

Job Trends Report

JANUARY 2012



Industry Spotlight – HEALTH CARE

The Health Care industry is a vital part of the local, regional and national economies. It is essential in providing significant services to the population, key to productivity and a supplier of a wide variety of regional jobs.

Broadly defined by the North American Industry Classification System:

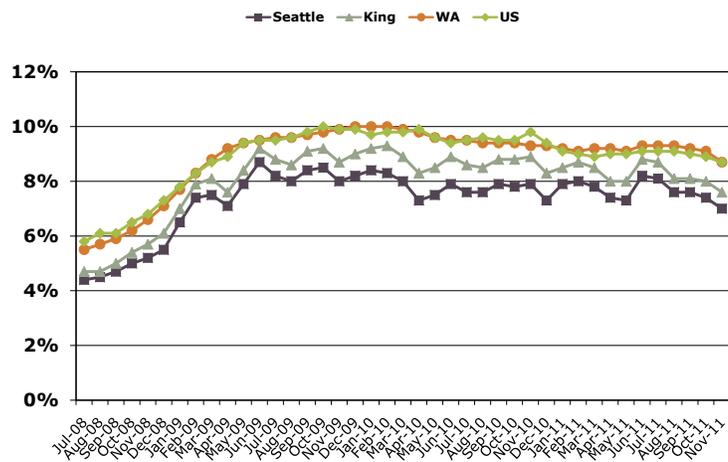
The Health Care and Social Assistance sector comprises establishments providing Health Care and social assistance for individuals. The sector includes both Health Care and social assistance because it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the boundaries of these two activities. The industries in this sector are arranged on a continuum starting with those establishments

TREND TRACKER: What's going on in the local labor market?

Chart 1. UNEMPLOYMENT – November 2011 brought with it some positive news in terms of unemployment rates. Nationally, unemployment was 8.7% for the month. This is the first time the rate has dropped below 9% since March 2011, and the lowest it has been since March 2009. Washington State and the Seattle region both saw similar drops, from 9.1% to 8.7% for the state and from 7.4% to 7.0% for Seattle. December's job numbers for the nation indicate continued improvement, with the unemployment rate dropping to 8.5% (not shown in Chart 1).

CHART 1
Unemployment Rate – July 2008 to November 2011

November 2011 unemployment rates indicate improvement in the national and regional labor market. Still, rates are projected to remain high well into 2012.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics; Washington State Employment Security Department, LMEA.

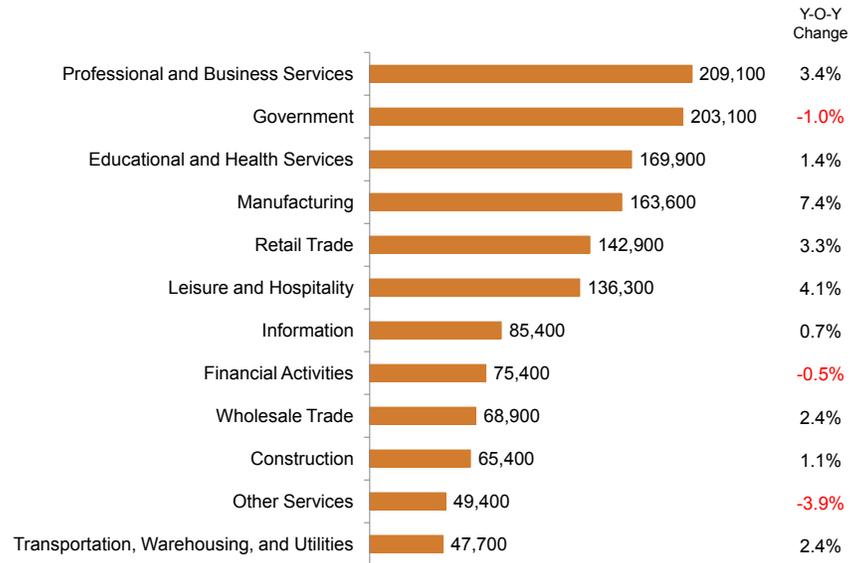
Chart 2. INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT - Coupled with the good unemployment news, signs of job growth are evident for many industries. For the Seattle area, most industries saw gains for the month of November 2011, totaling 9,600 jobs added. Leisure & Hospitality gained the most jobs – 2,400 – for November. Exceptions are Other Services, which lost 900 jobs for the month. Still, many industries have yet to make up the significant losses brought on by the recession. Since the start of the recovery in June 2009, industries such as Construction and Financial Activities are still struggling to regain their footing.

