

## Quick Paths to a Health-Care Career

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Worried about the effect of the recession on your career prospects? Don't be. Even in an economic downturn, one sector is staying strong -- health care.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) Current Employment Statistics, health care employment continued to grow in the first few months of 2008. During the past 12 months, the health care sector overall has grown by 363,000 jobs, making it the largest industry in the United States, accounting for 13.5 million jobs.

Better yet, the health care sector will generate 3 million new jobs by 2016, more than any other industry -- thanks, in part, to aging baby boomers and increased numbers of retirees. Plus, most positions will require less than four years of college education. Here's a look at the four accessible [health care jobs](#) -- and the education or training necessary to break into this growing field.

### Registered Nurse

Registered nurses are in high demand. If you're nurturing, detail oriented, and capable of staying calm in stressful situations, a [career in nursing](#) may prove a good fit. By 2010, 1.7 million nurses will be needed, but only 635,000 will be available. Demand is highest for nurses in emergency room, operating room, intensive care, pediatrics and labor and delivery room. Median [salary](#) in 2006 was \$57,280. To become a nurse, enroll in a nursing program, which range from bachelor's, associate degrees, and diplomas.

### Health Information Technicians

Were you the designated "note taker" in class? If you're super organized and meticulous to boot, a career in health information technology may suit you. Health information technologists maintain the medical records for patients -- including observations of their general health, medical history and symptoms, X-rays, diagnoses, surgery and treatments. Don't especially like working with people? This is one of the few careers in the health field where you can hunker down in your office, during day, evening, or night shifts. Computer skills are essential in analyzing data. [Health information](#) technicians typically earn around \$29,290, according to latest BLS figures, and have an associate degree from a community or junior college. Many employers prefer to hire technicians who have become Registered Health Information Technicians (RHIT).

### Dental Hygienists

#### Dental hygienists

earn an average of \$64,740 and enjoy a relatively "clean" job fostering good oral hygiene by scraping teeth, applying fluoride or sealants, and sometime taking and developing X-rays. Perks often include flexible hours; more than half of all dental hygienists work part time. Many dental hygienists arrange their schedule so they only work two to three days a week. As for educational requirements, you'll need an [associate degree](#) or certificate from an accredited [dental hygiene school](#) and a state license.

### Health Service Managers

Health service managers, also known as [health care administrators](#), manage the business end of specific clinical departments or entire health care facilities. They can be in charge of millions of dollars worth of equipment and hundreds of employees. They must be good managers with an understanding of finance and accounting. The job generally requires some travel and overtime, and pays a median [salary](#) of \$73,340, according to the BLS. While a [master's degree in health services](#) administration, public health, or business administration is standard, a [bachelor's degree](#) can land you an entry-level job at smaller facilities.

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