

Hot Jobs 2010 Briefs

Health Care



JOBS

Registered Nurses, Radiologic Technologists and Technicians, Diagnostic Medical Sonographers, and Dental Hygienists.

VACANCIES

Registered Nurses = 2,479
Radiologic Technologists and Technicians = 140
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers = 104
Dental Hygienist = 117

REGIONAL INFORMATION

Every county in Massachusetts is expected to increase its hiring in the health care industry, according to the Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development.ⁱ The three areas with the greatest projected increases for 2009 are the Cape and the Islands with an expected growth in health care jobs of 32%, western Massachusetts 22%, and the Greater Boston area 21%.ⁱⁱ

SALARY AT THE 75TH PERCENTILE OF THE JOB'S WAGE RANGE (meaning 75% of people are paid at or below the represented wage)ⁱⁱⁱ

Registered Nurses = \$97,160
Radiologic Technologists and Technicians = \$78,750
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers = \$84,210
Dental Hygienists = \$85,550

BENEFITS

Health and dental benefits are offered in each of these positions.^{iv} Paid vacation time and sick leave is also standard, and tuition reimbursement is common.

WORK SCHEDULE

If position is in a medical or dental office or outpatient care facility, hours are usually, 9 a.m.–5 p.m., Monday through Friday, but may also include Saturday hours. If employed in a hospital, nursing home, or other 24-hour patient care facility, an individual may also work nights and weekends. At these facilities, individuals can be required to work 12-hour shifts any day of the week.

IS THIS THE JOB FOR ME?

Workplaces include hospitals, nursing homes, physician or dentist offices, outpatient care centers, and private homes. Hot Jobs in this field are filled heavily by women; 91.7% of RNs are women and 93.3% of LPNs are women. These positions require the ability to lift heavy loads and to work on one's feet for more than eight hours at a time. Also, jobs in hospitals and nursing homes are often considered high stress.

Registered Nurses help physicians by recording patients' medical histories and symptoms and educating patients and their families on home care needs, diet and exercise programs, physical therapy, and self-

administration of medication. They also perform diagnostic tests by operating medical machinery and analyzing the results. In addition, registered nurses run general health screenings, immunization and blood drives, and public seminars on health and diseases.

Radiologic Technologists and Technicians assist physicians by producing x-ray films of parts of the human body to diagnose medical problems. Radiologic technologists and technicians work directly with patients, explaining the procedure and positioning them so they can be appropriately radiographed. They are also often responsible for keeping patient records and maintaining equipment.

Diagnostic Medical Sonographers help physicians diagnose and treat patients by operating special equipment called transducers. They examine certain parts of the body by collecting an image that may be videotaped, transmitted, or photographed. They work closely with patients, explaining the procedure and recording any medical history. They typically work in hospitals, but some may travel to patients' neighborhoods in equipped vans. Some may also work as contract employees in a number of different hospitals. Full-time sonographers work about 40 hours per week, and some may work nights and on weekends.

Dental Hygienists examine patients' teeth by taking and assessing dental x-rays. They also clean patients' teeth by removing stains and plaque. They teach patients how to practice good oral hygiene by explaining the relationship between diet and oral health, as well as how to properly brush and floss their teeth. These positions frequently have an unusual amount of flexibility in available schedules, including working full time or part time, daytime, evening or weekend hours. According to the U. S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than half of all dental hygienists work part time.

Individuals with any criminal convictions are NOT eligible for jobs in the health care industry.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Registered Nurses: An associate's degree in nursing (ADN) is a two- to three-year program offered at both community colleges and technical schools; the bachelor of science degree in nursing is a four-year degree program offered at universities and colleges. On-site internship training in hospitals or other places of patient care is a required component of both associate's and bachelor's programs in nursing. Once an AA or BA in nursing is obtained, the individual must complete and pass a national licensure exam.

Radiological Therapists and Technicians: Training can be one to four years in length; associate's degree programs last two years while bachelor's degree programs last about four years. One-year certificate programs can be pursued by individuals who have worked in other sectors of the medical field like nursing. All programs involve both classroom and clinical training. Once training is completed in any of these areas, the individual must obtain a temporary license from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Radiation Control Program. The temporary license is good for one year. In order to receive a permanent license, individuals must pass the national licensure exam. A permanent license remains valid as long as the individual completes 24 hours of continuing education training every two years.

Diagnostic Medical Sonographers: Training is offered in hospitals, vocational-technical institutions, and community colleges and universities, which can lead to an associate's or a bachelor's degree. Many employers prefer an individual is a registered sonographer, which involves taking an exam. Colleges and universities offer formal training in both two- and four-year programs. Two-year programs leading to an associate's degree are most prevalent. Course work includes classes in anatomy, physiology, instrumentation, basic physics, patient care, and medical ethics.

Dental hygienists: Training is offered by accredited dental hygiene schools, which award certificates, and through college and university degree programs (AA, BA and MA). High school diploma and college entrance test scores are usually required for admission to a dental hygiene program. Some dental hygiene programs require students to have completed at least one year of college. Dental Hygienists must be licensed

by the state in which they practice. They must then pass both a written and clinical examination that is administered by the American Dental Association.

It is important to note that jobs in health care require training and licensing from accredited institutions. There are schools in Massachusetts that are NOT accredited but still offer programs.

It is important to check the Board of Registration and Nursing Web site before enrolling in any program to ensure that it is currently accredited
<http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dph/quality/boards/rnnecpro.pdf> or the Massachusetts Dental Society www.massdha.org.

Many community colleges throughout Massachusetts are on the approved list of programs. They also require two years or less of education and can be affordable options. A degree from an accredited college or university is required to work in the health care field.

CAREER PATHWAYS

RNs begin working as staff nurses; especially if they have an associate's degree. RNs can be promoted to positions in management or administration if they have their bachelor's or master's degree

Radiological Technicians and technologists can specialize in CT scanning, MRIs, and angiography through gaining experience or entering certificate programs.

Diagnostic Medical Sonographers specializing in one particular discipline often seek competency in others. For example, obstetric sonographers might seek training in abdominal sonography to increase their employment options. Sonographers may also have advancement opportunities in education, administration, research, sales, or technical advising.

Dental Hygienists would most likely need a bachelor's or master's degree for advancement opportunities into administration, research or public health.

RESOURCES

- Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing: www.mass.gov/dph/boards/rn.
- Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing, Approved Practical Nursing and Registered Nurse Programs: <http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dph/quality/boards/rnnecpro.pdf>.
- Nursingjobs.org: <http://www.nursingjobs.org/massachusetts/>.
- Massachusetts Dental Hygienists' Association: www.massdha.org.
- Massachusetts Dental Society: www.massdental.org.
- School of Diagnostic Medical Sonography at Beth Israel Deaconess: www.bidmc.org.

ⁱ The Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development projected the increase in hiring per industry in late 2008, but did not provide detailed statistics on individual occupations within these industries.

ⁱⁱ Data taken from the *Massachusetts Business Hiring Expectations for the 1st Quarter 2009: As Collected in October and November 2008 as part of the semi-annual 2008 4th Quarter Job Vacancy Survey*.

ⁱⁱⁱ Median Annual Salary in Massachusetts in 2008

^{iv} Information in each of these sections was taken from the *2008-2009 Occupational Outlook Handbook* as viewed at <http://www.bls.gov>.