providing medical care exclusively, continuing with those providing Health Care and social assistance, and finally finishing with those providing only social assistance. The services provided by establishments in this sector are delivered by trained professionals. All industries in the sector share this commonality of process, namely, labor inputs of health practitioners or social workers with the requisite expertise. Many of the industries in the sector are defined based on the educational degree held by the practitioners included in the industry.¹

CHART 2

November 2011 – Employment by Industry – Seattle MSA

Many industry sectors continue to report positive job growth numbers.



Source: Washington State Employment Security Department, LMEA.

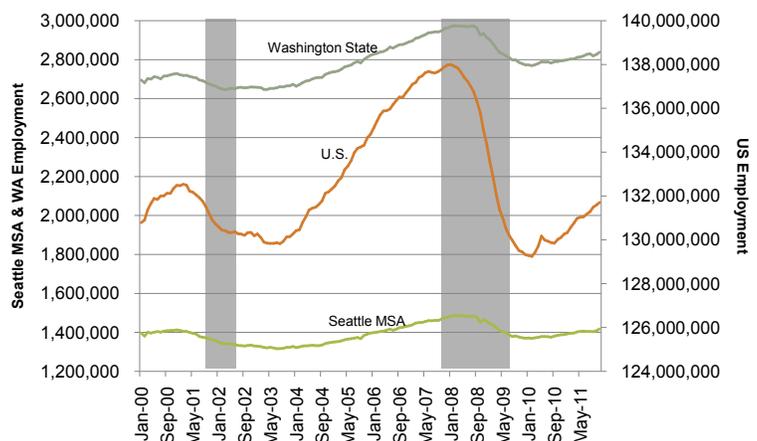
Chart 3. LONG-TERM TOTAL EMPLOYMENT FOR THE NATION, STATE, AND REGION

– Looking at employment trends over the long term, the following chart shows that progress is being made, however slowly. Nationally, the black line shows the harsh effects of the recession bringing employment numbers to a low for the decade, but with recent improvements being made. The blue and green lines indicate that, while Washington and Seattle MSA may have not seen such dramatic losses, the effects of this most recession continue to drag employment growth down.

CHART 3

Total Employment

It's been a slow recovery.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics; Washington State Employment Security Department, LMEA.

1 <http://www.bls.gov/iag/tgs/iag62.htm>

Locally, the Health Care industry holds a significant spot in the labor market. As **Table 1** details, the Health Care industry in Seattle-King County, grouped together with Education, accounts for roughly 12% of total employment, currently providing the region with over 169,900 jobs. While not the largest supplier of jobs, the industry cluster has been ranked by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board² as #1 based on a variety of criteria, including employment opportunities, supply of middle- and high-wage occupations, and projected employment.³

Table 1. Seattle MSA Industry Employment – November 2011

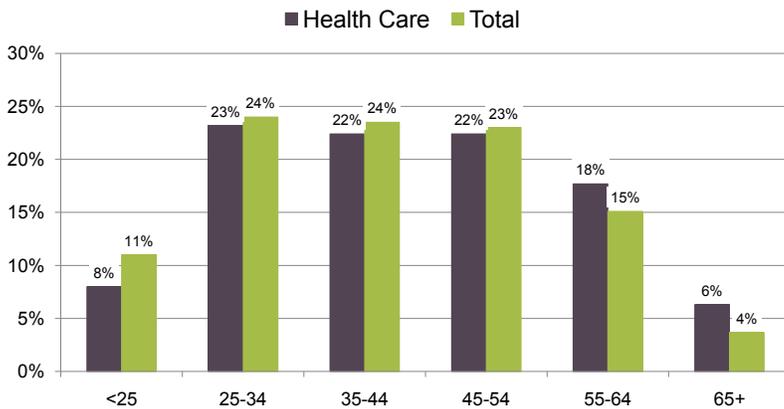
Industry	Nov '11 Employment	% of Total Employment
Total Nonfarm	1,417,800	100.0%
Professional and Business Services	209,100	14.7%
Government	203,100	14.3%
Educational and Health Services	169,900	12.0%
Manufacturing	163,600	11.5%
Retail Trade	142,900	10.1%
Leisure and Hospitality	136,300	9.6%
Information	85,400	6.0%
Financial Activities	75,400	5.3%
Wholesale Trade	68,900	4.9%
Construction	65,400	4.6%
Other Services	49,400	3.5%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	47,700	3.4%
Mining and Logging	700	0.0%

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department, LMEA.

