

MONTANA HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE PROFESSIONS AND TRAINING PATHWAYS OVERVIEW

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Montana Healthcare Workforce Statewide Strategic Plan was originally developed in 2011 to provide guidance for ensuring a sufficient and high-quality healthcare workforce across the state. The plan was subsequently updated in 2017 to reflect emerging workforce priorities and to build upon progress made under the original strategic framework. In the years since, Montana's healthcare system has faced intensifying and evolving challenges, including an aging population, rapid in-migration, and persistent labor market tightness exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors have amplified existing shortages, particularly in areas like nursing, and highlighted the urgent need to expand access to services like behavioral health.

To address this modern context and lay the foundation for the new strategic plan, JG Research and Evaluation (JG) was tasked with a three-part data collection and analysis effort in collaboration with the Montana Office of Rural Health & Area Health Education Center (MORH/AHEC) and the Montana AHEC Regional Centers. This effort included updating the Professions and Training Pathways Overview and completing two additional assessments: the AHEC Post-Secondary Education Partner Assessment and the Montana Healthcare Workforce Assessment, both published in October 2025.

The purpose of the AHEC Post-Secondary Education Partner Assessment was to understand the perceived needs of students enrolled in healthcare education programs in Montana, from the perspective of post-secondary education partners. The intention of the assessment was to document needs that students may have during their education and report on the challenges they may face as they enter the workforce. The study also examined awareness of AHEC programs among post-secondary education partners and what AHEC can do to improve their future programming.¹ The purpose of the Montana Healthcare Workforce Assessment was to develop and implement a healthcare workforce assessment to provide key insight to inform the updated Montana Healthcare Workforce Statewide Strategic Assessment².

PURPOSE

This document is designed to provide a broad overview of the Montana healthcare professions and associated training pathways. The focus in creating this updated version was to include content that is highly relevant to the healthcare workforce in Montana and to avoid redundancy with other published work. Where possible, JG linked to associated projects, reports, and sources to allow the audience to connect with other work related to this document. This document will be updated as requested by the Montana Healthcare Workforce Advisory Committee and will undergo a comprehensive revision planned as part of the next strategic plan in five years.

1. JG Research and Evaluation, "AHEC Post-Secondary Education Partner Assessment," accessed February 16, 2026, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/workforce-development/mhwac/AHEC%20Post-secondary%20education%20partner%20assessment%201.6.26.pdf>.

2. JG Research and Evaluation, "Montana Healthcare Workforce Assessment," accessed December 9, 2025, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/workforce-development/mhwac/plan-docs/Montana%20Healthcare%20Workforce%20Assessment.pdf>.

UNDERSTANDING THE HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE DATA

This section provides context for understanding the data and terminology used throughout this document concerning healthcare sectors and professions.

CLASSIFICATION AND TERMINOLOGY

It is important to acknowledge that the names and classifications of healthcare professions can vary significantly across different data sets, organizations, and entities.

To ensure a standardized approach for gathering workforce data, this project adopted occupation codes of the Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) program, administered by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), to classify healthcare professions. While the OEWS coding provides a consistent framework for the findings presented in this report, readers should be aware of potential discrepancies. The names of professions used in a specific clinical, academic, or workplace setting may differ from the standardized terminology utilized in this report. This variance is common across the healthcare industry.

EMPLOYMENT DATA AND PROJECTIONS

Where available, Montana employment data for healthcare professions is presented in the tables throughout this report. The tables use Montana Department of Labor & Industry (DLI) employment estimates and projections for 2024–2034. The employment trend figures, however, combine historical data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) program (2018–2023) with DLI employment estimates for 2024 and projections for 2034. Historical BLS data is used to provide trend information that is not otherwise available from the DLI.

INTERPRETING ZERO EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

Analysis of workforce data may reveal instances where a profession exhibits “zero” employment growth in its projected outlook. It is important to understand that this specific figure does not inherently signify market stagnation or a complete absence of future job opportunities within that field.

A zero-growth projection can arise from several scenarios, such as when the total number of jobs lost due to various factors is precisely offset by the creation of an equal number of new jobs within the profession, resulting in a net change of zero. Alternatively, the actual projection for growth may be a small positive or negative percentage that has simply been rounded to zero for presentation in the data set.

Even professions with projections of zero or minimal growth consistently generate job openings stemming from the replacement need. These opportunities are created when incumbent workers retire, transition to different careers, or otherwise exit the field.³ A projected growth figure of zero should not be interpreted as an equation for zero opportunity in the labor market.

3. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Employment Projections: Frequently Asked Questions,” accessed April 13, 2026, https://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_faq_001.htm.

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS IN MONTANA

The educational pathways presented in this document are detailed to highlight established routes for pursuing health careers specifically within Montana. These identified pathways encompass programs offered by the state’s institutions of higher learning, including two-year colleges (community and technical colleges), four-year universities, Tribal colleges, and medical schools.

The foundation for this information is derived from the resource list, [Pathways to Health Careers in Montana](#), developed by Montana AHEC. While this document features a broad and detailed compilation of educational pathways, it is important to note that other programs, organizations, and training entities, which are not explicitly included in this list, may also offer education and training relevant to various healthcare careers. Additionally, the information in this report reflects data available at the time of publication. Due to the dynamic nature of education and industry needs, new programs, training courses, and certifications may have been created or implemented by institutions and organizations since this report was finalized.

HEALTHCARE SECTORS

To finalize the scope of this report, the JG Research team collaborated with Montana AHEC project staff and leadership from the Montana Hospital Association (MHA). This collaboration established the definitive list of healthcare job sectors and the specific professions included within each sector. **Table 1** details the resulting healthcare sectors used throughout this report.

TABLE 1: HEALTHCARE SECTORS REPRESENTED

2025 Healthcare Sectors Represented
Allied Health
Alternative Health
Behavioral Health
Community and Public Health
Dental Health
Emergency Services
Health IT and Administration
Maternal Health
Medical Laboratory and Technicians
Optometry
Nursing
Pharmacy
Physician Assistants
Physicians

ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Integral to the multidisciplinary healthcare team, allied health professionals deliver therapeutic, diagnostic, and preventive services, constituting a vital and large segment of the overall healthcare workforce.

The Association of Schools Advancing Health Professionals defines these professionals as “professionals involved with the delivery of health or related services pertaining to the identification, evaluation and prevention of diseases and disorders; dietary and nutrition services; rehabilitation and health systems management, among others.”⁴

Allied health professionals are experts in a wide range of therapeutic, diagnostic, and preventive health interventions, encompassing more than 85 distinct occupations. They are formally educated and credentialed via certification, registration, and/or licensure, ensuring high standards of practice. These professionals collaborate closely with physicians, nurses, and other healthcare team members, supporting patient wellness by ensuring the health system can effectively identify, manage, and prevent a vast array of conditions. They deliver services in a wide variety of settings, including hospitals, outpatient facilities, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, clinics, schools, and home health environments.

WORKFORCE DATA: ALLIED HEALTH

This section presents key workforce data reflective of specific allied health professions in Montana, providing insight into current employment levels, future projections, and compensation. It is important to note that this is a highlighted list and not an exhaustive list of all allied health professions. Detailed descriptions of the professions listed here can be found in the document glossary.

Allied health professions are organized into three primary subcategories: Diagnostics, Rehabilitation and Wellness, and Clinical Support.

DIAGNOSTICS

The Diagnostics category includes Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians, Diagnostic Medical Sonographers, Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists, and Radiological Technologists and Technicians. It also encompasses all other specialized Health Technologists and Technicians.

REHABILITATION AND WELLNESS

The Rehabilitation and Wellness category includes Athletic Trainers, Audiologists, Chiropractors, Dietitians, Nutritionists, Massage Therapists, Recreation Therapists, and Speech Pathologists. Additionally, this group covers Occupational and Physical Therapists, along with their respective Assistants and Aides.

4. Association of Schools Advancing Health Professions, “What Is Allied Health?,” ASAHP, accessed April 13, 2026, <https://www.asahp.org/what-is-allied-health-copy>.

CLINICAL SUPPORT

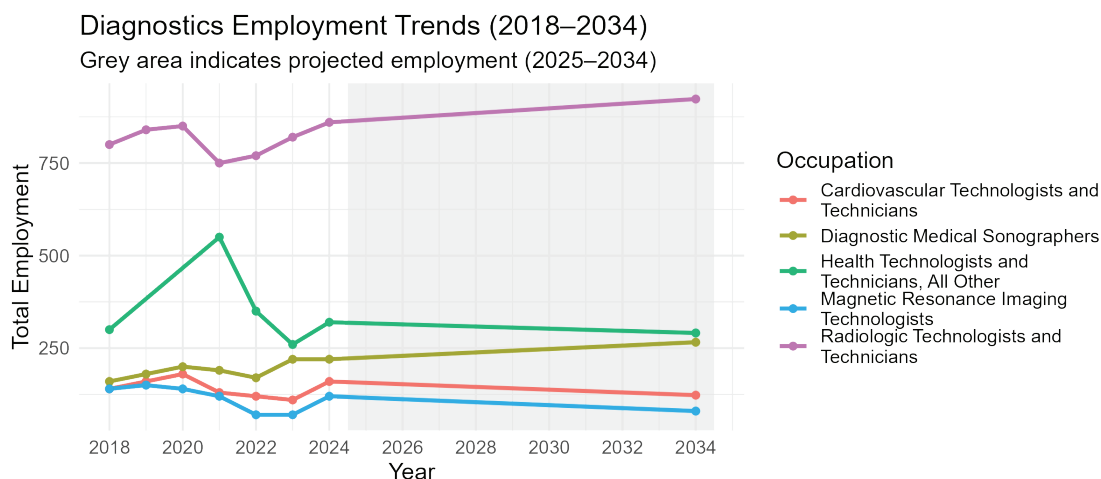
The Clinical Support category includes Healthcare Support Workers, Home Health and Personal Care Aides, Medical Assistants, Medical Equipment Preparers, Phlebotomists, Radiation Therapists, Surgical Assistants, and Surgical Technologists.

Table 2-4 and Figure 1-3 highlight the following metrics for the selected professions: Current Employment (estimated number of workers in the state), Employment Projection (the projected employment figures for the year 2034, indicating expected job growth or decline), and Mean Annual Wage (the average annual wage earned by professionals in the state).

TABLE 2: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE DATA FOR ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS (DIAGNOSTIC)⁵

Diagnostics		
Job Title	Employment	Mean Annual Wage
Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians	110	123 66,530
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	220	266 86,510
Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	260	291 52,450
Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists	70	80 80,750
Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	820	923 68,820

FIGURE 2: Montana Employment Trend Data for Allied Health Professionals (Diagnostic)⁶



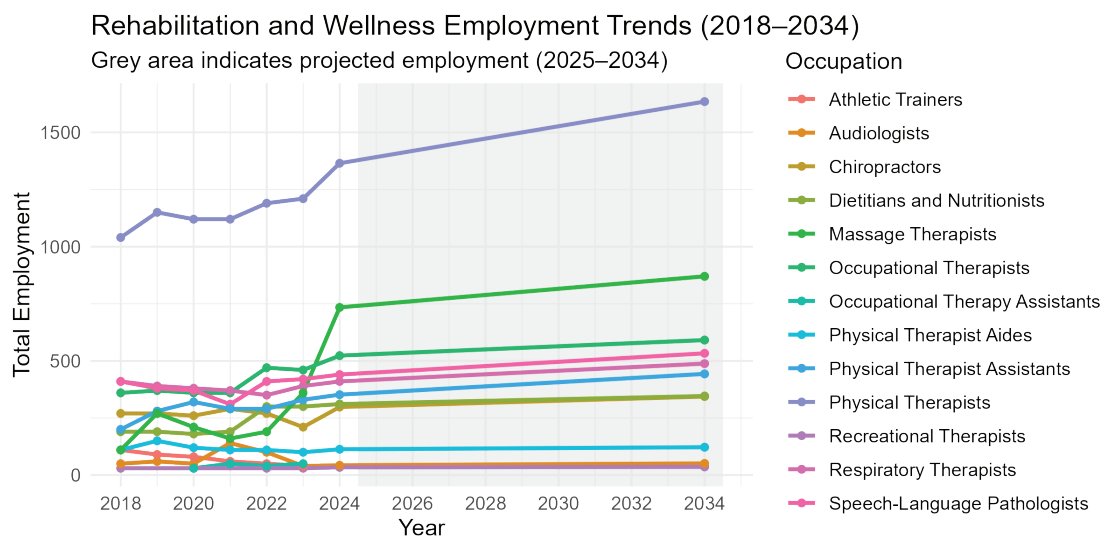
5. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>.

6. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>; Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, “Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics: Tables,” 2018–2024, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>.

TABLE 3: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE DATA FOR ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS (REHABILITATION AND WELLNESS)⁷

Rehabilitation and Wellness		
Job Title	Employment Projection	Mean Annual Wage
Athletic Trainers	-	- 62,910
Audiologists	43	51 88,290
Chiropractors	298	344 80,250
Dietitians and Nutritionists	311	346 68,900
Massage Therapists	734	870 58,990
Occupational Therapists	523	591 88,270
Occupational Therapy Assistants	-	- 68,100
Physical Therapist Aides	113	122 32,720
Physical Therapist Assistants	352	443 62,960
Physical Therapists	1,365	1,635 91,290
Recreational Therapists	34	36 58,130
Respiratory Therapists	410	488 78,540
Speech-Language Pathologists	440	533 83,830

FIGURE 3: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT TREND DATA FOR ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS (REHABILITATION AND WELLNESS)⁸



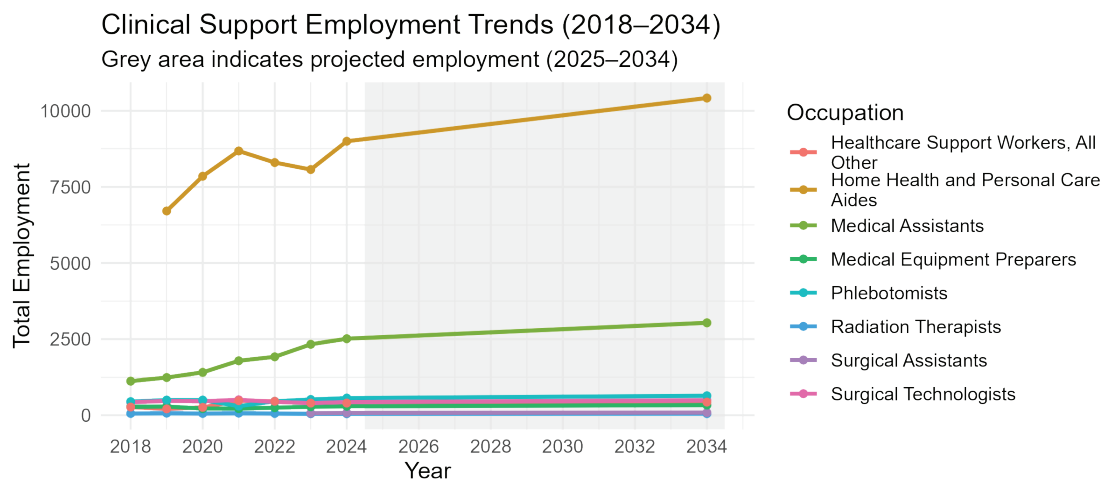
7. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>.

8. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>; Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, “Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics: Tables,” 2018–2024, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>.

TABLE 4: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE DATA FOR ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS (CLINICAL SUPPORT)⁹

Clinical Support		
Job Title	Employment Projection	
		Mean Annual Wage
Healthcare Support Workers, All Other	402	433 48,030
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	8,999	10,418 33,270
Medical Assistants	2,515	3,037 45,060
Medical Equipment Preparers	296	335 43,100
Phlebotomists	565	641 45,370
Radiation Therapists	51	56 114,050
Surgical Assistants	79	89 63,600
Surgical Technologists	434	492 59,240

FIGURE 4: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT TREND DATA FOR ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS (CLINICAL SUPPORT)¹⁰



9. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>.

10. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>; Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, “Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics: Tables,” 2018–2024, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>.

LICENSING AND EDUCATION: ALLIED HEALTH

Allied Health Professionals represent a highly diverse group with varying educational backgrounds, completing a range of training from a GED or high school diploma to a doctoral degree. This broad range reflects the varied and specialized roles these professions play in patient care.

LICENSING INFORMATION

To ensure public safety and professional competency, some Allied Health professions are subject to a variety of requirements that dictate certification, registration, and licensure. These standards are established and enforced by individual professional boards and statutes. Table 5 provides a snapshot of the current number of active licenses held by selected Allied Health Professions in Montana. It is important to note that not all Allied Health Professions require state licensure through the State of Montana; therefore, this table is not an exhaustive representation of the total workforce in all categories. The license counts below reflect those professions regulated by the state as of the reporting period.

TABLE 5: NUMBER OF ACTIVE MONTANA LICENSES FOR ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS¹¹

Profession	Number of Active Licenses in Montana
Physical Therapists	1786
Occupational Therapists	749
Speech-Language Pathologists	774
Speech Pathologist Audiologist	7
Speech-Language Pathologist Assistant	69
Respiratory Therapists	915
Massage Therapists	2239
Physical Therapist Assistants	410
Nutritionists	1372
Chiropractors	560
Occupational Therapy Assistants	109
Audiologists	129
Athletic Training	178
Genetic Counselor	279

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

11. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “eBiz License Search,” accessed September 16, 2025, <https://ebizws.mt.gov/PUBLICPORTAL/searchform?mylist=licenses>.

This section focuses on the educational infrastructure available in Montana that supports the development of the allied health workforce. Table 6 specifically outlines various educational pathways available to prepare individuals for these professions within the state. It is important to acknowledge that not all allied health roles need the specific post-secondary programs or advanced education listed in Table 4, as some entry-level positions may require only a high school diploma or on-the-job training.

TABLE 6: ALLIED HEALTH EDUCATION PATHWAYS AVAILABLE IN MONTANA

Academic Program	Degree or Certificate	College or University
Diagnostics		
Diagnostic Medical Sonography	Associate	City College, Gallatin College (OneMSU), Great Falls College (OneMSU)
EKG Technician	Certificate	University of Montana – Western, Bitterroot College
Rehabilitation & Wellness		
Athletic Training	Bachelor, Graduate	MSU Billings, University of Montana
Dietetics and Nutrition	Bachelor, Graduate	Montana State University
Occupational Therapy	Doctorate	Rocky Mountain College, University of Montana, University of Mary –Billings
Occupational Therapy Assistant	Associate	Helena College
Physical Therapy	Doctorate	University of Montana
Physical Therapy Assistant	Associate	Flathead Valley Community College, Great Falls College, Gallatin College (OneMSU)
Speech-Language Pathology	Graduate	University of Montana
Speech Language Pathology Assistant	Certificate	University of Montana
Clinical Support		
Medical Assistant	Certificate, Associate	Bitterroot College, Flathead Valley Community College, Gallatin College, Highlands College, Missoula College, Salish Kootenai College, University of Providence
Phlebotomy	Certificate	Bitterroot College, Gallatin College, Great Falls College, Helena College, Miles Community College, University of Montana - Western
Radiological Technology	Associate	City College, Flathead Valley Community College, Highlands College, Miles Community College, Missoula College
Surgical Technology	Associate	Bitterroot College, Flathead Valley Community College, Great Falls College, City College (OneMSU), Gallatin College (OneMSU), Missoula College

RELEVANT INSIGHT: ALLIED HEALTH

Montana's ability to maintain and expand its healthcare capacity, particularly within the allied health sector, is a statewide concern, often driven by high demand for professionals, especially in rural and geographically isolated communities. In the past decade, significant, targeted efforts have been made within the state to increase the pipeline of qualified healthcare workers.

INCREASING CAPACITY

To address documented workforce needs, efforts have focused on establishing new, advanced degree programs within Montana, reducing the need for students to seek education out-of-state. Two Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) programs have been established in Montana since 2021: one at Rocky Mountain College and one at the University of Montana.

Montana is also employing innovative “earn-and-learn” models to build capacity in key healthcare support roles. Through the University of Montana Office of Health Research & Partnership, the state is expanding apprenticeship opportunities for Surgical Technologists. Students enrolled in this program complete 2,000 hours of structured, on-the-job training while simultaneously completing an academic program in surgical technology. Upon successful completion of this apprenticeship, students are immediately eligible to sit for national certification, providing a rapid and effective pipeline into the workforce.¹² This model offers a promising strategy for increasing the supply of certified professionals while ensuring they gain practical experience.

Beyond education, recent legislative action has focused on reducing regulatory barriers to quickly add licensed capacity to the workforce. Montana has joined various interstate licensure compacts for Allied Health professions, which facilitate the practice of licensed professionals from other states by streamlining the licensure process. This strategy allows the state to increase the number of actively practicing professionals without relying solely on in-state graduates. The state's participation in two key compacts highlights this effort: The Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact (ASLP-IC) legislation (SB 214) was signed in 2023 and became effective on October 1, 2023. The ASLP-IC commission started issuing privileges to out-of-state professionals during the fall of 2025. The Dietitian Licensure Compact was officially joined through the passage of SB 279 in 2025, signed by the Governor on April 16, 2025. This entry will enhance workforce mobility and capacity for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists within the state.

IDENTIFIED EDUCATIONAL GAPS

While educational capacity has been successfully added in certain areas of the Allied Health sector, several key professions still lack formal, dedicated, degree-granting educational pathways within Montana. This gap requires many prospective students to seek the necessary advanced degrees out-of-state, which is a known barrier to long-term recruitment and retention of those professionals. This pattern directly contributes to the state's reliance on external recruitment to fill essential roles.

12. University of Montana, “Workforce Development,” accessed April 13, 2026, https://www.umt.edu/health-research-partnership/workforce_development/.

The following professions are key examples of those without dedicated degree programs in the state: Audiologists (typically requiring a Doctoral degree), Chiropractors (requiring a Doctoral degree), and Genetic Counselors (requiring a Master's degree). The absence of in-state training programs for these and other highly specialized professions remains a challenge in meeting the state's comprehensive healthcare demands.

PROFESSIONAL DATA

The 2025 Montana Healthcare Workforce Assessment¹³ identifies Radiology Technicians and Surgical Technicians as high-need, hard-to-fill positions. Survey data reveals that the primary barrier to staffing is a volume deficit, with 67.9% of respondents citing a “lack of candidates applying” for Radiology Technician roles. This is compounded by a skill gap, as 53.1% of employers reported a “lack of qualified candidates” for these same positions. The surgical technician workforce faces a similar deficit, with 42.9% of employers reporting a shortage of applicants and 53.1% struggling to find personnel who meet necessary professional standards.

Physical Therapists

Physical therapists were also identified in the 2025 Montana Healthcare Workforce Assessment¹⁴ as both an unmet need and a hard-to-fill position, along with registered nurses and physicians. Workforce data indicate a total of 1,780 licensed physical therapists throughout the state, amounting to 16 licensees per 10,000 residents. According to this 2024 data, eight counties in Montana do not currently have a licensed physical therapist who reports a home address within the county.

Figure 5 shows the distribution of licensed physical therapists per 10,000 residents by county of residence. The map shows higher concentrations of licensed physical therapists in Western, Central, Southwestern, and Southeastern Montana, with lower concentrations shown across North Central, Northeastern, and Eastern regions of the state. The patterns observed in Figure 4 reflect the residential distribution of licensed physical therapists and do not directly indicate where providers practice or where services are delivered. As such, this map should not be interpreted as a direct measure of access, especially in rural areas where providers may practice across county boundaries.

However, Figure 5 is useful in highlighting regions throughout the state with lower concentrations of licensed physical therapists, which may still suggest less access to care in the North Central, Northeastern, and Eastern regions of Montana.

13. JG Research and Evaluation, “Montana Healthcare Workforce Assessment,” accessed December 9, 2025, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/workforce-development/mhwac/plan-docs/Montana%20Healthcare%20Workforce%20Assessment.pdf>.

14. JG Research and Evaluation, “Montana Healthcare Workforce Assessment,” accessed December 9, 2025, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/workforce-development/mhwac/plan-docs/Montana%20Healthcare%20Workforce%20Assessment.pdf>.

FIGURE 5: LICENSES PER 10,000 PEOPLE BY COUNTY¹⁵

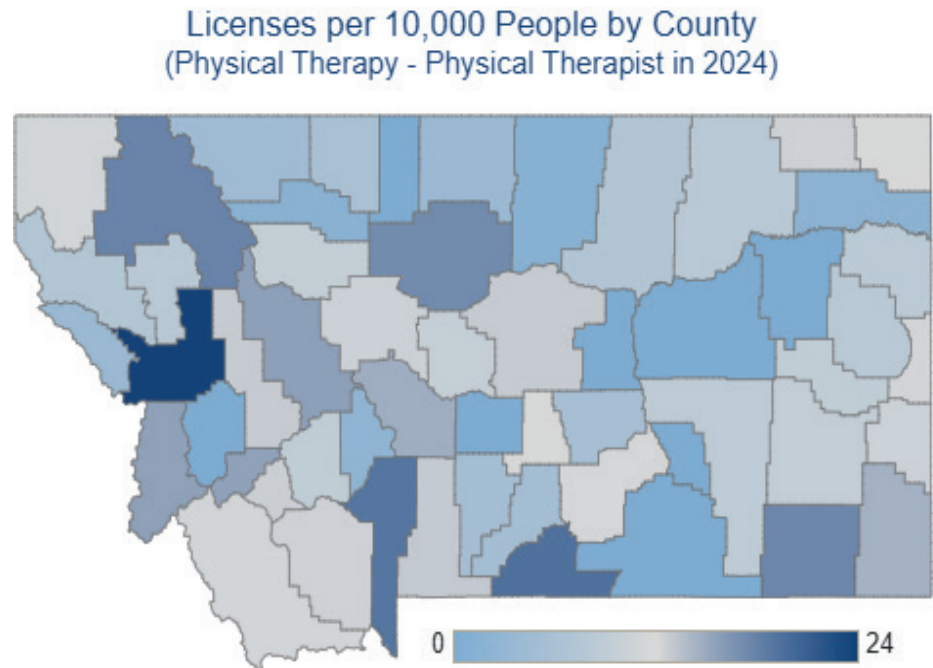
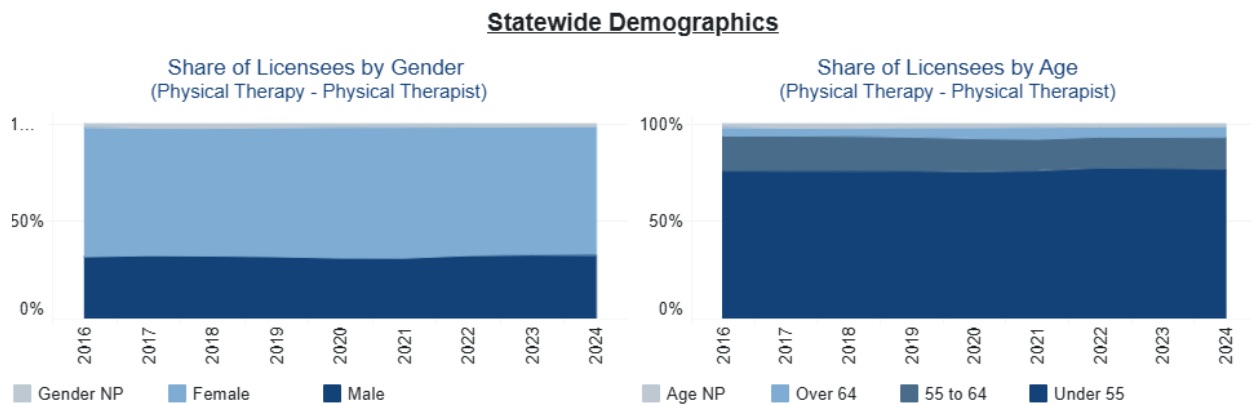


Figure 6 provides statewide demographic insight into the Physical Therapist workforce by illustrating the share of active licenses stratified by both gender and age groups. Analyzing these demographics offers key information regarding the composition of the current workforce and potential trends in retirement or future recruitment needs.

FIGURE 6: STATEWIDE DEMOGRAPHICS¹⁶



15. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Occupational Licensing Data Dashboard,” accessed September 17, 2025, <https://dli.mt.gov/data-dashboards/Occupational-Licensing>

16. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Occupational Licensing Data Dashboard,” accessed September 17, 2025, <https://dli.mt.gov/data-dashboards/Occupational-Licensing>

ALTERNATIVE HEALTHCARE

Alternative healthcare, often referred to as Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM), encompasses a diverse array of healing philosophies, therapies, and products. According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, different areas make up the field of complementary and alternative medicine. Traditional alternative medicine includes the more mainstream and accepted forms of therapy, such as acupuncture, homeopathy, and Eastern practices. These therapies have been practiced for centuries worldwide.¹⁷

Alternative healthcare is increasingly integrated into the broader care continuum to manage chronic pain, reduce reliance on opioids, and address wellness in aging populations. This sector includes licensed professionals such as Acupuncturists and Naturopathic Physicians, who provide specialized care that complements traditional medical models.

WORKFORCE DATA: ALTERNATIVE HEALTHCARE

This section presents key workforce data reflective of specific alternative healthcare professions in Montana. It is important to note that many practitioners in this field operate as small business owners or sole practitioners, which may influence how employment data is captured compared to hospital-based roles. Descriptions of the alternative healthcare professionals listed can be found in the glossary.

Table 7 highlights the current employment estimate and mean annual wage for alternative healthcare professionals nationally. This information is not available at the state level aside from what is presented with licensing data. Please note that data for every single alternative healthcare profession may not be represented in the following table.

TABLE 7: NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE DATA FOR ALTERNATIVE HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONS ¹⁸

Job Title	Employment Estimate (Nationally)	Mean Annual Wage
Acupuncturist	9,370	\$84,200

17. Johns Hopkins Medicine, “Types of Complementary and Alternative Medicine,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/types-of-complementary-and-alternative-medicine>.

18. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, “Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics: Tables,” 2018–2024, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>.

LICENSING AND EDUCATION: ALTERNATIVE HEALTHCARE

Alternative healthcare professionals represent a specialized workforce with comprehensive educational requirements, typically ranging from master’s degrees to doctorate degrees.

