

# Health Care Careers



# Traveling Health Care Workers

There are more health care jobs than there are people to fill them. When hospitals and other health care facilities have gaps in their staffing, they sometimes turn to traveling professionals to get them through the shortage.

Assignments for traveling health care professionals usually last between 13-26 weeks, staffing firm Aureus Medical says, though stays may be shorter or longer depending on the facility's needs. If you love the place you've landed, you can always work with the facility or your recruiter for an extension or even a permanent placement. If you're a traveling professional with a tax home — the city where your main place of business or work is located — your assignment at any one facility cannot be more than 12 months. Any more than a year, and your assignment may not qualify for certain tax benefits or deductions because your tax home will move to the city where your assignment is.

The upside to these limited assignments is that you'll get to see many different types of facilities and parts of the country. It's great if you want to try out different health care specialties, or if you want to experience different parts of the



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country. You may also get the opportunity to pick up certifications and skill sets that you wouldn't normally see in your home area.

Another definite perk is that traveling health care professionals tend to make more than permanent employees. They may qualify for perks

such as untaxed travel and accommodation per diems and other benefits. Some agencies offer free housing or a housing stipend. Some assignments may even come with a fully furnished, move-in ready home.

An agency that specializes in finding placements for travel-

ing health care professionals should be able to help you narrow your options and make sure you're taking advantage of all of the perks, financial and otherwise, that travel health care can offer. Look for a recruiter that seems knowledgeable and genuinely concerned about finding you posi-

tions that fit your skill set and will help you meet your career goals.

Agencies should help you handle any licensure requirements as you travel from assignment to assignment and keep your benefits the same as you move from facility to facility.

# What Is Compassion Fatigue?

Compassion fatigue is a condition commonly associated with jobs, such as those in health care, that deal with other people's trauma.

It describes the physical and mental aspects of caring for others during their times of crisis.

## SIGNS OF COMPASSION FATIGUE

Compassion fatigue may be brought on by a lack of resources in the workplace, by stress or by excessive hours of work. It may also be called secondary stress, secondhand shock or secondary traumatic stress. Some common triggers of compassion fatigue include being threatened while providing care, providing care in dangerous environments, specializing in care for those experiencing death or grief, providing services that requires you to view graphic scenes or reports of trauma, such as accident scenes.

Compassion fatigue occurs when the trauma you experience in the workplace begins to seep into your personal life, affecting your thoughts, moods and well-being. It may become overwhelming or even debilitating, resulting in mood swings, pessimistic thinking, quick to anger, addiction issues, insomnia, depression or anxiety, and detachment.



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## TREATING COMPASSION FATIGUE

Compassion fatigue isn't an uncommon condition. Reach out to support systems in your workplace, including any employee programs, and to your doctor. Talk to your supervisor about adjusting your responsibilities while you work through the situation.

Take time for self-care, including staying active, getting plenty of sleep, staying hydrated and eating well. Consider seeing a therapist or psychiatrist to help you work through feelings of stress, and don't be afraid to ask your doctor for medications that can help alleviate your symptoms.

Once you're feeling better,

focus on creating a community among your colleagues that can help prevent compassion fatigue in yourself and in others that you may work with. Stay connected with family and friends and help hold others accountable for practicing self-care as well. Normalizing compassion fatigue is a big step in helping yourself and

others heal. The American Psychological Association says that many sufferers may not even realize that compassion fatigue is something others feel, and may believe it's a personal failing all their own. Celebrate the positives of self-care and of caring for others, too. Focus on gratitude and ask for help when you need it.

# Interview Advice

The ink on your diplomas and certifications are dry and it's time to find the perfect health care job for you. In many cases, that starts with a great interview.

Here are some things you can do to ace that interview and find the best fit for your skills and lifestyle.

## DO YOUR RESEARCH

As soon as you're called for the interview, start digging. Research not only the company you're interviewing for but the people that you'll meet during the interview. Make note of recent company news or tidbits about the interviewers that you relate to, such as where they went to school or a recent expansion or big donation.

## ANTICIPATE QUESTIONS AND REHEARSE YOUR ANSWERS

Look over your resume with fresh eyes or ask a friend to do it. Look for any potential flags and be ready to answer questions about things such as gaps in employment or short stints on the job.

Rehearse the answers to typical interview questions such as:

- What made you interested in working here?