2 STRATEGIC INDUSTRY CLUSTERS FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT - <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/ClusterRankingsAllRegions.asp#Region5>

3 <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/clustercriteria.asp>

CHART 4
Health Care Industry Age – King County



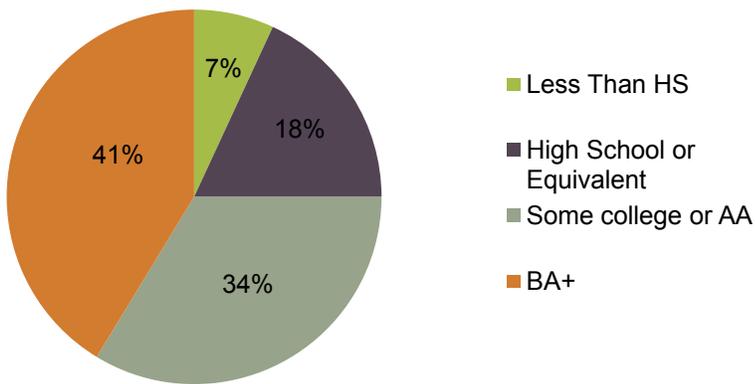
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics

Looking more deeply into the makeup of the current Health Care workforce in Seattle-King County, data indicate that roughly 3 out of 4 Health Care employees in the area are female.⁴

In addition, as **Chart 4** illustrates, workers in the industry tend to be older than the workforce as a whole, with 24% of workers over the age of 55, compared to 19% for all employment in Seattle-King County.

Chart 5 details the current makeup of employment in terms of educational attainment. Not surprisingly, 3 out of 4 occupations in the industry require some level of postsecondary educational attainment. Of those, over half require at least a four-year degree.

CHART 5
Health Care Industry Educational Attainment – King County



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics

⁴ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics 2010 Q4 for King County, Washington

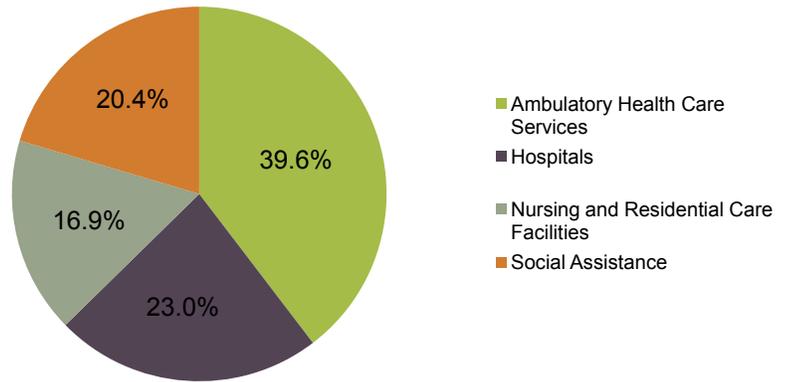
HEALTH CARE SUBSECTORS

Chart 6 illustrates how Health Care employment is distributed within the industry. Roughly 40% of industry employment is in Ambulatory Health Care Services, followed by 23% in Hospitals.

The Health Care industry has not been entirely immune to the effects of the most recent economic downturn. As **Chart 7** shows, Health Care Industry employment for the Seattle area did see some slower growth numbers at the tail end of the economic downturn.

Overall, however, the industry fared very well, adding jobs where other industries lost. In an interesting turn of events, it is only recently that there have been some sharp drop offs in employment in the industry, in part explained by temporary hiring freezes by local employers (See Employer Perspective on page 10 for more on this topic).

