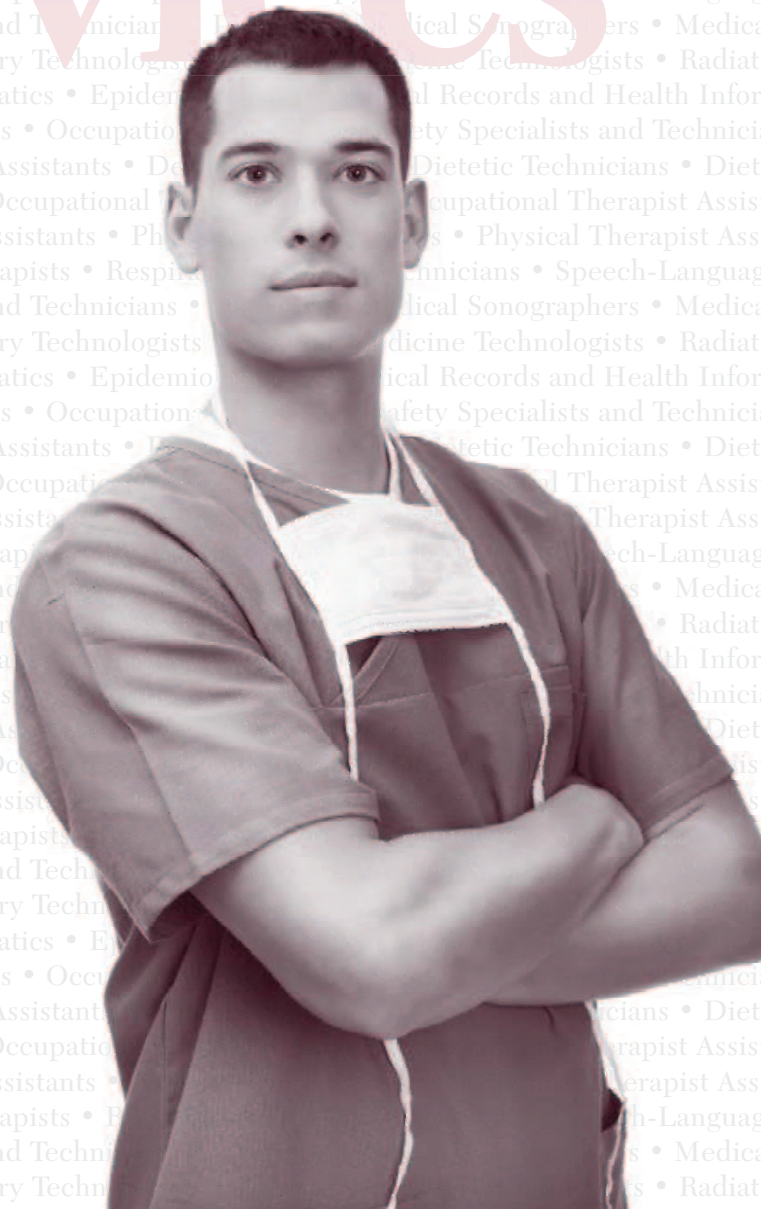


Support Services

Medical Assisting
Medical Assistant
Nursing Assistant



Medical Assisting

Medical assisting personnel (medical assistants) perform routine administrative and clinical tasks to keep clinics, home health agencies, private medical practices, and other health care facilities running smoothly.

Status

- Nationally, the BLS reports that medical assisting is expected to be one of the 10 fastest-growing occupations through the year 2018, growing much faster than the average for all occupations. Employment of medical assistants is expected to grow 33.9 percent from 2008 to 2018 (3.4 percent nationally). State data also indicates growth.
- As the health care industry expands because of technological advances in medicine and the growth and aging of the population, there will be an increased need for all health care workers. Helping drive the job growth is the increasing number of group practices, clinics, and other health care facilities that need a high proportion of support personnel, particularly medical assistants who can handle both administrative and clinical duties.
- Some 5.7 million to 6.5 million long-term care workers will be required to meet the needs of American seniors by 2050, up from 1.9 million employed in 2000 (HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson, 2003).
- Medical assisting personnel (medical assistants) perform routine administrative and clinical tasks to keep clinics, home health agencies, private medical practices, and other health care facilities running smoothly.
- Population ratios for medical assistants is higher for the state than that of the nation.

Medical Assistant

Description

Medical assistants perform a variety of administrative and clinical duties in accordance with the regulations of the state in which

they practice. Administrative duties may include scheduling and receiving patients, maintaining medical records, preparing patients for examinations, and assisting physicians during examinations. Medical assistants may also collect and prepare laboratory specimens, dispose of contaminated supplies, and sterilize medical instruments. They instruct patients about medication and special diets, prepare and administer medications as directed by physicians, telephone prescriptions to pharmacies, draw blood, prepare patients for x-rays, take electrocardiograms, remove sutures, and change dressings.