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- What's your biggest strength?

- Why did you leave your last position?

- What are your career goals?

Come prepared with some questions of your own. Remember, interviews aren't just to determine whether you're a good fit for the job, it's to determine whether the

company is a good fit for you as well. Some questions you could ask are:

- What made you interested in talking to me about this position?

- What is a typical day like in this job?

- What do you like best about working here?

- How do you handle conflict in the workplace?

## GET READY AHEAD OF TIME

Plan your outfit and pack your bag the day before your interview to avoid any unnecessary stress the day of. Even if you're interviewing for a position that would typically wear scrubs or another uniform, opt for business attire. Keep jewelry and makeup to a minimum and make sure you

look clean and smart.

In your bag, include some extra copies of your resume, a list of references, a notepad and pen, breath mints, a water bottle and a stain pen. Get plenty of rest before the big day so you can think clearly during the interview. Eat a good breakfast before and try to plan your commute so that you arrive 20-30 minutes early.

# Work-From-Home Jobs

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way we work forever, spiking the number of work-from-home jobs, even in health care fields.

By 2025, Forbes predicts that 32.6 million Americans will work remotely. That's about 22% of the work force. This is true even in medical fields, where the rise of telehealth and the digitization of health records have created more opportunities for remote work. Here are some examples of jobs in health care where you can work from home.

## THERAPIST

More and more patients are opting for the comfort of seeking talk therapy from home, and remote therapy opportunities are bringing much-needed mental health care to areas that previously experienced a shortage of these vital mental health professionals.

## LEGAL NURSE CONSULTANT

Legal nurse consultants provide advice on legal cases. They review and analyze legal information such as is found on malpractice cases. This is a specialized job that doesn't involve direct patient care, so can be done remotely easily. This is an option open to registered nurses who wish to pur-



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sue training and certification in legal consultation.

## MEDICAL ASSISTANT

Medical assistants help doctors, nurses and other medical professionals with clinical care and administration. This can include scheduling appointments and meetings, talking to patients over the phone and other administrative tasks. Medical assistants

must usually complete an accredited program and become certified.

## MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTIONIST

These medical professionals convert audio recordings from doctors into written documents and format them according to industry standards. They check for grammatical errors and ensure that

the correct medical terminology is used.

## CASE MANAGER

Medical case managers organize and evaluate care options for patients that best align with their mental, physical and emotional health. They are often patient advocates and help facilitate cost-effective providers and services. You should be able to develop

relationships over the phone or on video calls.

## REGISTERED NURSE

While RNs usually work in a clinical setting involving direct access to patients, they can also work remotely in roles such as recruiting. Remote nurses can provide care via telehealth and other remote services to elderly or rural patients who don't have access to health facilities.

# What Does A Dietitian Do?

Dietitians are experts in nutrition and the human diet to promote health, prevent disease and help patients make sound dietary choices.

They can create meal plans for patients and help keep track of progress toward their goals. Dietitians may work in doctors' offices, hospital settings, with allied health care staff, nurses and more.

## NUTRITIONIST VS. DIETITIAN

Dietitians generally receive more training and certification while nutritionists often have similar responsibilities but may not work directly with patients, especially in clinical settings. Most clinical settings require those working with patients to be a registered dietitian nutritionist or a registered dietitian, according to the licensure regulations in that state.

## SPECIALIZATIONS

While dietitians can work with a range of patients, they can also specialize in areas such as pediatrics, sports dietetics, renal nutrition, diabetes education, oncology, gerontology and more. These areas of practice may require additional certifications.

## BECOMING A DIETITIAN

The Mayo Clinic says dieti-



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tians should be passionate about using food and nutrition to improve health and well-being. Successful candidates must not be afraid to have difficult conversations, must be willing and able to cooperate well with other professionals and be able to provide individualized care plans.

Dietitians usually have a bachelor's degree followed by supervised training during an

internship or graduate degree program. Some four-year programs combine classroom work and practical experience geared toward passage of a registration exam.

Any training program must be accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) and prospective dietitians must pass a registration exam adminis-

tered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration. Registered dietitians must complete regular continuing education courses depending on state licensing requirements and can opt for further certification in specific areas of practice.

