

Overview of 2010–20 Healthcare Workforce Projections

Background

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics¹ the total employment in the US is expected to increase by 20.5 million jobs from 2010 to 2020, with 88 percent of detailed occupations projected to experience employment growth. Industries and occupations related to health care, personal care and social assistance, and construction are projected to have the fastest job growth.

Healthcare and Social Assistance Occupations

The healthcare and social assistance industry is projected to generate about 28 percent of all new jobs created in the U.S. economy. This industry – which includes public and private hospitals, nursing and residential care facilities, and individual and family services – is expected to grow by 33 percent, or 5.7 million new jobs. Employment growth will be driven by an aging population and longer life expectancies, as well as new treatments and technologies.

Within this group, two occupations are expected to add a substantial number of jobs: *registered nurses, with some 711,900 new jobs*; and *home health aides, with roughly 706,300 new jobs*.

Trends: As healthcare costs continue to rise, work is increasingly being delegated to lower paid workers in order to cut costs. For example, tasks that were previously performed by doctors, nurses, dentists, or other healthcare professionals increasingly are being performed by physician assistants, medical assistants, and physical therapist aides.

Personal Care and Service: Employment in these occupations is anticipated to grow by 27 percent over the next decade, adding more than 1.3 million jobs. As consumers become more concerned with health, beauty, and fitness, the number of cosmetic and health spas will rise, causing an increase in demand for workers in this group. The personal care and service group contains a wide variety of occupations; however, two of them – personal care aides and childcare workers – will account for nearly two-thirds of the group's new jobs. Personal and home care aides will experience increased demand as a growing number of elderly people require assistance with daily tasks.

Patients increasingly are seeking home care as an alternative to costly stays in hospitals or residential care facilities, causing a significant increase in demand for home health aides. Although not classified as healthcare workers, personal and home care aides are being affected by this demand for home care as well and is anticipated to grow by 27 percent over the next decade, adding more than 1.3 million jobs.

Life, physical, and social science: Occupations in these categories are projected to increase by nearly 190,800 jobs from 2010 to 2020, representing a growth rate of 16 percent. Employment in

¹ <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.nr0.htm>

life science occupations will increase by 58,300, driven largely by the need for medical scientists to conduct research and to create new medical technologies, treatments, and pharmaceuticals. Another 56,500 jobs are expected to be created in social science and related occupations, led by strong growth among clinical, counseling, and school psychologists, who will be in greater demand as they provide psychological services in schools, hospitals, mental health centers, and social services agencies.

Additional General Information

Credentials: Jobs requiring a master's degree are expected to grow the fastest, while those requiring a high school diploma will experience the slowest growth.

Population: Minorities and immigrants are expected to constitute a larger share of the U.S. population in 2020. The Asian and Hispanic origin populations are projected to continue to grow much faster than other racial and ethnic groups, with the number of Asians growing at a rate of 34 percent and Hispanics, 37 percent.

Workforce diversity: The U.S. workforce is projected to become more diverse by 2020. Among racial groups, Whites are expected to make up a decreasing share of the labor force while Blacks, Asians, and all other groups will increase their share. Among ethnic groups, persons of Hispanic origin are projected to increase their share of the labor force from 14.8 percent to 18.6 percent.

The number of women in the labor force will grow at a slightly faster rate than the number of men. The male labor force is projected to grow by 6.3 percent compared with 7.4 percent for the female labor force. The share of the youth labor force, workers ages 16 to 24, is expected to decrease from 13.6 percent in 2010 to 11.2 percent in 2020. The primary working-age group, those between 25 and 54 years old, is projected to decline from 66.9 percent of the labor force in 2010 to 63.7 percent in 2020. The share of workers ages 55 years and older, is anticipated to move from 19.5 percent to 25.2 percent of the labor force during the same period.

Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2012-13 Edition*, Projections Overview, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/about/projections-overview.htm>

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2012-13 Edition*, Registered Nurses, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/registered-nurses.htm>