LICENSING INFORMATION

Alternative health professionals have a variety of requirements established by profession that dictate certification, registration, and licensure. These standards are established and enforced by individual professional boards and statutes. For example, the Board of Alternative Health Care specifically oversees the licensing of Acupuncturists and Naturopathic Physicians. Table 8 highlights the number of current active licenses in Montana for alternative health professionals. Please note that not all alternative health professionals require licensure through the State of Montana; therefore, this table is not an exhaustive representation of the total workforce in all categories. Please note that not all alternative health professionals require licensure through the State of Montana.

TABLE 8: NUMBER OF ACTIVE MONTANA LICENSES FOR ALTERNATIVE HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS¹⁹

Profession	Number of Active Licenses in Montana
Acupuncturist license	186
Naturopathic Physician license	158

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

There are no degree-granting programs within the state for Acupuncture or Naturopathic medicine.

RELEVANT INSIGHT: ALTERNATIVE HEALTHCARE

EXPANDING ACCESS

A significant development in the state’s integrative care landscape is the expansion of collaborative care services to Eastern Montana. Holy Rosary Healthcare and Yellowstone Naturopathic Clinic began offering collaborative naturopathic cancer support services through the hospital’s integrative cancer care program. This collaborative partnership expanded services to patients in Miles City to receive care locally, without needing to travel to Billings. Such partnerships increase access to specialized supportive care in Montana’s rural and frontier regions.²⁰

19. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “eBiz License Search”, accessed September 16, 2025, <https://ebizws.mt.gov/PUBLICPORTAL/searchform?mylist=licenses>

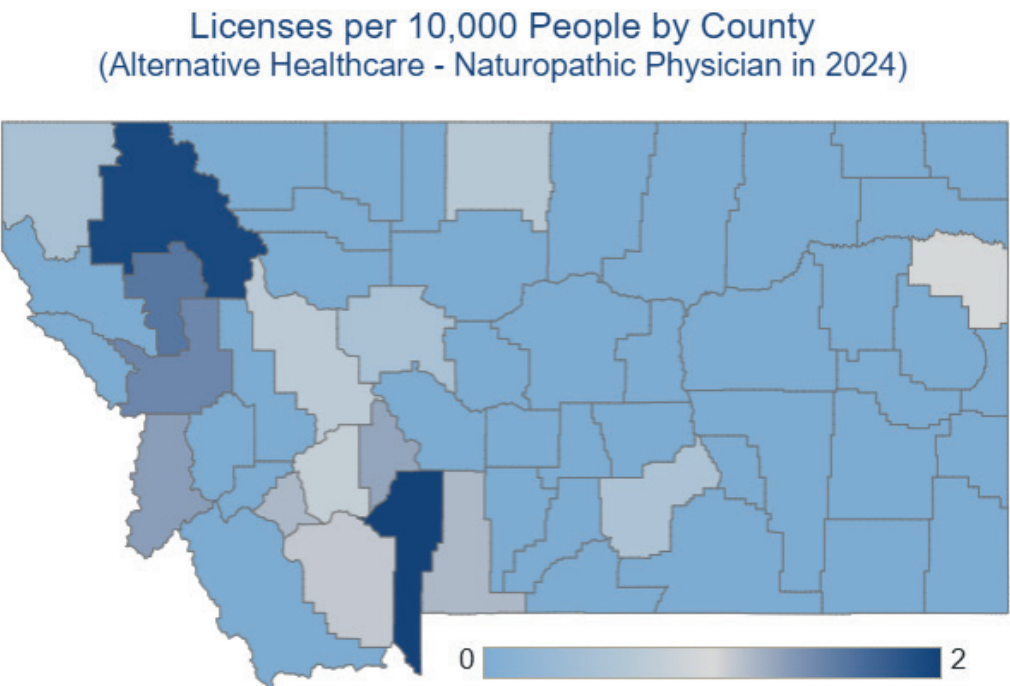
20. Intermountain Health, “Holy Rosary Healthcare Partners with Yellowstone Naturopathic Clinic to Provide Naturopathic Cancer Support Service,” March 2023, <https://news.intermountainhealth.org/holy-rosary-healthcare-partners-with-yellowstone-naturopathic-clinic-to-provide-naturopathic-cancer-support-service/>.

PROFESSIONAL DATA

Naturopathic Physicians (NDs) provide a unique blend of primary care and specialized integrative services in Montana. However, the availability of these professionals varies greatly based on county and geography. Currently, 41 counties in Montana do not have a licensed Naturopathic Physician. Of the 15 counties that do have a resident ND, the vast majority are concentrated in urban centers. Most licensed Naturopathic Physicians reside and practice in Missoula, Flathead, or Gallatin Counties.

This concentration in Western Montana and higher-population hubs mirrors the distribution trends seen in other specialized healthcare roles. Figure 7 illustrates this geographic distribution.

FIGURE 7: LICENSES PER 10,000 PEOPLE BY COUNTY²¹



21. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Occupational Licensing Data Dashboard,” accessed September 17, 2025, <https://dli.mt.gov/data-dashboards/Occupational-Licensing>

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Behavioral Health is recognized as a critical component of overall health. According to the American Medical Association, “Behavioral health generally refers to mental health and substance use disorders, life stressors and crises, and stress-related physical symptoms. Behavioral health care refers to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of those conditions.”²²

Montana faces chronic and significant challenges across the behavioral health landscape, including high suicide rates and lack of behavioral health providers. In 2023, Montana’s age-adjusted suicide rate was 26.6 per 100,000 residents, which is more than double the national average (approximately 14.1 per 100,000).²³ The state has ranked among the top five nationally for suicide rates for the past thirty years. Additionally, the vast majority of Montana is designated as a Mental Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA). All but five of Montana’s 56 counties were designated as Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas in 2024.²⁴ Given Montana’s vast, largely rural and frontier geography, this HPSA designation is particularly challenging. Residents in these areas must often travel great distances to access care.

WORKFORCE DATA: BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

This section provides key workforce data, including current employment levels, future projections, and compensation for a selection of Behavioral Health professions in Montana. It is important to note that this is a highlighted list and not an exhaustive compilation of all Behavioral Health professions. Detailed descriptions of the specific professionals listed here can be found in the document Glossary.

Table 9 and Figure 8 highlight the following metrics for the selected professions: Current Employment (estimated number of workers in the state), Employment Projection (the projected employment figures for the year 2034, indicating expected job growth or decline), and Mean Annual Wage (the average annual wage earned by professionals in the state).

22. American Medical Association, “What Is Behavioral Health?,” AMA, August 22, 2022, <https://www.ama-assn.org/public-health/behavioral-health/what-behavioral-health>.

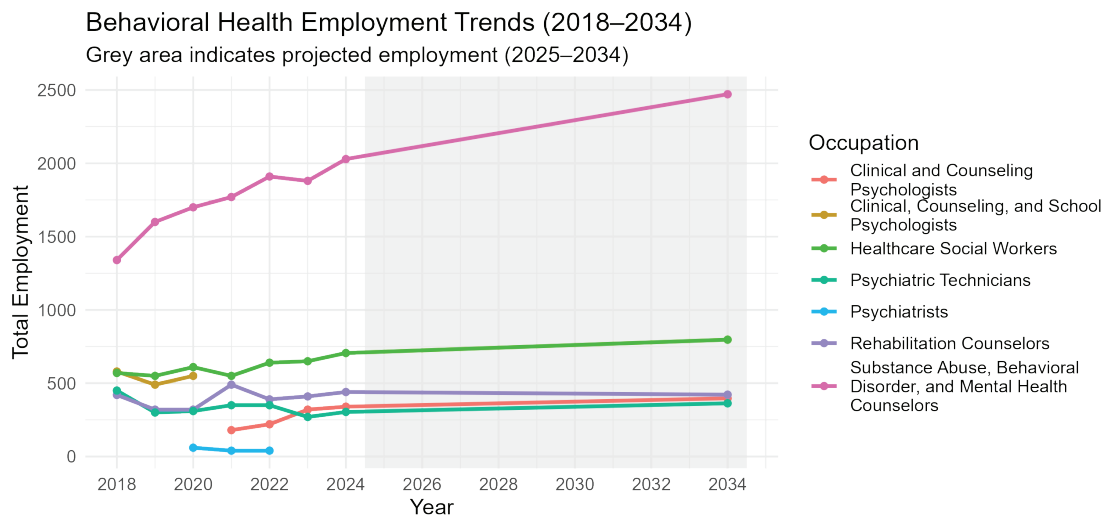
23. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Suicide Mortality,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/state-stats/deaths/suicide.html>.

24. HRSA Maternal & Child Health, “Overview of the State – Montana,” 2024, <https://mchb.tvisdata.hrsa.gov/Narratives/Overview/9a5f96d0-a5bd-4671-859f-f15a6cb89294>.

TABLE 9: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE DATA FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONS ²⁵

Behavioral Health		
Job Title	Employment Projection	
		Mean Annual Wage
Clinical and Counseling Psychologists	340	397 -
Counselors, All Other	-	- 58,240
Healthcare Social Workers	706	797 60,720
Marriage and Family Therapists	-	- 43,300
Psychiatric Technicians	304	363 41,270
Rehabilitation Counselors	440	422 47,770
Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	2,029	2,471 57,350

FIGURE 8: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT TREND DATA FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ²⁶

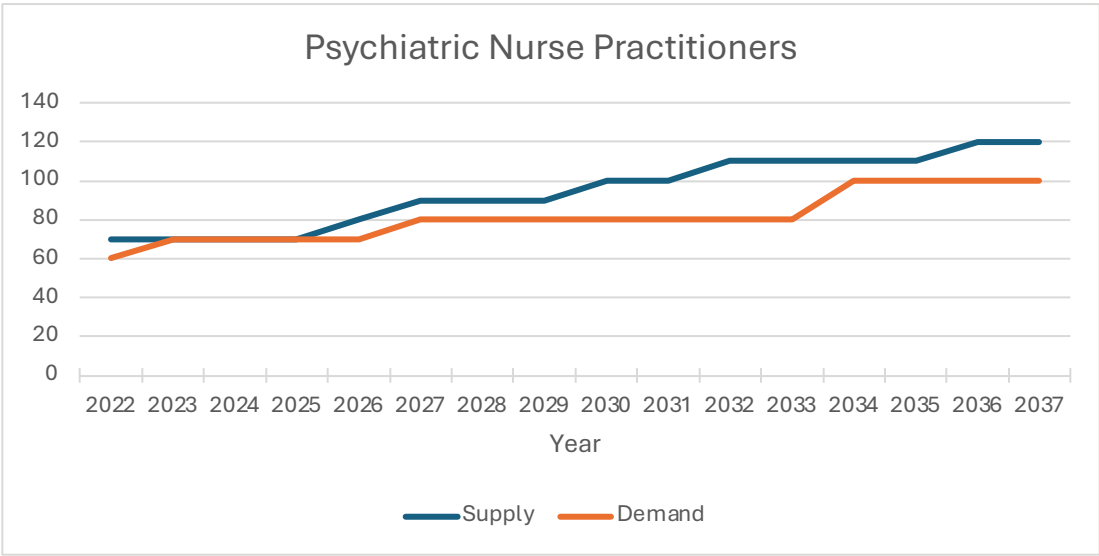


25. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>.

26. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>; Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, “Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics: Tables,” 2018–2024, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>.

Figure 9 provides the projected supply and demand dynamics for Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners in Montana over a fifteen-year period, specifically from 2022 to 2037.

FIGURE 9: SUPPLY VS DEMAND PROJECTIONS FOR PSYCHIATRIC NURSE PRACTITIONERS IN MONTANA FROM 2022-2037²⁷



LICENSING AND EDUCATION: BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Behavioral Health professionals represent a critical and highly diverse workforce. Reflecting the broad spectrum of roles, these professionals complete a wide range of educational training, extending from the completion of a GED or high school diploma for support roles to earning a doctoral degree for advanced clinical practice.

LICENSING INFORMATION

Behavioral Health professions are subject to a variety of requirements that dictate certification, registration, and licensure. These standards are established and enforced by individual professional boards and statutes.

Table 10 provides a snapshot of the current number of active licenses held by selected Behavioral Health professionals in Montana. It is important to note that not all behavioral health professions require licensure through the State of Montana; therefore, this table is not an exhaustive representation of the total workforce in all categories. The license counts below reflect those professions regulated by the state as of the reporting period.

27. HRSA Data Warehouse, “Workforce Projections,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://data.hrsa.gov/topics/health-workforce/nchwa/workforce-projections>.

TABLE 10: NUMBER OF ACTIVE MONTANA LICENSES FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS²⁸

Profession	Number of Active Licenses in Montana
Addiction Counselor	193
Licensed Clinical Professional License	2289
Certified Behavioral Health Peer Support Specialist Certification	245
Marriage Family Therapist	281
Assistant Behavioral Analyst License	5
Psychologist License	381
Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (which may include Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners (PMHNPs))	4465*
Baccalaureate Social Work License	26
Licensed Clinical Social Workers	1939
Licensed Masters Social Worker	74

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

This section focuses on the educational infrastructure available in Montana that supports the development of the behavioral health workforce.

Formal programs for preparing professionals exist at the certificate, undergraduate, and graduate levels, addressing the diverse educational requirements for various professions within the sector. Table 11 provides a detailed overview of these programs and the Montana institutions that offer them. The availability of these in-state programs is crucial for building and sustaining the local talent pipeline.

TABLE 11: EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH²⁹

Academic Program	Degree or Certificate	College/University
Addiction/Chemical Dependency Counseling	Certificate, Associate	Aaniih Nakoda College, Blackfeet Community College, Bitterroot College, Chief Dull Knife, Dawson Community College, Flathead Valley Community College, Fort Peck Community College, Great Falls College, Montana State University, Salish Kootenai College, Stone Child College, University of Montana, University of Providence
Behavioral/Mental Health Technician	Certificate	Bitterroot College, Gallatin College, Helena College, Highlands College
Clinical and Mental Health Counseling	Graduate	Montana State University, MSU Billings, University of Montana, University of Providence

28. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “eBiz License Search”, accessed September 16, 2025, <https://ebizws.mt.gov/PUBLICPORTAL/searchform?mylist=licenses>

29. Montana Office of Rural Health & Area Health Education Center, Montana State University, “Pathways to Health Careers,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/pathways>.

Marriage & Family Counseling	Graduate	Montana State University
Mental Health Support	Certificate	Montana State University
Psychologist	Graduate	Montana State University, University of Montana
School Counseling / Counselor Education	Graduate	Montana State University, MSU Billings, MSU Northern, University of Montana
Social Work	Bachelor, Graduate	Carroll College, Salish Kootenai College, University of Montana, Walla Walla University (Billings and Missoula)

RELEVANT INSIGHT: BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

INCREASING CAPACITY

The expansion of online and hybrid learning models is an important strategy for addressing the widespread shortage of behavioral health professionals in Montana’s rural and frontier communities. This structure allows students to overcome geographical barriers and earn advanced degrees, ultimately supporting the local community’s stability by retaining and growing the professional workforce where it is needed most. Montana institutions have significantly boosted capacity with several key launches since 2021. Carroll College and the University of Montana (UM) both launched online Master of Social Work (MSW) programs in 2021 and 2024, respectively. Similarly, UM launched an online master’s in School Counseling in 2024, with Montana State University (MSU) following in Summer 2026. Additionally, the MSU Billings Master of Science in Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling employs a mostly online, hybrid format with a short on-campus component to accommodate working professionals. These accessible programs are especially important in Montana, directly supporting the goal of channeling more licensed professionals into high-need communities across the state.

Recently, House Bill 872 (HB 872) has allocated significant funding to transform Montana’s behavioral health system, driving the Behavioral Health System for Future Generations (BHSFG) plan. A core part of this strategy is Recommendation 19, which focuses on incentivizing and building the provider pipeline.³⁰ Key measures include offering tuition reimbursement and student loan repayment to attract providers, creating dual enrollment pathways for high school students to take tuition-free college courses, and developing training for paraprofessional and peer support roles. These efforts aim to lower financial barriers and accelerate the entry of new talent to stabilize and grow behavioral healthcare services across the state.

30. Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Behavioral Health System for Future Generations Commission Final Report (Helena, MT: DPHHS, September 2024), <https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/FutureGenerations/BHSFGCommissionFinalReport.pdf>

IDENTIFIED EDUCATIONAL GAPS

While online degree programs are expanding, there is a shortage of local, supervised clinical internship and practicum sites in many rural and frontier counties. Students need these experiences to complete their degrees and meet licensure requirements, but few licensed supervisors are available outside of major population centers. This compels students to move to larger areas to complete their required clinical rotations, often creating a barrier for rural residents to complete their academic program successfully. The inability to secure additional clinical sites also limits the capacity of Montana's educational institutions to expand enrollment, even if student interest is high.

NEEDS ASSESSMENTS AND DATA

In 2024, Montana AHEC completed a Behavioral Health Needs & Training Assessment Survey to uncover behavioral health access and training needs across our state.³¹ Key Findings from this report indicate that 90% of stakeholders reported that their behavioral health needs are not being met. The system's primary challenges are rooted in severe workforce shortages, particularly for counselors, which directly contribute to poor overall access to care. Compounding this, financial barriers, including the high cost of services, lack of funding, and insurance issues, are the most significant obstacles preventing Montanans from receiving help. The report highlights gaps in specialized care for vulnerable groups like Veterans and nursing home residents, underscoring a need for more crisis support and inpatient beds. Stigma was a common theme throughout the report, hindering people from seeking or utilizing available services.

31. Montana Area Health Education Center, "2024 Regional Behavioral Health Needs & Training Assessment," accessed December 8, 2025, <https://heyzine.com/flip-book/e38daf7276.html>.

COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Public health serves as the foundational infrastructure for healthy communities. The American Public Health Association (APHA) highlights the importance of public health in the following ways:

“Public health improves our quality of life, helps children thrive, reduces human suffering and saves money. Every day, the public health field is working – often behind the scenes – to prevent hazards and keep people healthy.”³²

Healthcare and public health are complementary fields that work together to improve health outcomes. Healthcare primarily focuses on providing clinical care to individual patients, while public health emphasizes preventing disease, promoting wellness, and improving the health of entire communities and populations through education, policy, and systems-based approaches.

WORKFORCE DATA: COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

This section provides key workforce data, including current employment levels, future projections, and compensation for a selection of community and public health professionals in Montana. It is important to note that this is a highlighted list and not an exhaustive compilation of all community and public health professions. Detailed descriptions of the specific professionals listed here can be found in the document glossary.

Table 12 and Figure 10 highlight the following metrics for the selected professions: Current Employment (estimated number of workers in the state), Employment Projection (the projected employment figures for the year 2034, indicating expected job growth or decline), and Mean Annual Wage (the average annual wage earned by professionals in the state).

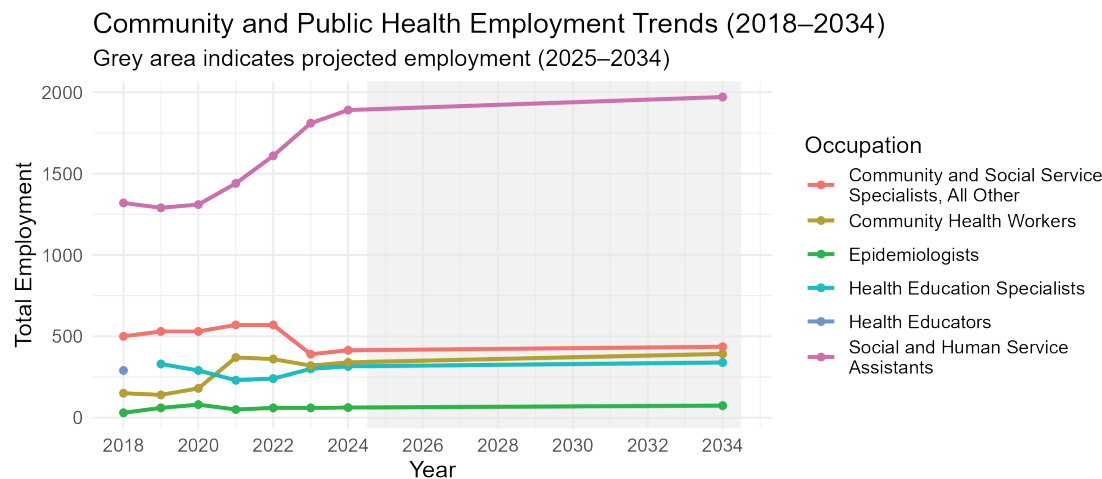
TABLE 12: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE DATA FOR COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONS.³³

Community and Public Health		
Job Title	Employment	Projection Mean Annual Wage
Community Health Workers	340	392 56,520
Community and Social Service Specialists, All Other	414	436 50,690
Epidemiologists	62	74 68,970
Health Education Specialists	315	339 57,010
Social and Human Service Assistants	1,891	1,971 37,540

32. American Public Health Association, “What Is Public Health,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://www.apha.org/what-is-public-health>.

33. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>.

FIGURE 10: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT TRENDS FOR COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONALS.³⁴



LICENSING AND EDUCATION: COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Community and public health professionals represent a highly diverse group with educational backgrounds ranging from high school diplomas for entry-level roles to master’s and doctoral degrees for specialized scientific positions like Epidemiologists.

LICENSING INFORMATION

Unlike many clinical roles, many public health professions in Montana do not require a state-mandated license. However, professional competency is often ensured through national certifications. For example, Health Education Specialist professionals often seek the Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) credential to demonstrate advanced competency.

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

Educational opportunities for community and public health profession programs in Montana exist at certificate, undergraduate, graduate, and doctorate levels. Table 13 outlines the following education pathways offered in Montana, providing a detailed overview of these programs and the institutions that offer them. The availability of these in-state programs is important for building and sustaining the local talent pipeline.

34. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>; Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, “Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics: Tables,” 2018–2024, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>.

TABLE 13: EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS IN MONTANA FOR COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONALS³⁵

Academic Program	Degree or Certificate	College or University
Community Health Worker	Certificate	Montana State University, University of Montana
Community/ Public Health	Associate, Bachelor, Graduate	Carroll College, Missoula College, Montana State University, Salish Kootenai College, University of Montana
Epidemiology	Certificate, Graduate	University of Providence, University of Montana
Environmental Health	Certificate, Bachelor, Graduate	Montana State University, University of Montana
Indigenous and Rural Health	Graduate	Montana State University
Rural Public Health	Associate, Certificate	Stone Child College
Toxicology	Graduate	University of Montana

RELEVANT INSIGHT

ADDING CAPACITY

A major strategy for addressing health disparities in Montana’s rural and frontier areas is the formalization and expansion of the Community Health Worker (CHW) workforce. There are two CHW training programs in Montana ([Montana State University](#) and [University of Montana](#)). Both programs received grant funding to support the CHW workforce. This investment ensures that CHWs can remain in their home communities, directly addressing the social determinants of health that most affect Montana’s rural residents.

A pivotal development in the state’s public health infrastructure is the establishment and growth of the Montana Public Health Institute (MTPHI). MTPHI supports state, local, and tribal public health agencies, healthcare and behavioral health system partners, statewide health organizations, and community-based organizations to deliver effective public health programs and service.³⁶ As a non-partisan, non-profit entity, MTPHI serves as a backbone organization, providing the administrative and technical capacity that smaller rural and tribal health departments often lack. In 2025, MTPHI was instrumental in leading the Montana 21C initiative, a movement to transform the governmental public health system to ensure that foundational public health services are available to every Montanan, regardless of their zip code.

35. Montana Office of Rural Health & Area Health Education Center, Montana State University, “Pathways to Health Careers,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/pathways>.

36. Montana Public Health Institute (MTPHI), “About,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://www.mtphi.org/>.

IDENTIFIED GAPS

While the structural support from the academic programs at MSU and UM provides a strong foundation, a gap remains in the standardization of the CHW profession. Currently, Montana does not have a formal state licensure for Community Health Workers. This lack of a unified regulatory framework can lead to variations in scope of practice and challenges in securing consistent, long-term insurance reimbursement, which is essential for the sustainability of these roles in rural clinics.

ADDITIONAL STATEWIDE RESOURCES

The following workforce assessments and reports provide additional information about Montana's community and public health workforce, including workforce capacity, compensation trends, and emerging needs across the state. Resources include the [Montana Community Health Workers and Other Paraprofessionals Statewide Workforce Report](#), the [Montana Public Health Workforce Wages Reported in 2022–2023](#), and the [Montana Public Health Workforce Assessment](#), all of which offer valuable insights to inform workforce planning, recruitment, retention, and professional development efforts in Montana's public and community health sectors.

DENTAL HEALTH

Dental health is integral to overall health and well-being. Poor oral health is associated with conditions of the oral cavity such as tooth decay and periodontal disease. However, evidence indicates that poor oral health can have an impact on other conditions such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, poor pregnancy outcomes, and respiratory diseases.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) designates Dental HPSAs (DHPSAs) to identify areas of greatest need, specifically to serve Medicaid and underserved populations. In 2024, Montana had 119 designated DHPSAs and an estimated need for 33.5 additional full-time equivalent dentists, demonstrating a widespread need for dental professionals across the state.³⁷

WORKFORCE DATA: DENTAL HEALTH

This section provides key workforce data, including current employment levels, future projections, and compensation, for a selection of dental health professionals in Montana.

It is important to note that this is a highlighted list and not an exhaustive compilation of all dental health professions. Detailed descriptions of the specific professionals listed here can be found in the document glossary.

Table 14 and Figure 11 highlight the following metrics for the selected professions: Current Employment (estimated number of workers in the state), Employment Projection (the projected employment figures for the year 2034, indicating expected job growth or decline), and Mean Annual Wage (the average annual wage earned by professionals in the state).

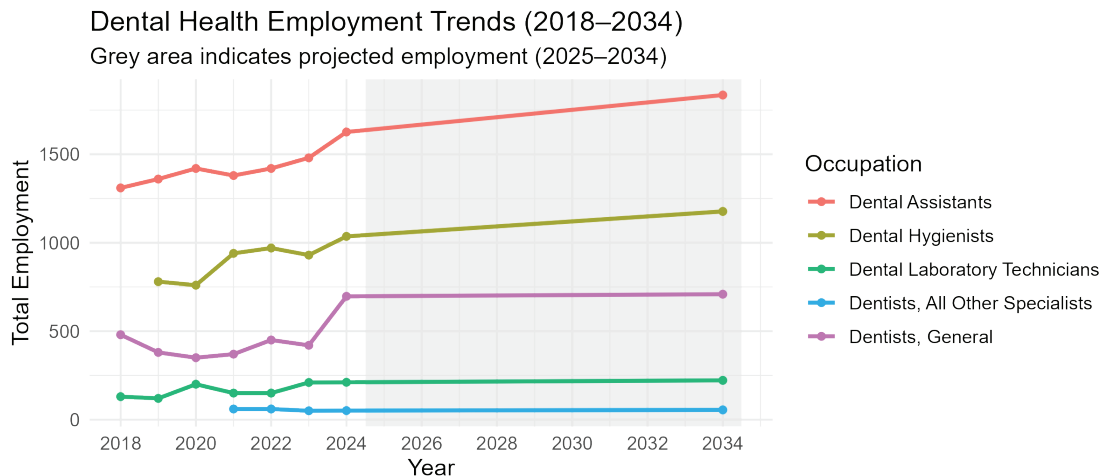
TABLE 14: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE DATA FOR DENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS³⁸

Dental Health		
Job Title	Employment	Projection Mean Annual Wage
Dental Assistants	1,626	1,835 45,930
Dental Hygienists	1,036	1,177 91,380
Dental Laboratory Technicians	211	222 56,050
Dentists, All Other Specialists	51	55 223,020
Dentists, General	697	709 180,630
Prosthodontists	1	0 -

37. Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, “Montana Oral Health Workforce Assessment 2024,” accessed December 9, 2025, <https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/ecfsd/MontanaOralHealthWorkforceAssessment2024.pdf>.

38. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>.

FIGURE 11: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT TREND DATA FOR DENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ³⁹



LICENSING AND EDUCATION: DENTAL HEALTH

Dental health professionals represent a workforce with highly varied educational pathways, ranging from the completion of a GED or high school diploma for support roles to earning a doctoral degree for advanced clinical practice. This breadth, which also includes the associate or bachelor's degree for Dental Hygienists, reflects the specialized roles required within the dental care team.

LICENSING INFORMATION

Dental health professionals are subject to a variety of requirements that dictate certification, registration, and licensure. These standards are established and enforced by individual professional boards and state statutes.

Table 15 provides a snapshot of the current number of active licenses held by selected dental health professionals in Montana. It is important to note that not all dental health professions require licensure through the State of Montana; therefore, this table is not an exhaustive representation of the total workforce in all categories. The license counts below strictly reflect those professions regulated by the state as of the reporting period.

TABLE 15: NUMBER OF ACTIVE MONTANA LICENSES FOR DENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ⁴⁰

Profession	Number of Active Licenses in Montana
Dentists	965
Denturist	24
Dental Hygienist	1114

39. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>; Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, “Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics: Tables,” 2018–2024, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>.

40. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “eBiz License Search”, accessed September 16, 2025, <https://ebizws.mt.gov/PUBLICPORTAL/searchform?mylist=licenses>

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

Educational opportunities for preparing the dental health workforce in Montana currently exist primarily at the certificate and associate levels, focusing on non-dentist support roles. The state does not currently have a Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) or Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD) program. Educational pathways offered in Montana are outlined in Table 16.

TABLE 16: EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS IN MONTANA FOR DENTAL HEALTH ⁴¹

Academic Program	Degree or Certificate	College or University
Dental Assistant	Certificate	Bitterroot College, Gallatin College, Great Falls College, Helena College, Salish Kootenai College, UM Western
Dental Hygienist	Associate	Great Falls College, Gallatin College (OneMSU), City College (OneMSU)

While there are no Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) or Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD) programs located in Montana, students can complete all necessary dental school prerequisites and foundational science requirements at various in-state institutions. Many of Montana’s four-year universities and colleges offer dedicated pre-dental advising tracks specifically designed to ensure that students fulfill the requirements needed for professional school admission. This allows students to earn their undergraduate degrees locally while remaining competitively prepared for the Dental Admission Test (DAT) and subsequent clinical training.

To provide affordable access to out-of-state dental schools, Montana utilizes the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) Professional Student Exchange Program and a specialized agreement with the University of Minnesota. Through these initiatives, the state pays a support fee for a limited number of residents, allowing them to attend participating programs at a significantly reduced tuition rate. These pathways ensure that Montana students can enter the dental profession without the typical financial burden of non-resident tuition.