## CAREER OUTLOOK

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics expects the need for

dietitians to rise, especially in nursing homes and residential care facilities. The bureau anticipates 11% job growth from 2020-2030, which is above average. With the appropriate training and experience, the Mayo Clinic says dietitians can become directors of nutritional services, teachers, or advance to research, clinical or public health positions.

# Non-Physician Jobs

Not every health care professional is a medical doctor, and some aren't even college graduates.

Here are some health care careers that don't require years of education before you get your foot in the door.

## CARDIOVASCULAR TECHNICIAN

These health care professionals help doctors diagnose and treat ailments with the cardiac and vascular systems. They work in a cardiac cath lab and help perform procedures including stent implants, cardiac pacemakers and perform tests to diagnose heart disease. Cardiovascular technicians who specialize in electrocardiograms, stress testing and Holter monitors are known as cardiographic or ECG technicians.

Many cardiovascular technicians can practice with an associate degree, although an employer may require certification by certain licensing associations.

## HEALTH INFORMATION SPECIALIST

A health information specialist manages and maintains the accuracy and privacy of medical records. They are responsible for coding diagnoses and procedures, managing the quality of medical data and ensuring compliance with both legal requirements and indus-



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try standards.

Some employers require certification as a registered health information technician.

## HISTOTECHNOLOGIST

These specialized medical

lab workers turn tissue samples into microscope slides, enabling the diagnosis and treatment of many diseases. Once the histotechnologists prepare the slides, a pathologist will examine them for diag-

nostic or research purposes.

Histotechnologists may be required to obtain certification and go through more extensive training. These specialists may go on to a supervisory role or into a teaching position.

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT

Occupational therapy assistants help occupational therapists provide care for patients who have a disability or impairments. These assistants may help patients with exercises or help them learn to complete daily tasks. They may also be called upon to communicate with a patient's family and take care of billing.

You can do this job with an associate degree, but some employers may require certification from the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education.

## PSYCHIATRIC TECHNICIAN

Often employed by hospitals or residential care facilities, psychiatric technicians help care for patients with mental illnesses or developmental disabilities. Entry level workers are often called psychiatric aides and work their way up to technician status through education and experience. Technicians are often responsible for some basic nursing duties such as recording vital signs, but might also help with record keeping and some counseling duties.

A post-secondary certificate is the most common entry point for a psychiatric technician; many employers prefer a candidate with at least some college. Some states call for licensure or certification through the American Association of Psychiatric Technicians.

# Becoming a Personal Trainer

Not every health care professional works in a hospital or doctor's office. Some work in places such as gyms, helping people reach their health and fitness goals.

Here's how you can become a personal trainer.

## WHO THEY ARE

Personal trainers design and supervise exercise regimens to help people achieve health and fitness goals, whether it's building muscle, maintaining flexibility or improving cardiovascular health. They should have knowledge of various exercise programs, exercise equipment, effective methods of exercise and basic nutrition.

## BACKGROUND

The National Personal Training Association says some post-secondary education in health and fitness can help you establish a strong foundation in your career. Look for a program that includes classwork or practical experience in nutrition, physiology, fitness theory, exercise theory, weight management and more. The organization says it also helps to be a good communicator and have exceptional interpersonal skills.

Personal trainers often must keep their own records of



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patient progress, so you will need strong attention to detail and writing skills.

## CERTIFICATION

There are many certifica-

tions out there for personal trainers. Most employers will require that you be CPR certified, and you can pursue certification through these organizations:

- National Strength and Conditioning Association's Certified Personal Trainer (NSCA-CPT).
- National Federation of Professional Trainers. This certification requires at least two years of fitness experience.
- National Endurance and Sports Trainers Association (NESTA).
- International Fitness Professionals Association (IFPA).
- The American Council on Exercise (ACE).
- The National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM).
- The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM).
- American Fitness Professionals and Associates (AFPA).

No matter which certifications you choose, you may have to complete continuing education courses to maintain it. These CECs are sometimes available online, but you may fulfill them through taking college courses such as biology, anatomy or nutrition; attending conferences offered by accrediting organizations or taking other approved coursework.

## SPECIALIZATION

Personal trainers can specialize in certain areas, such as senior fitness, youth fitness, weight loss, bodybuilding, pain management, sports performance, working with cancer patients, group exercise and more. Certifications may be available through organizations associated with these fields.

- National Strength and Conditioning Association's Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (NSCA-CSCS). This certification requires a four-year degree.