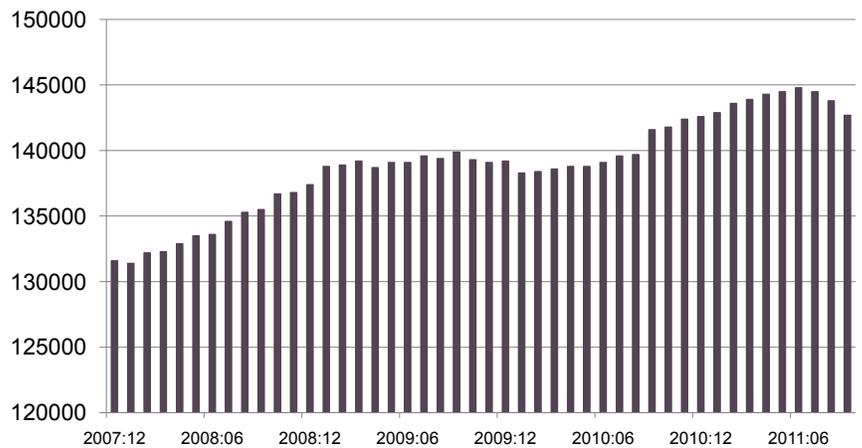
CHART 6
Health Care Subsector Employment – Seattle MSA



Source: Washington State Employment Security Department, LMEA.

CHART 7
Health Care Industry Employment – Seattle MSA

Industry employment has seen mixed growth for the majority of 2011.



Source: Washington State Employment Security Department, LMEA.

Looking over the long term, the Health Care industry has only seen signs of growth. **Chart 8** shows the long and generally upward progression of the Health Care industry employment, despite two recessions. With aging populations in need of increasing quality-of-life services, this industry is often heralded as a source for continued employment and living wages.

OCCUPATIONS & WAGES

Table 2 on the following two pages details the many occupations and related wages supporting the Health Care industry. As expected, occupations requiring greater levels of education and training also provide some of the highest wages.

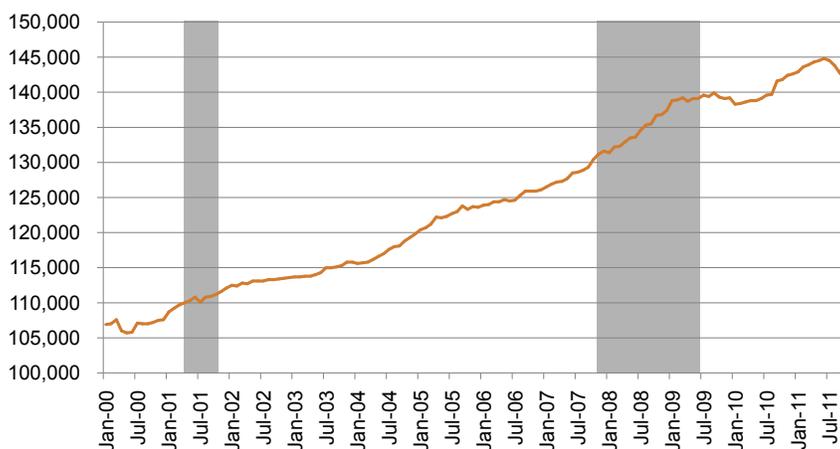
There exist, however, a host of opportunities for individuals to access living wages with training beyond high school but less than a 4-year degree. These middle-wage jobs include clinical positions such as Registered Nurses, Medical and Dental Assistants, and Surgical Technologists, as well as nonclinical positions like Medical Records and Health Information Technicians and Medical Transcriptionists.

(For more information on strong middle-wage jobs in the Health Care field, visit <http://www.seattlejobsinitiative.com/policy/publications/index.html> for SJI's Middle-Wage Jobs data update.)

CHART 8

Health Care Industry Employment – Seattle MSA

Industry employment has seen mixed growth for the majority of 2011.



Source: Washington State Employment Security Department, LMEA.

