



Growth Rates Vary for Different Allied Health Professions 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. Summarized below are their estimates of how demand for a variety of healthcare professionals is expected to change in South Carolina over the next decade. The number of anticipated annual openings include those due to growth (new jobs) and those created when people leave the workforce through retirement, career change, or for other reasons (replacements).

Allied Health Occupations	Employment			Total % Change	Average Annual Openings
	Actual 2008	Estimated 2018	Total Change		
Chiropractors	721	875	154	21%	28
Speech-Language Pathologists	1,295	1,515	220	17%	46
Audiologists	127	169	42	33%	7
Orthotists and Prosthetists	233	263	30	13%	8
Optometrists	452	561	109	24%	26
Opticians, Dispensing	923	1,068	145	16%	34
Dietitians and Nutritionists	931	1,010	79	8%	39
Radiation Therapists	243	330	87	36%	13

Note: The counts of Optometrists in this table are based on survey data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and may differ from counts based on analysis of South Carolina license data used in the "South Carolina Health Professions Data Book."

The greatest job growth, in terms of overall percentage change and the proportion of openings due to new job growth occurs among Radiation Therapists. The total percentage change for Dietitians and Nutritionists is small, and most of the future demand is expected to come from replacement needs. Among Speech-Language Pathologists, the group with the largest workforce of all those in the table, about half of the anticipated annual openings are due to new job growth and half to replacement needs. The same is true of Chiropractors. Radiation Therapists, on the other hand, will see most of their growth driven by new job creation.

In the 2008-09 academic year 75 new Chiropractors were graduated from the single program in the state. In that same year, state education programs produced 15 new Speech Language Pathologists, 68 Audiologists, and 211 Radiation Therapists. In 2008-09 there were no education programs graduating Orthotists, Prosthetists, Optometrists, Dispensing Opticians, Dietitians, or Nutritionists in South Carolina.

Data Source: Unpublished tables provided by the South Carolina Department of Commerce "2008 - 2018 Healthcare Workforce in South Carolina by Occupational Title."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>. Graduation figures are from the Institute of Education Sciences National Center for Education Statistics Program Major Completions 2008-2009 Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences.