



Fastest Growing Healthcare Occupations in South Carolina

Every two years, the South Carolina Department of Commerce and the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics collaborate to estimate future employment levels for a wide variety of healthcare occupations. Their most recent report covers the period from 2008 to 2018. Total workforce growth is calculated over the entire period and then translated into an expected number of job openings each year. The number of annual openings includes those due to growth (new jobs) and those created when people leave the workforce through retirement, career change, or for other reasons (replacements).

The two tables presented here show which healthcare occupations are expected to grow the fastest in South Carolina during that period. Table 1 lists the occupations with the largest number of expected annual job openings. Table 2 lists the occupations that are growing at the fastest rate, based on the percentage of growth expected from the 2008 levels.

Table 1. Top 10 Fastest Growing Healthcare Occupations by Estimated Annual Openings

Occupational Title	Employment			Total % Change	Average Annual Openings
	Actual 2008	Estimated 2018	Total Change		
1) Registered Nurses	38,401	48,021	9,620	25%	1,633
2) Nursing, Psychiatric, and Home Health Aides	31,632	39,207	7,575	24%	1,073
3) Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants	20,094	23,395	3,301	16%	530
4) Licensed Practical / Vocational Nurses	9,955	11,851	1,896	19%	501
5) Pharmacy Technicians	5,494	7,631	2,137	39%	353
6) Medical Assistants	7,099	9,484	2,385	34%	318
7) Pharmacists	4,419	5,476	1,057	24%	204
8) Dental Assistants	3,247	4,446	1,199	37%	181
9) Dental Hygienists	2,599	3,578	979	38%	151
10) Physicians and Surgeons, All Other	2,877	3,523	646	22%	116

Note: The group "Physicians and Surgeons, All Other" contains the following job titles: Allergists and Immunologists, Dermatologists, Hospitalists, Neurologists, Nuclear Medicine Physicians, Ophthalmologists, Pathologists, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Physicians, Preventive Medicine Physicians, Radiologists, Sports Medicine Physicians, and Urologists

Registered Nurses and nursing assistants in direct care roles are the largest healthcare occupational groups in South Carolina. Due to their large size, and that demand for their services is expected to increase over time, the number of annual job openings expected for nursing personnel is 2 or 3 times larger than for any other healthcare occupation listed in Table 1. When Licensed Practical Nurses are added to this picture, it is clear that the demand for nursing services, at all skill levels, will dominate South Carolina healthcare employment in the near future.

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The healthcare occupations expected to grow the fastest, based on the total percentage change in numbers employed from 2008 to 2018, are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Top 10 Fastest Growth Healthcare Occupations by Total % Change

Occupational Title	Employment			Total % Change	Average Annual Openings
	Actual 2008	Estimated 2018	Total Change		
1) Physician Assistants	595	833	238	40%	35
2) Pharmacy Technicians	5,494	7,631	2,137	39%	353
3) Dental Hygienists	2,599	3,578	979	38%	151
4) Dental Assistants	3,247	4,446	1,199	37%	181
5) Radiation Therapists	243	330	87	36%	13
6) Medical Assistants	7,099	9,484	2,385	34%	318
7) Audiologists	127	169	42	33%	7
8) Surgical Technologists	1,712	2,236	524	31%	95
9) Surgeons	770	996	226	29%	37
10) Obstetricians and Gynecologists	445	571	126	28%	21
10) Physical Therapists	2,415	3,096	681	28%	97

Note: There was a tie for tenth place based on overall percent change from 2008 levels, so both occupations are listed in the table.

The demand for Pharmacy Technicians, Medical Assistants, Dental Assistants, and Dental Hygienists is expected to be large both in terms of the average number of annual openings that are anticipated, and as a large percentage change over the 2008-2018 period. Smaller allied health groups, such as audiologists or radiation therapists are expected to grow by more than 30%, but their small numbers will result in many fewer job openings relative to the larger occupations. Two types of physicians are listed among the 10 fastest growing fields, based on percentage change from their 2008 levels: surgeons and obstetricians/gynecologists.

Note: Counts of the number of employed healthcare professionals listed in the tables above are based on survey data collected by the Department of Commerce and may differ from counts based on analysis of South Carolina license data as presented in the "South Carolina Health Professions Data Book."

Data Source: Unpublished tables provided by the South Carolina Department of Commerce "2008 - 2018 Healthcare Workforce in South Carolina by Occupational Title." National occupational projections can be found at: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.toc.htm>.