Table 2. King County Health Care Occupations by Educational Requirement, 2011

SOC Code	Occupation	2011 Jobs	2011 Median Hourly Wage
PROFESSIONAL DEGREE			
29-1069	*Physicians and surgeons	6,565	\$76.80
29-1051	*Pharmacists	2,232	\$55.88
29-1021	Dentists, general	895	\$67.46
29-1011	*Chiropractors	530	\$37.73
29-1131	Veterinarians	535	\$36.51
29-1041	Optometrists	291	\$44.17
29-1121	Audiologists	207	\$31.51
29-1081	Podiatrists	199	\$39.22
29-1023	Orthodontists	64	\$69.29
29-1022	Oral and maxillofacial surgeons	60	\$89.64
29-1029	Dentists, all other specialists	40	\$56.98
29-1024	Prosthodontists	<10	--
MASTER'S DEGREE			
29-1123	*Physical therapists	1,698	\$36.61
29-1127	*Speech-language pathologists	1,296	\$31.43
29-1122	*Occupational therapists	767	\$34.10
BACHELOR'S DEGREE			
29-2011	*Medical and clinical laboratory technologists	1,307	\$30.52
29-1199	Health diagnosing and treating practitioners, all other	1,018	\$30.79
29-1129	Therapists, all other	931	\$29.82
29-1071	*Physician assistants	774	\$48.10
29-1031	*Dietitians and nutritionists	685	\$29.72
29-9011	Occupational health and safety specialists	530	\$32.64
29-9091	Athletic trainers	93	\$25.34
29-1125	Recreational therapists	62	\$29.36
29-2091	Orthotists and prosthetists	60	\$35.84
ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE			
29-1111	*Registered nurses	21,187	\$37.45
29-2021	Dental hygienists	1,699	\$47.08
29-2071	*Medical records and health information technicians	1,577	\$18.23
29-2034	*Radiologic technologists and technicians	1,478	\$32.11
29-2012	*Medical and clinical laboratory technicians	1,120	\$18.46
29-1126	*Respiratory therapists	619	\$31.49
29-2056	*Veterinary technologists and technicians	638	\$14.45
29-2032	Diagnostic medical sonographers	481	\$38.84

Table 2. King County Health Care Occupations by Educational Requirement, 2011, *cont'd*

SOC Code	Occupation	2011 Jobs	2011 Median Hourly Wage
ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE, CONT'D			
31-2021	*Physical therapist assistants	305	\$25.08
29-2031	Cardiovascular technologists and technicians	192	\$33.62
29-2033	Nuclear medicine technologists	156	\$40.12
31-2011	Occupational therapist assistants	128	\$26.03
29-1124	Radiation therapists	125	\$45.88
29-2054	Respiratory therapy technicians	38	\$28.94
POSTSECONDARY VOCATIONAL AWARD			
31-1012	Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants	7,444	\$15.07
29-2061	*Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	2,764	\$22.71
29-2099	*Health Care technologists and technicians, all other	1,472	\$23.05
31-9011	*Massage therapists	1,400	\$27.66
31-9094	*Medical transcriptionists	1,297	\$17.04
29-2041	*Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	1,284	\$16.04
29-2055	*Surgical technologists	663	\$23.99
29-9099	Health Care practitioners and technical workers, all other	288	\$25.12
29-9012	Occupational health and safety technicians	91	\$26.84
LONG-TERM ON-THE-JOB TRAINING (OJT)			
29-2081	Opticians, dispensing	466	\$17.70
MODERATE-TERM ON-THE-JOB TRAINING (OJT)			
31-9092	*Medical assistants	4,129	\$17.65
31-9091	*Dental assistants	3,744	\$18.95
29-2052	*Pharmacy technicians	2,355	\$18.69
29-2051	Dietetic technicians	230	\$15.38
29-2053	Psychiatric technicians	126	\$15.83
SHORT-TERM ON-THE-JOB TRAINING (OJT)			
31-1011	*Home health aides	4,775	\$12.97
31-9099	Health Care support workers, all other	2,227	\$16.43
31-9093	Medical equipment preparers	837	\$16.35
31-9096	Veterinary assistants and laboratory animal caretakers	581	\$13.38
31-2022	Physical therapist aides	311	\$13.39
31-1013	Psychiatric aides	250	\$13.37
31-9095	Pharmacy aides	189	\$12.78
31-2012	Occupational therapist aides	14	\$19.95