RELEVANT INSIGHT: DENTAL HEALTH

INCREASING CAPACITY

In 2025, Montana launched innovative educational delivery models to strategically expand the pipeline for Dental Hygienists through the OneMSU Network. Great Falls College MSU currently holds the state’s sole Associate of Science (AS) degree in Dental Hygiene program. Through this collaborative distance learning approach, the program effectively overcomes geographical barriers to advanced training and leverages the resources of multiple institutions as students in the Bozeman area can now use Gallatin College MSU as their primary campus for local activities. The program’s structure is split. Dental hygiene theory courses are taken online, while hands-on coursework is completed at the local partner college. All required clinical courses are completed locally, directly integrating students into their regional healthcare environment. This partnership is a vital strategy for decentralizing education, increasing the number of Dental Hygienists trained, and improving retention by allowing students to complete their studies without relocating from their home communities.

41. Montana Office of Rural Health & Area Health Education Center, Montana State University, “Pathways to Health Careers,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/pathways>.

EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS SUPPORTING THE DENTAL WORKFORCE

While Montana does not have an in-state dental school, the state has developed strategic partnerships to strengthen the dental workforce pipeline and expand educational opportunities for Montana students. A key component of this effort is Montana's collaboration with the University of Washington School of Dentistry through the Regional Initiatives in Dental Education (RIDE) program. Through RIDE, dental students complete clinical rotations in rural and underserved communities, including sites in Montana, where they gain experience serving frontier, tribal, and community health populations. These community-based training experiences are a promising strategy for increasing interest in rural practice, expanding access to oral health services, and strengthening recruitment pathways into underserved communities. By exposing future dentists to Montana's unique rural healthcare environment, RIDE helps build connections that can influence future practice decisions and support long-term workforce sustainability.

Montana also participates in the WICHE Professional Student Exchange Program and maintains a cooperative agreement with the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry that provides a limited number of subsidized educational opportunities for qualified Montana residents pursuing dental degrees ⁴². Together, these partnerships help expand access to dental education and create pathways for Montana students to enter the profession.

NEEDS ASSESSMENTS AND DATA

In 2024, the Montana Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS) conducted a Montana Oral Health Workforce Assessment.⁴³ This assessment highlights state-wide concerns regarding oral health and workforce shortages across all dental professions, including dentists, dental hygienists, and dental assistants. These shortages, which are particularly acute in rural and underserved areas, are exacerbated by low Medicaid acceptance among private providers, with only 36% of dentists accepting new adult Medicaid patients, concentrating most public patient care among a small percentage of providers. The report further points to major challenges in the recruitment and educational pipeline, noting low career interest in dentistry among high school students and enrollment declines in dental assisting programs. The combination of workforce gaps and financial/geographical barriers leads to poor access to care and an over-reliance on emergency rooms for non-traumatic dental issues.

42. Montana University System, "University of Minnesota Dental Program," accessed April 13, 2026, https://www.mus.edu/psep/MN_Dental_Program.html.

43. Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, "Montana Oral Health Workforce Assessment 2024," accessed December 9, 2025, <https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/ecfsd/MontanaOralHealthWorkforceAssessment2024.pdf>.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are a key, integrated part of the emergency care system, comprising response agencies, communication and transportation networks, and trauma systems. This system relies on seamless communication and collaboration between hospital staff (physicians, nurses, emergency staff members), government officials, and “prehospital” personnel (EMTs and paramedics) who usually serve as a person’s initial contact with the healthcare system in an emergency.

Due to Montana’s overwhelmingly rural and frontier geography, the state’s EMS departments face significant and unique challenges. Most communities utilize systems that rely heavily on volunteers but may also include hospital or commercial ambulance services and fire departments. This structure creates strains, including the struggle to secure adequate financing, a lack of equipment necessary to handle multiple complex calls, and long response times due to lengthy distances to isolated patients. The heavy reliance on volunteers also complicates recruiting and retaining experienced personnel, particularly when volunteers may be unavailable to take calls. This combination of factors places the entire rural emergency care system under constant strain.

WORKFORCE DATA: EMERGENCY SERVICES

This section provides key workforce data, including current employment levels, future projections, and compensation, for a selection of Emergency Service Professions in Montana. It is important to note that this is a highlighted list and not an exhaustive compilation of all Emergency Service Professions. Detailed descriptions of the specific professionals listed here can be found in the document glossary.

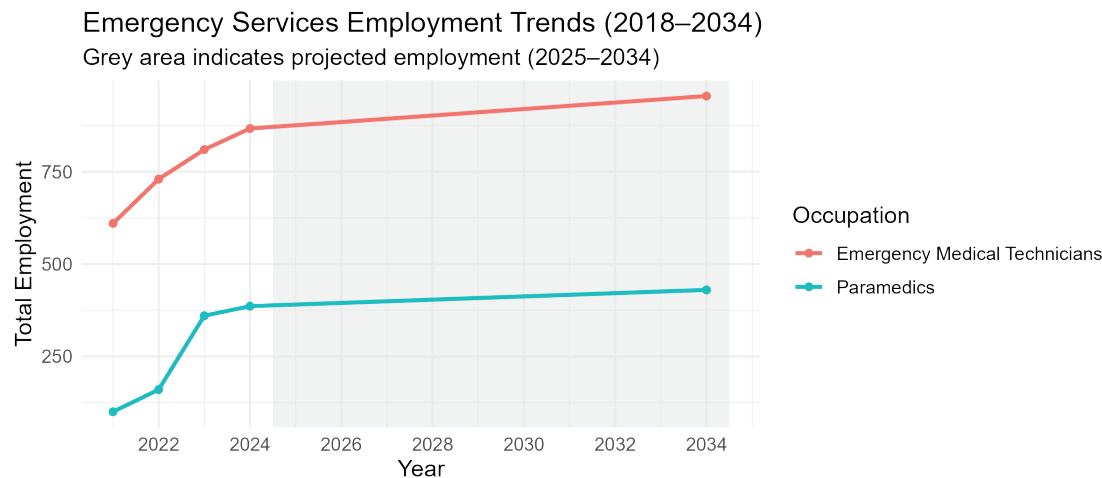
The workforce data presented includes Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), Paramedics, and specialized roles such as Community Integrated Health/Community Paramedics. Table 17 and Figure 12 highlight the following metrics for the selected professions: Current Employment (estimated number of workers in the state), Employment Projection (the projected employment figures for the year 2034, indicating expected job growth or decline), and Mean Annual Wage (the average annual wage earned by professionals in the state).

TABLE 17: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE DATA FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES PROFESSIONS⁴⁴

Emergency Services		
Job Title	Employment Projection	
		Mean Annual Wage
Emergency Medical Technicians	867	955 36,250
Paramedics	386	430 52,360

44. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>.

FIGURE 12: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT TREND DATA FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES PROFESSIONALS⁴⁵



LICENSING AND EDUCATION: EMERGENCY SERVICES

Emergency services professionals represent a workforce with highly varied educational pathways, reflecting the various levels of training required for life-saving prehospital care. This training ranges from the completion of a GED or high school diploma for entry-level roles to an associate’s degree for advanced Paramedic practice.

LICENSING INFORMATION

Emergency services professionals are subject to a variety of requirements that dictate certification, registration, and licensure to ensure competency and adherence to patient care standards. These standards are established and enforced by state agencies and professional bodies.

Table 18 highlights the current number of active certifications and licenses held by selected emergency services professions in Montana. It is important to note that not all emergency service professions require licensure through the State of Montana; therefore, this table is not an exhaustive representation of the total workforce in all categories. The counts below strictly reflect those professions regulated by the state as of the reporting period.

TABLE 18: NUMBER OF ACTIVE MONTANA LICENSES FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES PROFESSIONALS⁴⁶

Profession	Number of Active Licenses in Montana
Emergency Medical Technician License	4807
Emergency Medical Responder	283
Advanced EMT License	668
Paramedics	1795

45. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>; Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, “Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics: Tables,” 2018–2024, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>.

46. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “eBiz License Search,” accessed September 16, 2025, <https://ebizws.mt.gov/PUBLICPORTAL/searchform?mylist=licenses>.

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

Educational opportunities for preparing the emergency services workforce in Montana exist at the certificate and associate levels. The pathways available are crucial for developing the prehospital workforce, which ranges from basic life support technicians to advanced paramedics. Both Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and Paramedics require a license or certification to practice, reflecting the high standards and critical nature of their roles. The specific educational pathways offered in Montana institutions are outlined in Table 19.

TABLE 19: EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS IN MONTANA FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES PROFESSIONALS⁴⁷

Academic Program	Degree or Certificate	College or University
EMR/EMS/EMT/ Paramedics	Certificate, Associate	Bitterroot College, City College, Flathead Valley Community College, Great Falls College (OneMSU), Helena College, Miles Community College, Missoula College, Salish Kootenai College
Fire & Emergency Services	Certificate, Associate	Helena College

RELEVANT INSIGHT: EMERGENCY SERVICES

INCREASING CAPACITY

Community Integrated Health (CIH), often referred to as Community Paramedicine (CP), is an emerging field where trained EMTs and paramedics operate in an expanded role to connect underutilized resources with underserved populations, thereby filling gaps in community healthcare access.⁴⁸ In this capacity, CIH professionals utilize their skills outside of traditional emergency responses to provide non-emergency services such as chronic disease management, post-discharge follow-up, and wellness checks. This approach is highly effective in rural environments like Montana because it leverages existing emergency response infrastructure to provide preventative care, reducing reliance on expensive emergency room visits and addressing primary care shortages.

To build and sustain this expanded workforce model, the state has actively supported specialized training and leadership development. The Montana Office of Rural Health & Area Health Education Center (MORH/AHEC) has supported CIH training through specific courses, including the Montana Family Support Program and the Behavioral Health Training Program, enabling paramedics to address not only medical needs but also social and behavioral determinants of health. MORH/AHEC and MT DPHHS have collaborated to support the Frontier EMS Leadership Academy as well. This initiative is specifically designed to strengthen leadership, management, and operational capacity among EMS providers serving Montana’s vast rural and frontier communities, ensuring these advanced programs are efficiently and sustainably deployed.

47. Montana Office of Rural Health & Area Health Education Center, Montana State University, “Pathways to Health Careers,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/pathways>.
48. Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, “Community Integrated Health,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/EMSTS/EMS/CommunityIntegratedHealth>.

HEALTH IT AND ADMINISTRATION

Healthcare administrators, or health services administrators, are management professionals responsible for the planning, coordination, and supervision of healthcare facility functions and staff. Their specific duties vary greatly by institution, from hospitals and nursing homes to primary-care practices, but generally encompass leading large staffs, managing financial operations, overseeing staffing, quality improvement, and program development. They serve as liaisons between clinical and business professionals, tasked with maintaining and developing professional standards, procedures, and policies for institutional activities.

The modern healthcare landscape, particularly the shift from volume to value, is heavily reliant on Health Information Technology. Health Informatics has been defined by the US National Library of Medicine as: “the interdisciplinary study of the design, development, adoption and application of IT-based innovations in healthcare services delivery, management and planning.”⁴⁹ More generally, the area of Health IT encompasses a broad range of functions, including telehealth applications, Health Information Exchange, Electronic Health Records (EHRs), mobile health applications and monitoring, and quality reporting. Virtually every employee in a modern healthcare setting touches IT, from front-desk staff entering demographic information into the EHR to quality improvement staff analyzing data. Employer assessments indicate that the lack of adequate basic IT skills and the need for experienced staff to utilize telemedicine and advanced analytics are common challenges across Montana healthcare facilities, emphasizing that increasing the supply of IT professionals is a long-term solution to avoid delays in crucial IT initiatives.

WORKFORCE DATA: HEALTH IT & ADMINISTRATION

This section provides key workforce data, including current employment levels, future projections, and compensation, for a selection of health information technology and administration professions in Montana. It is important to note that this is a highlighted list and not an exhaustive compilation of all health IT and administration professions. Detailed descriptions of the specific professionals listed here can be found in the document glossary.

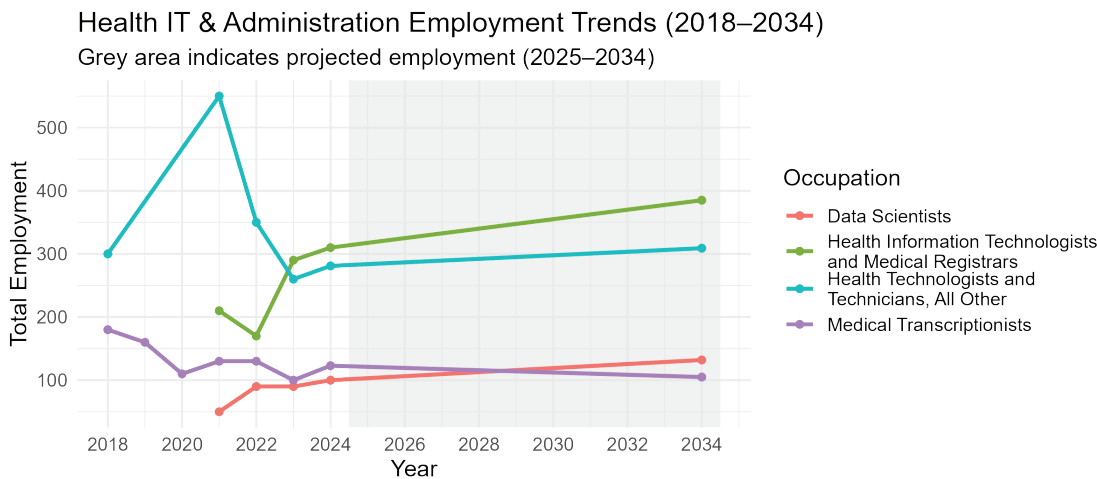
Table 20 and Figure 13 highlight the following metrics for the selected professions: Current Employment (estimated number of workers in the state), Employment Projection (the projected employment figures for the year 2034, indicating expected job growth or decline), and Mean Annual Wage (the average annual wage earned by professionals in the state).

49. Measure Evaluation, “Health Informatics,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://www.measureevaluation.org/our-work/health-informatics.html>.

TABLE 20: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE DATA FOR HEALTH IT AND ADMINISTRATION PROFESSIONALS⁵⁰

Health IT and Administration		
Job Title	Employment Projection	Mean Annual Wage
Data Scientists	100	132 111,490
Health Information Technologists and Medical Registrars	310	385 78,850
Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	281	309 56,380
Medical Transcriptionists	123	105 45,500

FIGURE 13: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT TREND DATA FOR HEALTH IT AND ADMINISTRATION PROFESSIONALS⁵¹



EDUCATION AND TRAINING: HEALTH IT & ADMINISTRATION

Health IT and administration professionals represent a workforce with highly varied educational pathways, ranging from specialized technical certificates to graduate-level degrees (such as a Master of Health Administration or a Master of Science in Health Informatics). This diversity is essential for filling roles from technical support and data analysis to upper-management and executive leadership within complex healthcare systems.

50. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>.

51. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>; Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, “Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics: Tables,” 2018–2024, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>.

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

Educational programs for preparing professionals in health IT and administration in Montana exist across a wide spectrum of academic levels. These opportunities span certificate, associate, undergraduate, and graduate degrees, providing local pathways for developing both the technical specialists and the administrative leaders required for modern healthcare. These educational opportunities offered in Montana are outlined in Table 21.

