the acidity or alkalinity level of the blood. The work setting is usually in a hospital, though an increasing number of respiratory care practitioners have branched out into nursing homes, home health agencies, medical supply companies, and even physician offices.	\$31,720	\$55,500	2 - 4 year degree. Graduates who pass the entry-level examination administered by the National Board for Respiratory Care earn the Certified Respiratory Therapist credential: CRT.



Radiology Technologist



Surgical Technology