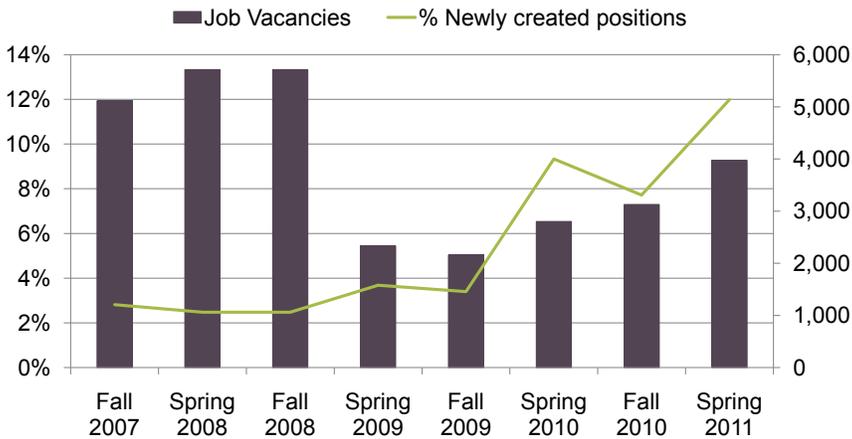
Source: EMSI Complete Employment – 2011.4

* In-Demand Occupation for Seattle King County – <https://fortress.wa.gov/esd/wilma/wdclists/WDAArea.aspx?area=000005>

CHART 9

Seattle-King County Health Care Job Vacancies

Employers are reporting opportunities, with growing numbers of new positions.



Source: Washington State Employment Security Department, LMEA, Job Vacancy Survey.

SUPPLY & DEMAND

Opportunities to access the many in-demand occupations listed above continue to exist in Seattle-King County, despite the harsh impact of the recession and the slow momentum of recovery. As **Chart 9** illustrates, Health Care vacancies number well over 3,500 for the Seattle-King County area, with increasing numbers of those opportunities being newly-created positions.

At the same time, the supply for many Health Care occupations is simply not meeting the demand. For Washington State, key Health Care occupations that do not require a 4-year degree have been identified as experiencing a significant supply-demand gap:⁵ Registered Nurses, Medical & Clinical Lab Technicians, Diagnostic Medical Sonographers, Dental Hygienists, and Surgical Technologists.

For the Seattle-King County region, occupations highest in demand in terms of annual job openings (projected to account for nearly half of all job openings) include Registered Nurses, Personal and Home Care Aides, Home Health Aides, Medical Scientists and Medical Secretaries.⁶ At the same time,

those positions with the greatest supply shortages include Registered Nurses, Personal and Home Care Aides, and Home Health Aides, representing a significant gap issue for the industry going forward.

NEEDED SKILLS

Employers are regularly struggling to find workers with the appropriate skills to support the Health Care industry. For many clinical positions, training beyond high school is requisite, with exposure to hospital and other clinical settings a must for hiring and advancement. Eighty-two percent of employers in this sector think higher education makes employees more valuable in their jobs; fifty-six percent also value vocational training.⁷

5 Washington State Skill Gap Analysis: 2010 <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/NursingOccupationShortages.asp>

6 The Seattle-King County Talent Pipeline Study

7 Puget Sound Business Barometer, 2011: Challenges and opportunities in our local economy. Alison Peters for the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce.

As with many other industries, the increasing demands of technology and computerization in the workplace also mean that both clinical and administrative positions will require individuals with this type of technical knowledge.

In addition to solid scientific training relevant to their jobs, employees consistently mentioned the need for workers to have strong computer skills, conflict resolution and interpersonal skills, speaking and leadership skills. Other valuable experience includes experience working successfully with patients/customers, knowledge of medical terminology and medical billing and a prior business background.⁸

EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE

In order to get a full picture of what's taking place in the Health Care industry in the Seattle & King County area, Seattle Jobs Initiative went to the field directly to hear what employers, educators and staffers are experiencing in light of the trends described above.

The following are a series of questions posed to these industry stakeholders and summaries of their responses.

⁸ Puget Sound Business Barometer, 2011: Challenges and opportunities in our local economy. Alison Peters for the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce.