TABLE 21: EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS IN MONTANA FOR HEALTH IT AND ADMINISTRATION⁵²

Academic Program	Degree or Certificate	College or University
Data Science	Certificate, Bachelor, Graduate	Montana State University, Montana Tech, University of Montana
Healthcare Administration	Certificate, Associate, Bachelor, Graduate	Carroll College, Gallatin College, MSU Billings, University of Montana, University of Providence, University of Mary (Billings)
Healthcare Informatics	Bachelor	Montana Tech
Health/Medical Informatics Technology	Certificate, Associate	Bitterroot College, Great Falls College, Missoula College, Montana Tech
Medical Records and Coding	Certificate, Associate	Bitterroot College, Chief Dull Knife College, City College, Flathead Valley Community College, Great Falls College, Helena College, Missoula College

RELEVANT INSIGHT: HEALTH IT & ADMINISTRATION

INCREASING CAPACITY

To support technological advancement and increase the operational capacity of Montana’s healthcare system, Governor Gianforte announced a significant \$20 million investment in 2022 for the state’s health information exchange, Big Sky Care Connect (BSCC).⁵³ BSCC is Montana’s state-designated Health Information Exchange (HIE). This platform is an important component of the modern Health IT infrastructure, as it allows healthcare providers to appropriately access and securely share a patient’s important medical information electronically. By ensuring that patient data is instantly available across different care settings, the HIE directly contributes to improving the speed, quality, and safety of patient care, while simultaneously driving down costs by reducing redundant testing and streamlining administrative processes. This substantial state investment recognizes Health IT infrastructure as a core element of long-term workforce enablement and improved health outcomes.

52. Montana Office of Rural Health & Area Health Education Center, Montana State University, “Pathways to Health Careers,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/pathways>.

53. Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Behavioral Health System for Future Generations Commission Final Report (Helena, MT: DPHHS, September 2024), <https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/FutureGenerations/BHSFGCommissionFinalReport.pdf>.

MATERNAL HEALTH

Maternal health refers to a woman’s health and well-being from pregnancy through the postpartum period, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The health and safety of individuals during this time are critical, as problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and depression can arise before, during, or after pregnancy, potentially putting the mother’s or infant’s health at risk. Furthermore, the use of alcohol and tobacco during pregnancy can significantly harm the health of both the mother and the baby. Access to high-quality healthcare is essential to help women adopt healthier habits, prevent and address complications, and improve overall pregnancy and postpartum outcomes.⁵⁴

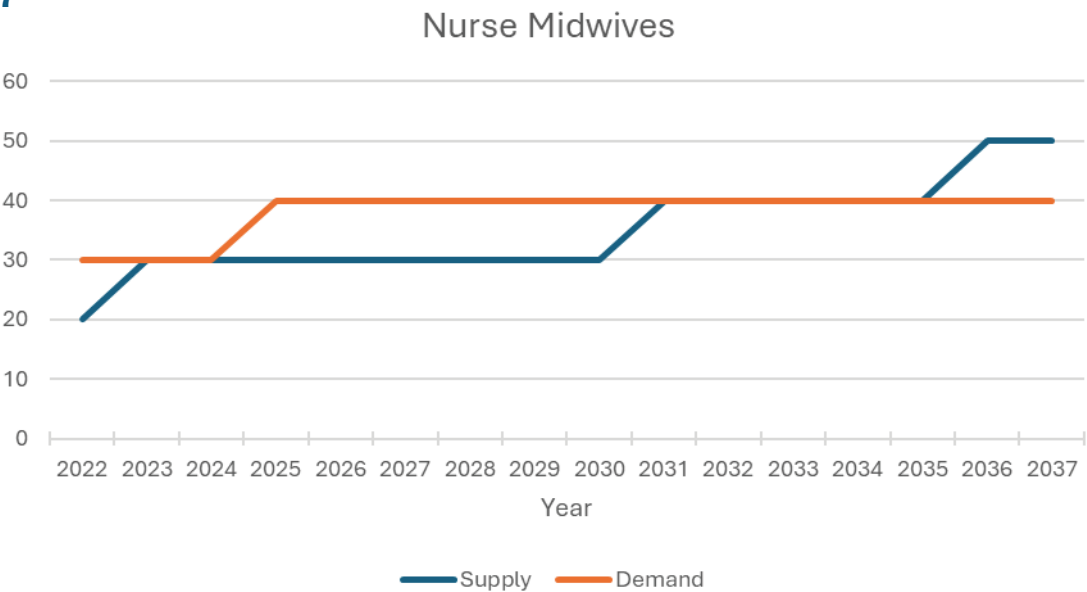
In Montana, maternal health care is delivered by a specialized multidisciplinary workforce. This includes Obstetricians/Gynecologists (OBGYNs), Family Medicine Physicians who provide obstetric care in rural settings, Certified Nurse-Midwives (CNMs), and an emerging workforce of Licensed Doulas and specialized Community Health Workers.

WORKFORCE DATA: MATERNAL HEALTH

This section presents key workforce data reflective of specific Maternal Health Professions in Montana. It is important to note that this is a highlighted list and not an exhaustive compilation of all maternal health professions. Detailed descriptions of the specific professionals listed here can be found in the document glossary.

The following figures (Figure 14-17)⁵⁵ highlight the current supply and demand as well as projected supply and demand for the following positions. Note, the category of healthcare used to create these supply and demand projections is “Women’s Health.” However, these projections provide estimates for professional supply and demand projections in this field.

FIGURE 14: SUPPLY VS DEMAND PROJECTIONS FOR NURSE MIDWIVES IN MONTANA FROM 2022-37



54. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Maternal Health,” June 3, 2024, <https://www.cdc.gov/cdi/indicator-definitions/maternal-health.html>.

55. HRSA Data Warehouse, “Workforce Projections,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://data.hrsa.gov/topics/health-workforce/nchwa/workforce-projections>.

FIGURE 15: SUPPLY VS DEMAND PROJECTIONS FOR WOMEN’S HEALTH NURSE PRACTITIONERS IN MONTANA FROM 2022-37

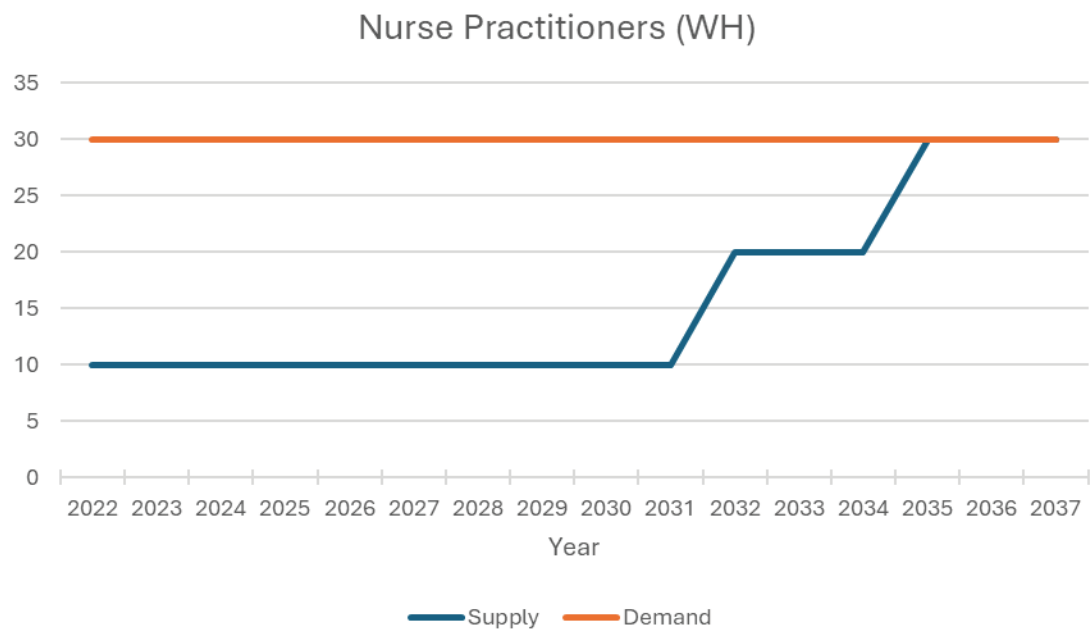


FIGURE 16: SUPPLY VS DEMAND PROJECTIONS FOR OB/GYNS IN MONTANA FROM 2022-37

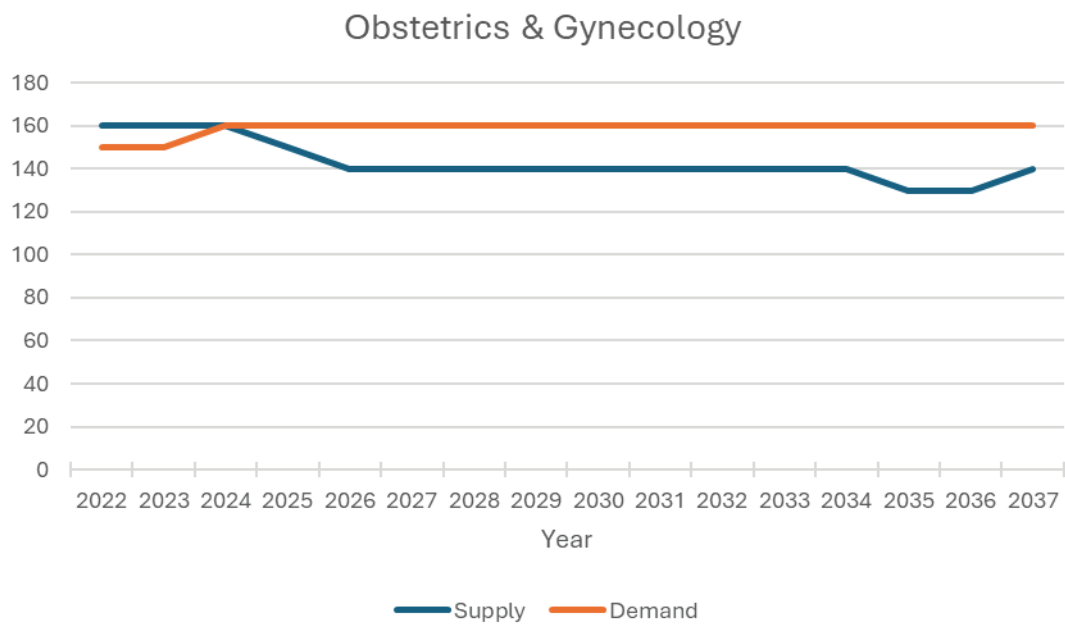
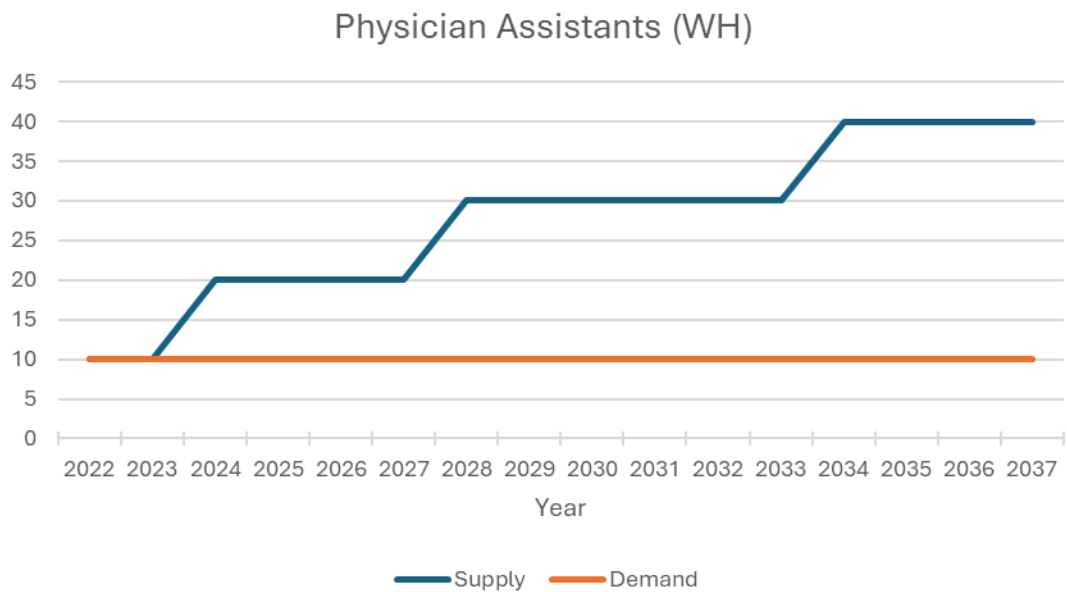


FIGURE 17: SUPPLY VS DEMAND PROJECTIONS FOR WOMEN’S HEALTH PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS IN MONTANA FROM 2022-37



LICENSING AND EDUCATION: MATERNAL HEALTH

Maternal health providers complete a range of educational training from the completion of a GED or high school diploma to doctorate degrees. This diverse educational landscape allows for a multi-layered care model that includes clinical specialists, community-based support workers, and traditional birth attendants.

LICENSING INFORMATION

Maternal health professionals have a variety of requirements established by profession that dictate certification, registration, and licensure. These standards are established and enforced by individual professional boards and statutes under the Montana Department of Labor and Industry. For example, the Board of Nursing regulates Certified Nurse-Midwives as Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), while the Board of Alternative Health Care oversees Direct-Entry Midwives.

Notably, as of January 1, 2026, Montana began formal licensure for Doulas under Senate Bill 319 (2025). This legislation establishes a voluntary licensure pathway for doulas who meet specific training competencies, facilitating their integration into the state’s Medicaid reimbursement framework.

Table 22 highlights the number of current active licenses in Montana for maternal health professions. Please note that not all maternal health professions require licensure through the State of Montana; for instance, some community-based birth workers and traditional healing providers operate under exemptions or national certifications rather than state-issued licenses.

TABLE 22: NUMBER OF ACTIVE MONTANA LICENSES FOR MATERNAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Profession	Number of Active Licenses in Montana
Direct Entry Midwife License	46
Midwife Apprentice License	27

Practicing Providers

Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (which includes WHNP and CNM)	4,465*
Physician Assistants (which includes WHPA)	1,589*
Physicians (which includes OB/GYNs)	8,629*

*Counts for APRNs, physician assistants, and physicians represent all active Montana license holders within those professions and are not limited to providers specializing in maternal health, obstetrics, gynecology, or women’s health. Specialty-specific licensure data were not available.

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

Educational opportunities for maternal health professionals in Montana exist at the certificate, associate, undergraduate, and graduate levels. Table 23 outlines the various pathways available within the state to prepare individuals for these roles.

TABLE 23: EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS FOR MATERNAL HEALTH PROFESSIONS IN MT⁵⁶

Academic Program	Degree or Certificate	College or University
Nurse Practitioners (Doctor in Nursing Practice DNP) includes CNM program	Graduate	Montana State University (DNP)
Physician Assistants	Graduate	Rocky Mountain College, University of Montana
Doctor of Osteopathy (DO) Must complete Residency	Graduate	Touro College, Rocky Vista University
Doctor of Medicine (MD) Must complete Residency	Graduate	Montana WWAMI (partnership between Montana State University and University of Washington)

56. Montana Office of Rural Health & Area Health Education Center, Montana State University, “Pathways to Health Careers,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/pathways>.

