

Growth expected in health-care job sector

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Despite tepid signs of economic growth in the coming new year, I remain bullish on employment growth in the state's health sector and the opportunities awaiting any Nevada student interested in pursuing a career in the health professions. Many of these prospects are highlighted in the recently published "Health Care Careers in Nevada, 2014-2015 edition" from the High Sierra Area Health Education Center and the University of Nevada School of Medicine's Office of Statewide Initiatives (www.highsierraahcec.org).

"Health Care Careers in Nevada" is primarily targeted to middle school and high school students in Nevada interested in exploring careers in medicine, nursing, and other health care fields. This updated edition of the manual contains current information on over eighty health care occupations in Nevada, including an overview of job requirements, employment outlook, and average salary data for each occupation. It also provides a detailed inventory of educational certificate and degree programs available in Nevada for each type of health care job.

Over the past decade, the health services sector – hospitals, clinics, medical and dental practices, nursing homes, pharmacies, and other health providers – has been an economic mainstay during the state's deepest recession since the Great Depression. From 2007 to 2012, Nevada's economy shed close to 200,000 jobs. In contrast, employment in Nevada's health industries grew by nearly 9,000 jobs or 10 percent.

The most recent jobs report from the Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation notes that health sector remains a "stalwart creator new jobs," generating an estimated 3,600 jobs during the past year alone. The DETR report adds that an aging population and insurance coverage expansions associated with the Affordable Care Act will spur additional demand for health care, which should lead to more health sector jobs in the near term.

Currently, over 110,000 Nevadans are employed in the health services sector and nearly one in ten jobs in Nevada is in a hospital, clinic, or other health care setting. Moreover, twenty of the fastest growing health care occupations in Nevada possess an average annual salary that exceeds the average annual salary of \$41,497 for all occupations in the state.

Health sector jobs continue to represent well-paying, recession-resistant employment for thousands of Nevadans poised to enter the state's workforce – opportunities that will only increase with the growing demand for health care over the next two decades. The newly published "Health Care Careers in Nevada" will assist anyone interested in exploring such opportunities.

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