HEALTH CARE IS OFTEN HELD UP AS A MODEL INDUSTRY IN TERMS OF ITS ABILITY TO WITHSTAND THE EBBS AND FLOWS OF ECONOMIC CYCLES. WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR EXPERIENCE IN TERMS OF JOB GROWTH FOR THIS KEY INDUSTRY OVER THE LAST 4 YEARS?

Health Care industry employers report that hiring has been relatively stable overall, despite some expected cyclical hiring freezes and layoffs. As Jennifer Garrepy, Sr. Employee Relations Specialist at Overlake Hospital Medical Center notes, new positions are being created due to technological changes, requiring some shifting of personnel based on appropriate skills, especially on the nonclinical side. On the clinical side, there are some positions for which there is a regional glut of new graduates, such as RNs, Radiology Technologists and Medical Assistants. While organizations such as Overlake continue to have unfilled needs for RNs and Medical Assistants, they seek the hard-to-find experienced candidates rather than new graduates, as they do not have the bandwidth to train and orient those fresh out of school. For positions such as Radiology Technologist, there are fewer openings than there are well-experienced candidates, so it is more difficult for a new graduate to compete.

WHAT DO THE NEXT 3-5 YEARS HOLD FOR THE HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY AND ITS JOB MARKET IN SEATTLE/KING COUNTY?

Employers expect the clinical side to remain strong. Mergers and partnerships in the administration and operation of many large care providers in the region, however, may result in further layoffs, particularly in the consolidation of nonclinical aspects of the industry such as accounting and other centralized resources. As Jennifer Bunzel, Sr. Compensation Analyst, UW Northwest Medical Center notes, such transition in the industry comes with a level of uncertainty in terms of the employment needs of organizations going forward.

WHAT KIND OF REQUIREMENTS DO HEALTH CARE EMPLOYERS HAVE FOR ENTRY-LEVEL WORKERS? HOW HAVE THESE REQUIREMENTS CHANGED BASED ON THE CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION?

"As the industry moves to doing more with less, this trend means that that current employees and new hires will need to be more skilled and efficient than before", notes Garrepy. This means a high bar set for many

positions, both on the clinical and nonclinical sides. Eric Radcliffe, HR Manager at Minor and James Medical, a Swedish Health Partner, notes that for many positions a Bachelor's degree is desired, though not always required. Even on the nonclinical side, according to Bunzel, some Health Care work experience is preferred as it means employees can hit the ground running with some general idea of terminology as well as how the industry works. Finally, Radcliffe stresses the importance of key soft skills for performance - good professional phone and interpersonal skills, attendance and enthusiasm, and overall professional presentation are all highly sought after by employers.

DO EMPLOYERS FIND GAPS IN THE SKILLS OF CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES? HOW ARE EMPLOYERS RESPONDING TO THIS?

There is always opportunity to polish and upgrade existing skills. For the Health Care industry, many technical and administrative skills are desired and needed. However, for many of the applicants that employers are seeing currently, there is an equally important value to performance and soft skills that seem to be lacking. As Radcliffe notes, those soft skills outlined above are often lost on our newest generation of job-seekers.

HOW IS THE CURRENT WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION TRAINING SYSTEM MEETING YOUR NEEDS FOR A SKILLED AND READY HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE? WHAT SUGGESTIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT?

A variety of programs exist locally to provide individuals with the various skills needed to work in the Health Care industry. Radcliffe notes that, in some cases, there may be too many schools producing too many graduates with skills that do not match employer needs. Therefore, he notes, employers often stick with programs they recognize as producing quality graduates – specifically the community college programs. These programs provide both a better educational experience and are generally more rigorous programs than private certification institutions.

With that said, based on evidence that there is an oversupply of workers for many existing positions in the industry, Garrepy suggests, the potential need to pause programs training individuals in these areas. At the same time, positions like Acute Care Health Unit Coordinators (HUCs) could benefit from more formalized industry-approved training.

TRAINING

Given the significant demand for a variety of Health Care positions, employers are looking to the variety of local education and training providers for their next potential workforce. One essential resource for training lies in the local community college system. **Table 3** outlines some available certificate and degree programs locally in key Health Care areas.