Educational Preparation

Most employers prefer to hire graduates of formal programs in medical assisting, according to the BLS. Postsecondary programs usually last one year and result in a certificate or diploma or last two years and result in an associate's degree. Accredited programs ensure entry-level competencies and require an internship.

National certification is provided by two recognized associations: the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) and the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES). Medical assistants can advance to other occupations through experience or additional training. Administrative medical assistants may advance to become office managers or qualify for a variety of other administrative support occupations.

National Supply and Demand

In 2008, medical assistants held approximately 483,600 jobs. About 62 percent were in physicians' offices, 12 percent in hospitals, and 11 percent other health care offices. Employment of medical assistants is expected to grow 33.9 percent from 2008 to 2018 (3.4 percent annually). As the health care industry expands because of technological advances in medicine and the growth and aging of the population, there will be an increased need for all health care workers. Helping drive the job growth is the increasing number of group practices, clinics, and other health care facilities that need a high proportion of support personnel, particularly medical assistants who can handle both administrative and clinical duties.

State Supply and Demand

The estimated employment in Tennessee for medical assistants was 9,927 in 2008. Growth plus replacement needs for medical assistants in Tennessee are estimated to average about 455 openings per year from 2006 to 2016. Of these estimated 455 openings per year, 74.7 percent are due to growth (new positions), and 25.3 percent are due to the replacement of workers leaving the occupation. By comparison, of all occupations in Tennessee, 37.4 percent of annual openings are due to growth (new positions), and 62.6 percent of annual openings are due to the replacement of workers who have left their occupations. The outlook for this field in Tennessee is very competitive, though the growth rate is positive. There were three times (or more) as many training completers in a recent year as job openings expected annually.

There are 25 accredited programs for medical assisting in Tennessee. Graduates of the programs receive a certificate, diploma, or an associate's degree. The certificate and diploma programs last between 8 and 15 months. The programs that award an associate's degree last 24 months.

TABLE 5.1

Tennessee Medical Assisting Programs

| School | Program Offers |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Academy of Allied Health | Workforce Investment Act |
| Chattanooga State Technical College | Certificate/Diploma |
| Concorde Career College | A.A.S., Certificate/Diploma |
| Draughons Junior College–Clarksville | A.A.S., Certificate/Diploma |
| Draughons Junior College of Business | A.A.S., Certificate/Diploma |
| Fugazzi College | A.A.S. |
| Institute of Allied Health and Commerce | Certificate/Diploma |
| Knoxville Business College | A.A.S. |
| Miller Motte Business College | A.A.S. |
| Nashville College | Certificate |

Cont.

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| National College of Business and Technology–Nashville | A.A.S. |
| Northeast State Technical Community College | A.A.S. |
| Remington College–Memphis | Diploma |
| Southeastern Paralegal Institute | Diploma |
| South College | A.A.S. |
| Tennessee Technology Center–Chattanooga | Diploma |
| Tennessee Technology Center–Hartsville | Certificate/Diploma |
| Tennessee Technology Center–Knoxville | Certificate/Diploma |
| Tennessee Technology Center–McMinnville | Certificate/Diploma |
| Tennessee Technology Center–Ripley | Certificate/Diploma |
| Tennessee Technology Center–Shelbyville | Certificate/Diploma |
| Vatterott College–Memphis | A.A.S./Diploma |
| West Tennessee Business College | Diploma |

Source: Health Professions Education Directory

Summary

Technological advances in medicine along with the growth of an aging population indicates an increased need for all health care workers, including medical assistants. Though the national outlook for medical assistants is expected to be one of the 10 fastest-growing occupations through the year 2018, the outlook for this cluster in Tennessee is very competitive. Local demands may change within a short period of time and may not always reflect state workforce data.

Nursing Assistant

(Nursing, Psychiatric, and Home Health Aides)

Nursing assistants (also known as nursing aides, certified nursing assistants, geriatric aides, etc.) provide basic patient care under the supervision of nursing and medical staff. Specific tasks vary, and assistants handle many aspects of a patient's care.

Status

- The job opportunities are excellent for this field due to a combination of rapid employment growth and the need to replace the many workers who leave the occupation each year.
- Nationally, the BLS reports employment for nursing assistants is expected to grow faster than the average in response to the long-term needs of an increasing elderly population. There is a clear “care gap” emerging between the number of those requiring long-term care assistance and those available to provide that assistance. State data also reflects growth.
- Some 5.7 million to 6.5 million long-term care workers will be required to meet the needs of American seniors by 2050, up from 1.9 million employed in 2000 (HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson, 2003).
- Helping drive the job growth is the increasing number of group practices, clinics, and other health care facilities that need a high proportion of support personnel, including nursing assistants.
- Nursing assistants (also known as nursing aides, certified nursing assistants, geriatric aides, etc.) provide basic patient care under the supervision of nursing and medical staff. Specific tasks vary, and assistants handle many aspects of a patient's care.
- The population ratio for nursing assistants is higher for the state than that of the nation.

