

Allied Health Professions

Overview

For more information on careers in this field, click on the appropriate profession(s) in the [Career Explorer](#) section of this site.

The term **Allied Health** (or Health-Related Professions, at some institutions) is used to identify a cluster of health professions, encompassing as many as 200 health careers (see list below). There are **5 million allied health care providers in the U.S.**, who work in more than **80 different professions** and represent approximately 60% of all health care providers -- but this is just a drop in the bucket in terms of how many allied health care workers are needed to meet current and future healthcare needs in America.

When you work in allied health, you are involved (directly or indirectly) with patient health, and you are regarded as an expert in your field. Some allied health professionals practice independently; others work as part of a health care team, providing continual evaluation and assessment of patient needs. They also play a major role in informing the attending clinician of the patient's progress and response to treatment.

The allied health professions fall into two broad categories: technicians (assistants) and therapists/technologists. Technicians are trained to perform procedures, and their education lasts less than two years. They are required to work under the supervision of technologists or therapists. This part of the allied health field includes physical therapy assistants, medical laboratory technicians, radiological technicians, occupational therapy assistants, recreation therapy assistants, and respiratory therapy technicians.

The educational process for therapists or technologists is more intensive and includes acquiring procedural skills. In addition, students of therapy/technology learn to evaluate patients, diagnose conditions, develop treatment plans, and understand the rationale behind various treatments in order to judge their appropriateness and potential side effects. Educational curricula teach students to evaluate patients' responses to therapy and make appropriate decisions about continued treatment or modification of treatment plans.

For more information about Allied Health, see the [Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions](#) Website. The U.S. Department of Labor has a whole section on allied health professions on its [Career Voyages](#) Website. Another useful resource is the [American Medical Association \(AMA\)](#)'s overview of selected Allied Health careers, including an overview of selected [allied health career salaries](#). The Health Professions Network (HPN)'s publishes a feature on the ["Allied Health Profession of the Month"](#). Also, and another online newsletter called [Diversity Allied Health](#) includes "A Day in the Life" of professionals in various allied health careers.

To find an accredited allied health program, see the [Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Programs](#) Website -- which lists most, but not all, of the allied health fields. Some allied health programs (such as [dietetics](#)) are credentialled by another accrediting body. The [American Association of Community Colleges](#) also provides a list of schools that train students for allied health careers.

According to the [Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions](#), allied health encompasses the following careers:

[Athletic training](#)

[Cardiovascular perfusion technology](#)

[Cytotechnology](#)

[Dental hygiene](#)

[Diagnostic medical sonography](#)

[Dietetics](#)

[Emergency medical sciences](#)

[Health administration](#)

[Health information management](#)

[Medical technology](#)

[Nuclear medicine technology](#)

[Nursing](#) (not part of allied health but frequently offered at schools that also train allied health providers)

[Occupational therapy](#)

Physical therapy
Physician assistant
Radiation therapy technology
Radiography
Rehabilitation counseling
Respiratory therapy
Respiratory therapy technology
Speech-language pathology and audiology

Funding Opportunities

Search for funding opportunities in this field

Enrichment Programs

Search for enrichment programs in this field

Careers in This Field

Anesthesiologist Assistants
Blood Bank Technology Specialist
Cardiovascular Technologist/Technician
Clinical Laboratory Technologist/Technician
Community Health Worker
Cytotechnologist
Diagnostic Medical
Sonographer
Dosimetrist
Electroneurodiagnostic Technologist
Emergency Medical Technician/Paramedic
General Aide
Genetic Counselor
Health Information Manager
Healthcare Interpreter
Home Care Assistant/Aide
Medical Assistant
Medical Coder
Medical Transcriptionist
Nuclear Medicine Technologist
Nurses Aide/Nursing
Assistant Ophthalmic Laboratory
Technician Optician (Dispensing)
Orientation & Mobility Specialist
Orthotist and Prosthetist
Pathologists' Assistant
Perfusionist
Phlebotomist
Radiologic Technologist
Respiratory Therapist
Surgical Technologist

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