Table 3. Seattle-King County Community College Programs in Health Care

PATHWAY	CREDENTIAL	COLLEGE	CREDITS	NUMBER OF QUARTERS
ANESTHESIA	Anesthesia Tech AAS Degree	RENTON	100	5-6
	Anesthesia Tech AAS-T Degree	RENTON	100	5-6
	Anesthesia Tech Certificate	RENTON	80	4
BIO TECH LAB	Bio Tech Lab Specialist AAS degree	SHORELINE	94.5	6
	Bio Tech Lab Specialist Certificate	SHORELINE	36-37	4
DENTAL ASSISTING	Dental Assistant AAS Degree	RENTON	93	5-6
	Dental Assistant Certificate	RENTON	73	4
	Dental Assistant AAS-T Degree	RENTON	93	5-6
DENTAL HYGIENE	Dental Hygiene AAS-T Degree	SEA-CEN	122	7
	Dental Hygiene AAS Degree	SHORELINE	118	7
HEALTH CARE TECHNOLOGY/ CODING	Health Care Information Technology AAAS degree	SHORELINE	102-104	6
	Medical Coding Specialist AAS Degree	RENTON	120	7
	Medical Coding Specialist Certificate	RENTON	105	6
	Medical Office Clerk	SO-SEA	66	5
	Medical Office Skills Certificate	RENTON	19	1
	Medical Reception Certificate	RENTON	39	2
	Medical Reimbursement Clerk Specialist Certificate	RENTON	71	4
	Coding/Reimbursement	SHORELINE	74-77	5
MEDICAL ASSISTANT	Medical Assistant AAS-T Degree	RENTON	105	5
	Medical Assistant Certificate	NOR-SEA	70	6
		RENTON	85	4
	Medical Assistant AAS Degree	NOR-SEA	94	6
		RENTON	105	5
		HIGHLINE	90	6
	Medical Coding Certificate	HIGHLINE	19	1
	Medical Office Administrator Certificate	NOR-SEA	41	3
	Medical Reception Certificate	NOR-SEA	21	1
	Medical Transcriptionist Certificate	HIGHLINE	48	3
Patient Account Specialist Certificate	HIGHLINE	51	3	
MEDICAL LAB TECHNOLOGY	Med Lab Tech AAAS	SHORELINE	117 (includes prerequisites)	6
NURSING	Certified Nursing Assistant	HIGHLINE	12	1
		HIGHLINE	12	1
		NOR-SEA	14	1
		RENTON	14	1

Table 3. Seattle-King County Community College Programs in Health Care, *cont'd*

PATHWAY	CREDENTIAL	COLLEGE	CREDITS	NUMBER OF QUARTERS
NURSING, cont'd	Certified Nursing Assistant, cont'd	SHORELINE	20	1
		SO-SEA	12	1
	Licensed Practical Nurse	NOR-SEA	44	4
		RENTON	75	4
		SO-SEA	48	4
		HIGHLINE	74-76	6
	Registered Nurse	HIGHLINE	38-40	3
		NOR-SEA	49	4
		RENTON	33	2
		SEA-CEN	78	6
		SO-SEA	36	3
		SHORELINE	49	4
		SHORELINE	70	10
		SHORELINE	70	6
OPHTHALMOLOGY	Ophthalmology Assistant AAS Degree	RENTON	106	5-6
	Ophthalmology Assistant AAS-T	RENTON	106	5-6
	Ophthalmology Assistant Certificate	RENTON	76	4
OPTICIAN	Optician AAS Degree	SEA-CEN	126-128	7
PHARMACY	Pharmacy Tech AAS Degree	NOR-SEA	90	6
	Pharmacy Tech AAS Degree	RENTON	105	5-6
	Pharmacy Tech AAS-T Degree	RENTON	105	5-6
	Pharmacy Tech Certificate	NOR-SEA	48-50	3
		RENTON	75	4
POLYSOM	Polysom Tech AAS	HIGHLINE	103	6-7
	Polysom Tech Certificate	HIGHLINE	43	3
RESPIRATORY CARE	Respiratory Care AAS Degree	HIGHLINE	91	7
		SEA-CEN	110.5	7
SURGERY TECH	Surgery Tech AAS Degree	RENTON	102	5-6
	Surgery Tech Certificate	RENTON	82	4
	Surgery Tech Certificate AAS-T Degree	RENTON	102	5-6

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