Description

Nursing assistants (also known as nursing aides, certified nursing assistants, geriatric aides, etc.) provide basic patient care under the supervision of nursing and medical staff. Specific tasks vary, and assistants handle many aspects of a patient's care. They answer patients' call bells, deliver messages, serve meals, make beds,

and help patients eat, dress, and bathe. Nursing assistants may be employed in hospitals, nursing homes, and home health agencies.

Educational Preparation

Most nursing assistants receive their training in hospital or long-term care programs averaging 6 to 12 weeks in length. Students receive a certificate of completion and must take the state-administered nursing assistant test to practice in the state of Tennessee.

There is a “care gap” emerging between the number of those requiring long-term care assistance and those available to provide that assistance. Long-term care providers serve the fastest growing population group—the elderly. A 2003 report prepared by the Department of Health and Human Services for Congress stated, “The total number of Americans in need of long-term care is expected to rise from 13 million in 2000 to 27 million in 2050, an increase of over 100 percent.”

National Supply and Demand

Nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides held about 2.5 million jobs in the U.S. in 2008. Nursing assistants held the most jobs (approximately 1.5 million). About 52 percent of nursing aides worked in nursing and residential care facilities and another 29 percent worked in hospitals. The job opportunities are excellent for this field due to a combination of rapid employment growth and the need to replace the many workers who leave the occupation each year.

Employment for nursing assistants is expected to grow faster than the average in response to the long-term needs of an increasing elderly population. The Bureau of Statistics projects a 30.2 percent increase through 2018 (3.0 percent annually). Financial pressures on hospitals to discharge patients as soon as possible should greatly increase admissions to nursing care facilities. As a result, job openings will be more numerous in nursing and residential care facilities than in hospitals.

State Supply and Demand

This field is predicted to grow in Tennessee. The number of nurse aides, orderlies, and attendants employed in Tennessee in 2006 was 34,043. It is projected that there will be 39,370 by 2016.

This represents a 1.9 percent annual average growth rate, or an overall growth rate of 21.1 percent. The long-term growth for nursing assistants, orderlies, and attendants in Tennessee is estimated to average about 975 openings per year from 2006 to 2016. Of these estimated 975 openings per year, 70.3 percent are due to growth (new positions), and 29.7 percent are due to the replacement of workers leaving the occupation. Nursing care facilities have the highest employment in this area, with 37.9 percent of the total employment; hospitals follow with 22.7 percent.

Nursing assistant programs are located in a variety of settings in Tennessee: high school vocational programs, area technology centers, acute and long-term care centers, and private training programs. Licensure or registration in these areas varies and is not required, although a certificate of completion and an exam is mandatory for nursing assistants to practice.

Home health aides vary in background and training. The long-term growth for home health aides in Tennessee is predicted to grow. The number of home health aides employed in Tennessee in 2008 was 11,832. It is projected that in 2016 there will be 15,650. This represents an annual average growth rate of 3.8 percent (or 4.5 percent overall growth rate), which is faster than the 1.0 percent growth rate for all occupations in Tennessee. Growth plus replacement needs for home health aides in Tennessee are estimated to result in an average of about 585 openings per year from 2006 to 2016. Of these estimated 585 openings per year, 82.9 percent are due to growth (new positions), and 16.2 percent are due to the replacement of workers leaving the occupation. According to the state economic outlook, this cluster in Tennessee is excellent. Occupations in this cluster report more job openings annually than training completers. Local demands may change within a short period of time and may not always reflect state workforce data.

Summary

Employment for nursing assistants is expected to grow faster than the average in response to the long-term needs of an increasing elderly population. Job openings will be more numerous in nursing and residential care facilities than in hospitals given the financial pressures on hospitals to discharge patients as soon as possible, which leads to increased admissions to nursing care facilities. According to

the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a 30.2 percent increase is projected through 2018 (3.0 percent annually) for this occupational cluster. According to the state economic outlook, this field in Tennessee is expected to grow rapidly. Occupations in this field report more job openings annually than training completers. Local demands may change within a short period of time and may not always reflect state workforce data.

TABLE 5.2

Tennessee Supply and Demand Data for Medical Assisting Personnel 2006–2016

| | Medical Assistant | Surgical Technologist | Nursing Assistant |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Total Annual Average Openings | 455 | 175 | 975 |
| 2016 Projected Employment | 12,710 | 107,000 | 39,370 |

Source: Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, “The Source,” www.sourceten.org/analyzer/session/session.asp?cat=OCC, accessed August 2009.

