



The health care industry provided 13.5 million jobs—13.1 million jobs for wage and salary workers and about 411,000 jobs for the self-employed in over 300 different health careers. Of these, approximately 41 percent require professional-level preparation, 33 percent require technical-level preparation, and 26 percent require assistant-level preparation. The Department of Labor’s Bureau of Statistics predicts that 8 out of 20 of the fastest growing occupations are in health care services, and the need for health care professionals in the United States is expected to increase more than 27 percent by the year 2014.

The growth in the health care industry is based on several factors. The number of people in older age groups, with much greater than average health care needs, will grow faster than the total population between 2004 and 2014; as a result, the demand for health care will increase. Advances in medical technology will continue to improve the survival rate of severely ill and injured patients, who will then need extensive therapy and care. New technologies will make it possible to identify and treat conditions that were previously not treatable. Finally, health care reform, with emphasis on managed care, cost containment, and accessibility has created more careers that focus on preventative medicine and personal responsibility for health and wellness.

These factors underscore the importance of having a well-prepared workforce that can provide quality health care for all Americans. The opportunities and benefits offered by a career in health care are numerous. Benefits of working in health care include career ladder options, varied work schedules, life-long learning educational support, career mobility, and portability of skills. Perhaps the greatest benefit of pursuing a health career is the opportunity to make a difference in the quality of life for health care consumers.

Health Science is a secondary career education program for students interested in pursuing a career in health care. Every Health Science program should provide students with opportunities to explore a variety of health careers and make realistic and satisfying career choices. Whether a student is skilled in scientific research and design, clinical laboratory procedures, written and verbal communication skills, or is skilled in caring for people, career options are available to match these individual interests and abilities.

Health Science has experienced steady, consistent growth over the last ten years; student enrollment has increased 50 percent in the last five years.

| Year | 2000-01 | 2001-02 | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2004-05 | 2005-06 |
|------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Enrollment | 41,321 | 43,024 | 53,612 | 56,762 | 55,325 | 61,176 |