

## CRITICAL SKILL SHORTAGES INITIATIVE:

# Choose an LPN or RN career path — and find secure and rewarding employment!

### THE HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY: SIGNIFICANT POINTS

- As the Nation's largest industry in 2004, health care provided 13.5 million jobs
- Eight out of 20 occupations projected to grow the fastest are in health care.
- More new jobs will be in healthcare than in any other industry — about 19 percent, or 3.6 million created between 2004 and 2014
- Most healthcare workers have jobs that require less than 4 years of college education, but health diagnosing and treating practitioners are among the most educated workers.

### Nature of the Industry

Combining medical technology and the human touch, the health care industry administers care around the clock, responding to the needs of millions of people, from newborns to the critically ill.

About 545,000 establishments make up the healthcare industry. They vary greatly in terms of size, staffing patterns, and organizational structures; about 76 percent of healthcare establishments are offices of physicians, dentists, or other health practitioners. Although hospitals constitute only 2 percent of all healthcare establishments, they employ 40 percent of all workers.

The healthcare industry consists of the following nine segments:

- Hospitals
- Nursing and residential care facilities
- Physician Offices
- Dentist Offices

- Home health care services
- Offices of other health practitioners
- Outpatient care centers
- Other ambulatory health care services
- Medical and diagnostic laboratories

The preceding information was provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Career Guide to Industries, 2006-07 Edition, Healthcare, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/cg/cgs035.htm> (visited February 13, 2006).

### NURSING

If you're looking for a job that provides security and an excellent salary with benefits, plus allows you to help people, then you should consider a career in the nursing field. Hospitals, clinics, home care facilities and community health agencies are currently in need of nurses.

With baby boomers approaching their golden years, the number of people needing long-term care services is increasing dramatically. At the same time, studies show that many nursing professionals are retiring. There is a nursing shortage across the country and options are wide open for graduates of nursing programs.

By choosing a career in nursing, you will experience a wide variety of responsibilities and will work in a fast-paced environment. You will have the opportunity to save and improve lives, to teach people better health practices and to advocate for patients to make sure they get the best care. Nursing is a highly regarded profession. A 2004 Gallup Poll found that the public voted nurses number one for "honesty and ethical standards of various professions."

If you are interested in becoming a professional in a highly in-demand field, choose a career as a Licensed Practical Nurse or a Registered Nurse. The following facts are provided by Monster.com about the nursing professions.

### LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE SIGNIFICANT POINTS

- Training lasts approximately one year and is available at your local community college.
- Nursing care facilities will offer the most new jobs.

### Nature of the Work

Licensed practical nurses (LPNs) care for the sick, injured, convalescent and disabled under the direction of physicians and registered nurses. Most LPNs provide basic bedside care, taking vital signs such as temperature, blood pressure, pulse and respiration. They also prepare and give injections, monitor catheters, apply dressings, treat bedsores and give alcohol rubs and massages. LPNs monitor their patients and report adverse reactions to medications or treatments. They collect samples for testing, perform routine laboratory tests, feed patients and record food and fluid intake and output. To help keep patients comfortable, LPNs assist with bathing, dressing and personal hygiene.

### Employment Outlook

Employment of LPNs is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through 2012 in response to the long-term care needs of an increasing elderly population and the general growth of healthcare. Replacement needs will be a major source of job openings, as many workers leave the occupation permanently.

Employment of LPNs in nursing care facilities is expected to grow faster than the average. Such facilities will offer the most new jobs for LPNs as the number of aged and disabled persons in need of long term care rises. In addition to caring for the aged and the disabled, LPNs in nursing care facilities will care for the increasing number of patients who will have been discharged from the hospital, but have not recovered enough to return home. Employment of LPNs is expected to grow much faster than average in home health-care services. This growth is in response to an increasing number of older persons with functional disabilities, consumer preference for care in the home and technological advances that make it possible to bring increasingly complex treatments into the home.

### Local Wages for Licensed Practical Nurses\*

Entry Wage	
Hourly	\$9.81
Annual	\$20,407
Median Wage	
Hourly	\$11.93
Annual	\$24,809
Experienced Wage	
Hourly	\$13.31
Annual	\$27,678

\*Source: Illinois Workforce Information Center

### REGISTERED NURSE SIGNIFICANT POINTS

- Registered nurses constitute the largest healthcare occupation, with 2.3 million jobs.
- More new jobs are expected to be created for registered nurses than for any other occupation.
- Job opportunities are expected to be very good.

### Nature of the Work

Registered nurses (RNs) work to promote health, prevent disease and help patients cope with illness. They are advocates and health educators for patients, families and communities. When providing direct patient care, they observe, assess and record symptoms, reactions and progress in patients; assist physicians during surgeries, treatments and examinations; administer medications; and assist in convalescence and rehabilitation. RNs also develop and manage nursing care plans, instruct patients and their families in proper care and help individuals

and groups take steps to improve or maintain their health

### Employment Outlook

Job opportunities for RNs are expected to be very good. Employment of registered nurses is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through 2012, and because the occupation is very large, many new jobs will result. In fact, more new jobs are expected to be created for RNs than for any other occupation. Thousands of job openings also will result from the need to replace experienced nurses who leave the occupation, especially as the median age of the registered nurse population continues to rise.

### Local Wages for Registered Nurses\*

Entry Wage	
Hourly	\$14.50
Annual	\$30,156
Median Wage	
Hourly	\$19.18
Annual	\$39,896
Experienced Wage	
Hourly	\$22.29
Annual	\$46,365

\*Source: Illinois Workforce Information Center

### EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

To help reduce the shortage of nurses in our region, many healthcare providers are offering educational assistance for nursing. Educational assistance programs are available through Southern Illinois Healthcare, Hamilton Memorial Hospital, St. Mary's Good Samaritan Inc., and Harrisburg Medical Center.

Other opportunities for educational assistance are available through the local Workforce Investment Act (WIA) providers. Title I funds, under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, provide financial assistance to eligible adults who are 18 years of age or older.

### EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Job opportunities abound in area hospitals, clinics, and long term care facilities such as:

- Southern Illinois Healthcare — Herrin Hospital, Memorial Hospital of Carbondale, St. Joseph Memorial Hospital of Murphysboro, Miners Memorial Health Center of West Frankfort, and Herrin Hospital.
- Hamilton Memorial Hospital District located in McLeansboro.

- St. Mary's Good Samaritan Inc. located in Mt. Vernon and Centralia.
- Harrisburg Medical Center
- ABS Management, which operates Fountains, City Care of Anna, City Care of Cobden, Oak Grove in Carbondale, Ridgeway Manor, and Friendship Care.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Many resources are available for individuals interested in healthcare. A web site has been created to provide more information about the Critical Skill Shortages Initiative and about the topics and employers listed above. To read more, visit <http://cssi.siwb.org/marketing.asp>.

Additional resources are being created for the high school youth in our region. A Nursing Career Handbook containing detailed information about the healthcare industry, nursing occupations, community college nursing programs, educational assistance programs, and places to work will be distributed to all high schools in our region, and can be accessed on-line at <http://cssi.siwb.org/>. Guidance counselors and health occupation instructors will also receive the handbook to help link our youth with the opportunity to work within the healthcare field in southern Illinois. Plans are also under development to distribute a newsletter to the high schools to provide them with information about the healthcare industry and where to find the Nursing Career Handbook.

For help obtaining more information about a career in healthcare please contact Cary Minnis Healthcare Liaison at [caryminnis@mantracon.org](mailto:caryminnis@mantracon.org) or 1-800-315-3986, ext. 211. ■

### Questions about the initiative?

If you would like additional information about the Critical Skill Shortages Healthcare Initiative, please feel free to contact:

**Mr. Cary Minnis**  
 Healthcare Liaison  
 Man-Tra-Con Corporation  
 3000 W. DeYoung Street, Suite 800-B  
 Marion, IL 62959  
 Phone: 618/998-0970, Ext. 211  
 E-mail: [CaryMinnis@mantracon.org](mailto:CaryMinnis@mantracon.org)



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