RELEVANT INSIGHT: MATERNAL HEALTH

ADDRESSING DISPARITIES AND ACCESS

The Montana Obstetric and Maternal Support (MOMS) grant, a HRSA-funded initiative led by the Montana DPHHS in partnership with Billings Clinic and the University of Montana, has successfully utilized its funding to revitalize Indigenous birth practices. Between 2022 and 2024, the partnership with Zaagi'idiwin—an Indigenous-led training organization—delivered a transformative “Full Spectrum” curriculum that bridges traditional wisdom with clinical safety. Between 2022 and 2024, the program certified over 100 Indigenous Doulas using a “Full Spectrum” curriculum that prepares workers to support families through all pregnancy outcomes, including healthy births and pregnancy loss.⁵⁷

In 2023, Montana transitioned from a standard 60-day postpartum coverage period to a 12-month continuous eligibility model for individuals enrolled in Montana Medicaid and Healthy Montana Kids (HMK). This expansion, which became effective July 1, 2023, was designed to address the “coverage gap” where new parents often lost insurance just as critical health risks began to peak.⁵⁸

INCREASING CAPACITY

The Montana Office of Rural Health & AHEC, in partnership with One Health, provides a specialized Recovery Doula certification established in 2021 to support families facing behavioral health challenges. This year-long program integrates traditional birth support with the skills of a peer recovery specialist, training workers in trauma-informed care and substance use recovery. Graduates often serve as “dual-certified” professionals who bridge the gap between clinical obstetric care and community-based mental health services in rural and tribal regions⁵⁹.

In 2025, Governor Gianforte signed Senate Bill 319, significant legislation that professionalizes doula care by establishing a formal licensure and regulatory framework under the Montana Department of Labor and Industry. Effective January 1, 2026, this law defines doulas as trained, nonmedical professionals who provide continuous physical, emotional, and informational support throughout the antepartum, intrapartum, and 12-month postpartum periods. The legislation creates a voluntary licensure pathway that requires applicants to meet specific competency standards, including a minimum of 20 hours of classroom education or 40 hours of supervised on-the-job training. The bill authorizes Montana DPHHS to provide Medicaid coverage for services provided by these licensed doulas. This allows doulas to bill Medicaid directly, expanding access to birth support for rural and Indigenous families who previously faced financial barriers to these services. By integrating doulas into the formal healthcare system, Montana aims to improve maternal health outcomes and reduce the high rates of pregnancy-related complications across the state⁶⁰.

57. Montana Obstetric Maternal Support, “Indigenous Doula Training Program,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://mtmoms.org/indigenous-doula-training-program/>.

58. Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies, “Timeline of Selected Perinatal Mental Health Initiatives in Montana,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://hmhb-mt.org/montana-perinatal-mental-health-landscape/>.

59. Montana State University, “Recovery Doula,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/bhwet/ccr/rd.html>.

60. Nora Mabie, “Governor Signs New Law Professionalizing Doula Care,” Montana Free Press, May 14, 2025, <https://montanafreepress.org/2025/05/14/governor-signs-new-law-professionalizing-doula-care/>.

HEALTHCARE INVESTMENT

Building on the 2019 foundational grant, Montana’s maternal health infrastructure has moved into a phase of long-term sustainability and expanded clinical reach. According to the Montana Obstetrics and Maternal Support (MOMS) website, the program, originally funded by a \$9.6 million HRSA State Maternal Health Innovation (SMHI) grant, was re-awarded for a second five-year cycle in 2024. This ensures that the innovations developed between 2019 and 2024 will continue through the end of the decade.⁶¹

61. Montana Obstetric Maternal Support, “About MOMS,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://mtmoms.org/about/>.

MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNOLOGISTS AND TECHNICIANS

Medical laboratory professionals are crucial members of the healthcare team, providing the objective data necessary for diagnosis and treatment. It is estimated that 70 to 80% of objective information used in patient diagnosis and treatment is a result of testing performed by these professionals.⁶²

The workforce is defined by two key roles with distinct educational requirements. Medical Laboratory Technologists are bachelor-level trained and nationally certified. They work in clinical laboratories performing complex testing on patient samples in four main areas: microbiology, chemistry, hematology, and immunohematology (blood banking), helping to determine the diagnosis and treatment of disease. Medical Laboratory Technicians are associate-level trained and perform routine laboratory procedures on blood, tissue, and other bodily fluids using specialized instruments. They typically work under the supervision of a Medical Laboratory Technologist or pathologist, and their knowledge allows them to recognize factors that directly affect procedures and results. These professionals are in high demand across the healthcare industry. This demand is driven by several factors including the aging population which requires more services and tests; the introduction of complex new tests requiring a highly skilled workforce; and the added complexity of bioterrorism, emerging infectious diseases, and emergency preparedness for laboratory personnel.

WORKFORCE DATA: MEDICAL LABORATORY

This section provides key workforce data, including current employment levels, future projections, and compensation, for a selection of medical laboratory professionals in Montana. It is important to note that this is a highlighted list and not an exhaustive compilation of all medical laboratory professionals. Detailed descriptions of the specific professionals listed here can be found in the document glossary.

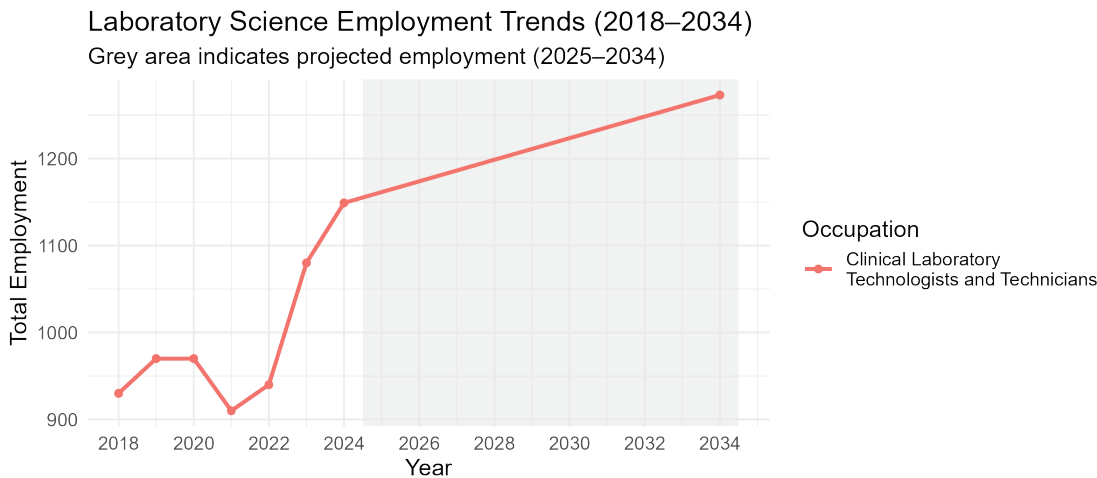
Table 24 and Figure 18 highlight the following metrics for the selected professions: Current Employment (estimated number of workers in the state), Employment Projection (the projected employment figures for the year 2034, indicating expected job growth or decline), and Mean Annual Wage (the average annual wage earned by professionals in the state).

62. Mayo Clinic, "Medical Laboratory Scientist," Explore Healthcare Careers, accessed September 17, 2025, <https://college.mayo.edu/academics/explore-health-care-careers/careers-a-z/medical-laboratory-scientist>; and Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, "Bachelor of Science in Medical Laboratory Science," accessed April 13, 2026, <https://www.ttuhscc.edu/health-professions/bachelor-of-science-medical-laboratory-science/default.aspx>.

TABLE 24: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE DATA FOR MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNOLOGISTS AND TECHNICIANS PROFESSIONS⁶³

Medical laboratories science and technicians		
Job Title	Employment Projection	
		Mean Annual Wage
Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians	1,149	1,273 67,120

FIGURE 18: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT TREND DATA FOR MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNOLOGISTS AND TECHNICIANS PROFESSIONS EMPLOYMENT⁶⁴



LICENSING AND EDUCATION: MEDICAL LABORATORY

Medical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians complete a wide range of educational training, from the completion of a GED or high school diploma for entry-level roles through graduate degrees for specialized leadership and research positions. This range of training is necessary to fill the diverse roles required in a modern clinical laboratory.

LICENSING INFORMATION

Medical Laboratory Technologists and Technician professionals are subject to a variety of requirements established by the professions that dictate certification, registration, and licensure. These standards are established and enforced by state agencies and professional bodies to ensure public safety and competence in laboratory testing. Table 25 highlights the current number of active licenses in Montana for these professions. It is important to note that not all medical laboratory professions require licensure through the State of Montana; therefore, this table is not an exhaustive representation of the total workforce in all categories.

63. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>.

64. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>; Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, “Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics: Tables,” 2018–2024, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>.

TABLE 25: NUMBER OF ACTIVE MONTANA LICENSES FOR MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNOLOGISTS AND TECHNICIANS PROFESSIONALS⁶⁵

Profession	Active Montana Licenses
Clinical Laboratory Scientist License	830
Clinical Laboratory Specialist License	46
Clinical Laboratory Technician License	204

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

Educational opportunities for Medical Laboratory Technologists and Technician professionals exist across a comprehensive spectrum in Montana, ranging from high school or GED equivalents to associate and graduate degrees. These pathways are crucial for developing the skilled workforce needed to conduct complex diagnostic testing. The specific educational pathways offered in Montana are outlined in Table 26.

TABLE 26: EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS FOR MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNOLOGISTS AND TECHNICIANS⁶⁶

Academic Program	Degree or Certificate	College or University
Immunology and Infectious Disease	Graduate	Montana State University, University of Montana
Medical Laboratory Technician	Certificate, Associate	Bitterroot College, Flathead Valley Community College, Miles Community College
Medical Laboratory Science	Bachelor	Montana State University, MSU Billings, University of Montana

RELEVANT INSIGHT: MEDICAL LABORATORY

PROFESSIONAL FORECAST

The demand for Medical Laboratory Scientists and Technicians is projected to remain strong. According to the University of Montana Med Tech Program, employment is expected to grow 5 percent from 2023 to 2033, a rate consistent with the average for all occupations.⁶⁷ This sustained demand is driven by several key demographic and medical trends: An aging population necessitates a greater need for diagnostic procedures to identify and manage chronic conditions, such as cancer or type 2 diabetes. Furthermore, the rising frequency of complex procedures, such as prenatal testing for various genetic conditions, requires an ongoing demand for skilled laboratory professionals to operate and maintain the specialized equipment needed for accurate diagnosis and treatment.

65. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “eBiz License Search”, accessed September 16, 2025, <https://ebizws.mt.gov/PUBLICPORTAL/searchform?mylist=licenses>

66. Montana Office of Rural Health & Area Health Education Center, Montana State University, “Pathways to Health Careers,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/pathways>.

67. University of Montana, “Medical Technology Program: News and Jobs,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://www.umt.edu/med-tech/news-jobs.php>.

OPTOMETRY

Optometry is an autonomous healthcare profession dedicated to the examination, diagnosis, and treatment of disorders of the visual system. Optometrists, often termed Doctor of Optometry, serve as primary eye care providers who conduct comprehensive eye exams, prescribe corrective lenses, detect and manage ocular diseases, and prescribe medications as well as perform minor procedures.⁶⁸ Optometry technicians, also called ophthalmic technicians, support optometrists by performing preliminary eye tests, gathering patient histories, preparing examination rooms, and assisting with diagnostic equipment. They play an important role in patient care and record accuracy, allowing optometrists to focus on diagnosis and treatment.

WORKFORCE DATA: OPTOMETRY

This section provides key workforce data, including current employment levels, future projections, and compensation, for a selection of optometry professions in Montana. It is important to note that this is a highlighted list and not an exhaustive compilation of all optometry professions. Detailed descriptions of the specific professionals listed here can be found in the document glossary.

The workforce data presented includes Optometrists, Ophthalmic Medical Technicians, and Dispensing Opticians. Table 27 and Figure 19 highlight the following metrics for the selected professions: Current Employment (estimated number of workers in the state), Employment Projection (the projected employment figures for the year 2034, indicating expected job growth or decline), and Mean Annual Wage (the average annual wage earned by professionals in the state).

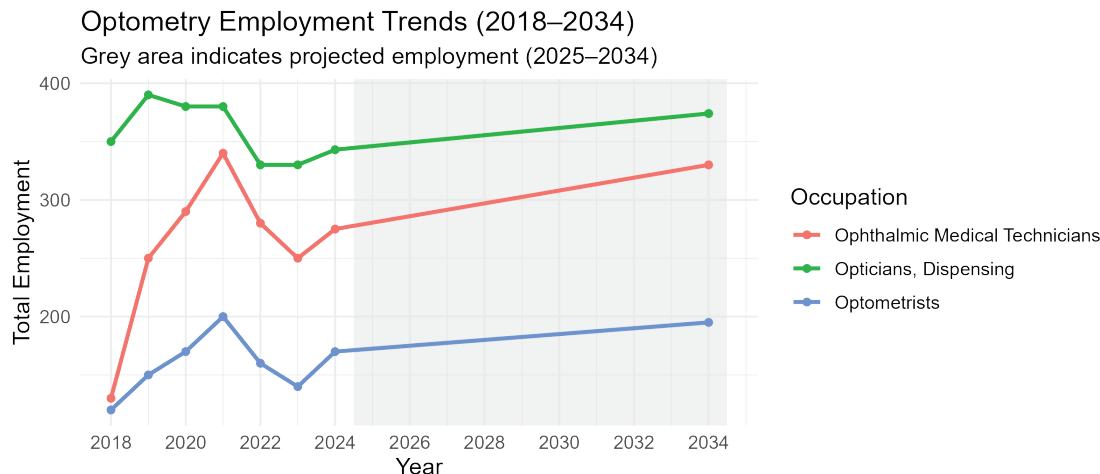
TABLE 27: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE DATA FOR OPTOMETRY PROFESSIONS⁶⁹

Optometry		
Job Title	Employment	Projection Mean Annual Wage
Ophthalmic Medical Technicians	275	330 48,050
Ophthalmologists, Except Pediatric	-	- 208,770
Opticians, Dispensing	343	374 45,700
Optometrists	170	195 114,630

68. Michigan College of Optometry, Ferris State University, “What Is Optometry,” accessed September 17, 2025, <https://www.ferris.edu/optometry/admissions/What-is-Optometry.htm>.

69. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>.

FIGURE 19: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT TREND DATA FOR OPTOMETRY PROFESSIONALS⁷⁰



LICENSING AND EDUCATION: OPTOMETRY

Optometry professionals complete a range of educational training from certificate-level programs for technicians to doctorate degrees for providers.

LICENSING INFORMATION

Optometry professionals have a variety of requirements established by profession that dictate certification, registration, and licensure. Optometrists are licensed by the Montana Board of Optometry. To be eligible for licensure, an applicant must have graduated from an accredited school of optometry and passed all parts of the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) exams.

Table 28 highlights the number of current active licenses in Montana for optometry professions. Please note that not all optometry professions require licensure through the State of Montana.

TABLE 28: NUMBER OF ACTIVE MONTANA LICENSES FOR OPTOMETRY PROFESSIONALS⁷¹

Profession	Active Montana Licenses
Optometrist License	321

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

Educational programs for optometry professionals exist in Montana at the certificate levels, primarily focusing on the technician and optician workforce. The specific educational pathways offered in Montana are outlined in Table 29.

70. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>; Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, “Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics: Tables,” 2018–2024, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>.

71. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “eBiz License Search”, accessed September 16, 2025, <https://ebizws.mt.gov/PUBLICPORTAL/searchform?mylist=licenses>

TABLE 29: EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS FOR MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNOLOGISTS AND TECHNICIANS⁷²

Academic Program	Degree or Certificate	College or University
Optician Certification	Certificate	Bitterroot College, Helena College
Optical Manager	Certificate	Bitterroot College, Helena College

While there are no Doctor of Optometry (OD) programs located in Montana, students can complete all necessary optometry school prerequisites and foundational science requirements at various in-state institutions. Many of Montana’s four-year universities and colleges offer dedicated pre-health advising tracks specifically designed to ensure that students fulfill the requirements needed for professional school admission. This allows students to earn their undergraduate degrees locally while remaining competitively prepared for the Optometry Admission Test (OAT) and subsequent graduate study. Since Montana does not host an optometry school, the state participates in the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) Professional Student Exchange Program. This program provides Montana residents with affordable access to out-of-state professional programs.

For support staff, formal education is often not required, and many enter the field through on-the-job training. Dispensing opticians typically receive training through on-the-job instruction or apprenticeships, and while certification is available, it is not mandated by all employers. Similarly, ophthalmic medical technicians generally receive on-the-job training, though certification is available for both a Certified Ophthalmic Medical Assistant and Certified Ophthalmic Medical Technologist through the International Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology (IJCAHPO).

RELEVANT INSIGHT: OPTOMETRY

INCREASING CAPACITY

As of July 1, 2025, the scope of practice for Montana optometrists expanded following the passage of House Bill 218.⁷³ Licensed optometrists can now seek certification to perform specific in-office surgical and laser procedures. This advancement is particularly significant for Montana’s rural landscape, as it allows patients to receive specialized ocular care, such as laser treatments for glaucoma or minor eyelid procedures, within their own communities rather than traveling to major urban surgical centers. To qualify for this certification, Montana optometrists must complete a Board-approved 32-hour didactic and clinical training course, ensuring they are equipped with the specialized skills necessary to manage the anterior segment of the eye safely.

72. Montana Office of Rural Health & Area Health Education Center, Montana State University, “Pathways to Health Careers,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/pathways>.
73. Montana Legislature, HB 218, 69th Legislative Session (2025), https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Sessions/69th/Contractor_index/CH0130.pdf.

NURSING

The International Council of Nurses defines nursing as “autonomous and collaborative care for individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, sick or well” and in all settings. Nursing includes the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the care of ill, disabled and dying people.”⁷⁴ Nursing roles, which span from support staff (Certified Nursing Assistants/CNAs) to advanced practitioners (Advanced Practice Registered Nurses/APRNs), are the cornerstone of the healthcare system, providing the only 24-hour care surrounding the patient.

The nursing workforce is characterized by its distinct educational levels and functions. Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) and Registered Nurses (RNs) comprise the core licensed staff, with RNs holding responsibility for the care of individuals and groups. Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), including Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs), Certified Nurse-Midwives (CNMs), and Certified Nurse Practitioners (CNPs), complete accredited graduate-level education. Montana is one of 27 states, two U.S. territories, and Washington, D.C. that grant APRNs full practice authority⁷⁵. Full practice authority allows APRNs to practice independently and utilize their full scope of education and training, increasing the availability of primary care providers in rural and underserved communities.

Nursing workforce recruitment challenges exist across Montana. Administrative and executive staff responding to the Montana Healthcare Workforce Assessment 2025⁷⁶ were asked to identify the hardest-to-fill positions based on recruitment difficulties. Registered Nurse (RN) positions were identified as the hardest to fill among medical professionals (85.7% of respondents) and Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) were identified as the second hardest to fill among allied health positions (53.6% of respondents). The demand for nurses of all levels remains high, driven by an aging state population, an increase in co-morbid diseases, and existing physician shortages.

WORKFORCE DATA: NURSING

This section provides key workforce data, including current employment levels, future projections, and compensation, for a selection of nursing professions in Montana. It is important to note that this is a highlighted list and not an exhaustive compilation of all nursing professions. Detailed descriptions of the specific professionals listed here can be found in the document glossary.

Table 30 and Figure 20 highlight the following metrics for the selected professions: Current Employment (estimated number of workers in the state), Employment Projection (2034) (the projected employment figures for the year 2034, indicating expected job growth or decline), and Mean Annual Wage (the average annual wage earned by professionals in the state).

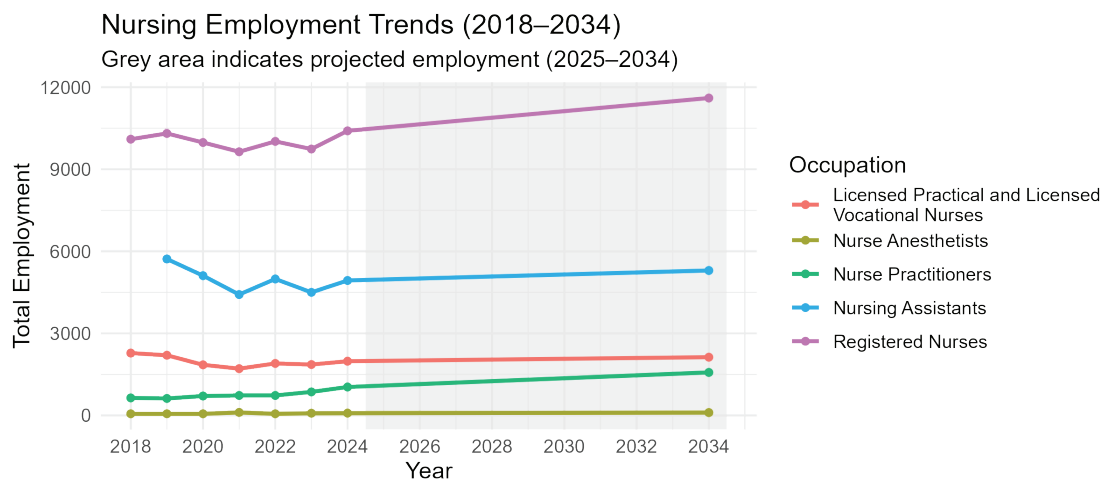
74. International Council of Nurses, “Definition of Nursing,” 2002, <https://www.icn.ch/who-we-are/icn-definition-of-nursing>.

75. Montana Office of Rural Health/Area Health Education Center and Montana Healthcare Workforce Advisory Committee, Montana Healthcare Workforce Strategic Plan 2017, 2017, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/workforce-development/mhwac/documents/MHW%20Strategic%20Plan%202017.pdf>.

76. JG Research and Evaluation, “Montana Healthcare Workforce Assessment,” accessed December 9, 2025, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/workforce-development/mhwac/plan-docs/Montana%20Healthcare%20Workforce%20Assessment.pdf>.

TABLE 30: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE DATA FOR NURSING⁷⁷

Job Title	Nursing		Mean Annual Wage
	Employment	Projection	
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	1,982	2,129	58,710
Nurse Anesthetists	84	104	-
Nurse Practitioners	1,039	1,572	131,560
Nursing Assistants	4,934	5,299	42,020
Registered Nurses	10,406	11,605	88,480

FIGURE 20: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT TRENDS FOR NURSING PROFESSIONALS⁷⁸

77. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>

78. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>; Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, “Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics: Tables,” 2018–2024, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>.

LICENSING AND EDUCATION: NURSING

Nursing professionals in Montana complete a wide range of educational training, from foundational certificate programs to graduate and doctoral degrees. This comprehensive range of training is essential to prepare nurses to fill the diverse, hands-on roles required across various complex healthcare settings in the state.

LICENSING INFORMATION

Nursing professionals are subject to rigorous requirements established by the Montana Board of Nursing (BON) that dictate educational qualifications, national certification, and state licensure. These standards ensure public safety and competence in the delivery of patient care. The primary license categories regulated by the Montana BON are the Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), the Registered Nurse (RN), and the Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN), the last of which requires an active RN license as a prerequisite. Montana is a member of the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC). This agreement allows an RN or LPN who holds a multi-state license from another Compact state to practice in Montana without obtaining a separate Montana license, provided Montana is not their primary state of residence.

Table 31 highlights the number of current active licenses in Montana for nursing professions. Please note that not all Nursing professions require licensure through the State of Montana.

TABLE 31: NUMBER OF ACTIVE MONTANA LICENSES FOR NURSING PROFESSIONALS⁷⁹

Profession	Active Montana Licenses
Advanced Practice Registered Nurse License (includes Certified Nurse Midwives, Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners, and Nurse Anesthetists)	4,465
Licensed Practical Nurse License	2,183
Registered Nurse License	26,310

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

Educational opportunities for nursing programs exist across a comprehensive spectrum in Montana, from local colleges offering LPN certificates to four-year universities offering doctoral programs. These pathways are crucial for developing and advancing the highly skilled nursing workforce needed throughout the state’s urban and rural communities.

Montana’s educational system also supports career mobility through RN-to-BSN Bridge Programs, frequently offered online for working nurses with associate degrees, and Accelerated BSN Programs which provide a fast-track path to a BSN for those who already hold a bachelor’s degree in a different field.

79. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, eBiz License Search, accessed September 16, 2025, <https://ebizws.mt.gov/PUBLICPORTAL/searchform?mylist=licenses>

TABLE 32: EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS IN MONTANA FOR NURSING PROFESSIONS⁸⁰

Academic Program	Degree or Certificate	College or University
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	Certificate	Aaniih Nakoda College, Bitterroot College, Blackfeet Community College, City College, Flathead Valley Community College, Fort Peck Community College, Great Falls College, Helena College, Highlands College, Miles Community College, Missoula College, Salish Kootenai College, Stone Child College
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	Certificate	Bitterroot College, City College, Flathead Valley Community College, Great Falls College, Helena College, Dakota Nursing Program Williston State College
Registered Nursing	Associate, Bachelor	Aaniih Nakoda College, Blackfeet Community College, City College, Helena College, Flathead Valley CC, Great Falls College, Missoula College, Miles CC, Carroll College, MSU Billings, Montana State University, MSU Northern, Montana Tech, Salish Kootenai College, Touro University, University of Providence
Nursing (Master)	Graduate	Montana State University, University of Providence
Nurse Practitioner (DNP)	Graduate	Montana State University

Beyond traditional academic institutions, various private Certified Nursing Assistants training programs are available across the state, often featuring flexible, fast-track schedules. Additionally, several healthcare facilities offer on-the-job training pathways.

RELEVANT INSIGHT: NURSING

INCREASING CAPACITY

Montana's academic institutions are creating new pathways to boost the number of nursing graduates at both the baccalaureate and advanced practice levels. Salish Kootenai College added a Direct Admit BSN program in 2020, allowing high school graduates to secure an immediate spot in the four-year professional nursing track. Carroll College introduced an Accelerated Nursing Program in 2021, offering a fast-track degree, often completed in 15 months, for applicants who already hold a bachelor's degree in a non-nursing field.

80. "Pathways to Health Careers," Montana Office of Rural Health & Area Health Education Center, Montana State University, accessed September 17, 2025, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/pathways/>

Montana State University (MSU) also launched the Montana Nursing Direct Entry Program for the Fall 2023 semester. This initiative guarantees admission into the nursing bachelor's degree program for qualifying graduates of any accredited Montana high school, removing the traditional gated application hurdles for in-state students who maintain specific academic standards. Furthermore, MSU expanded its Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program in 2024 to include a specialization in Nurse-Midwifery. This crucial addition complements MSU's existing DNP degrees in Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) and Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP), directly targeting maternal and mental health provider shortages, particularly in rural areas.

Nursing Investment

The expansion of Montana's nursing programs has been significantly fueled by unprecedented financial gifts and grants that ensure long-term growth, faculty development, and student support. These investments focus heavily on modernizing facilities and attracting top talent. The cornerstone of this funding is the \$101 million investment from Mark and Robyn Jones in 2021, which represents the largest gift ever made to a U.S. college of nursing.⁸¹ This monumental donation is funding the construction of five new, state-of-the-art nursing facilities across all of Montana State University's (MSU) five campuses (Bozeman, Billings, Great Falls, Kalispell, and Missoula). This physical expansion is projected to increase MSU's capacity to graduate 100 more baccalaureate-prepared nurses annually. The funds also endow five professorships and create new scholarships, supporting both faculty and students.

Targeted support has also been directed to other institutions. Montana Tech received a substantial \$7 million gift in 2021 from Dave and Sherry Lesar, which supports program development, professional faculty training, and scholarships.⁸² City College at MSU Billings secured a \$1.9 million grant in 2023 to establish the Rural Eastern Montana Nursing Expansion Program, aimed at boosting capacity in underserved areas.⁸³ Lastly, MSU-Northern received \$900,000 in 2025 to specifically support students in its RN-to-BSN bridge program, underscoring the commitment to serving rural communities and facilitating career advancement for licensed nurses.⁸⁴

Professional Data

Data from the 2025 workforce assessment study confirms the persistent need for nurses across the state. Registered Nurses are consistently identified as both an unmet need and a hard-to-fill position⁸⁵, reflecting a statewide demand that exceeds the available supply of practitioners. Current workforce data shows a total of 23,368 licenses held by Registered Nurses in Montana. The statewide density is approximately 205 licenses per 10,000 residents. However, as illustrated in Figure 21, this overall figure masks significant regional disparities in nurse distribution.

81. Anne Cantrell, "MSU's Nursing College Named for Mark and Robyn Jones," MSU News Service, November 18, 2021, <https://www.montana.edu/news/21621/msu-s-nursing-college-named-for-mark-and-robyn-jones>.

82. Montana Tech, "Montana Tech Receives Historic Gift," October 2021, <https://mtech.edu/news/2021/10/montana-tech-receives-historic-gift.html>.

83. Shiloh Skillen-Robison, "City College at MSU Billings Awarded \$1.9 Million Grant to Expand Nursing Programs," MSU Billings, June 12, 2023, <https://www.msubillings.edu/news/article.asp?id=22979>.

84. NBC Montana Staff, "MSU Northern Receives \$900,000 for Endowed Nursing Scholarship," NBC Montana, August 27, 2025, <https://nbcmontana.com/news/local/msu-northern-receives-900000-for-endowed-nursing-scholarship>.

85. JG Research and Evaluation, "Montana Healthcare Workforce Assessment," accessed December 9, 2025, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/workforce-development/mhwac/plan-docs/Montana%20Healthcare%20Workforce%20Assessment.pdf>.

Figure 21 shows the distribution of Registered Nurses per 10,000 residents by county of residence. The map shows higher concentrations of Registered Nurses in Western, Southeastern, Southwestern, Central, and Northeastern Montana, with lower concentrations shown across Northern and Eastern regions of the state. The patterns observed in Figure 20 reflect the residential distribution of Registered Nurses and do not directly indicate where Registered Nurses practice or where services are delivered. As such, this map should not be interpreted as a direct measure of access, especially in rural areas where providers may practice across county boundaries.

However, Figure 21 is useful in highlighting regions throughout the state with lower concentrations of Registered Nurses, which may still suggest less access to care in the Northern and Eastern regions of Montana.

FIGURE 21: LICENSES PER 10,000 PEOPLE BY COUNTY⁸⁶

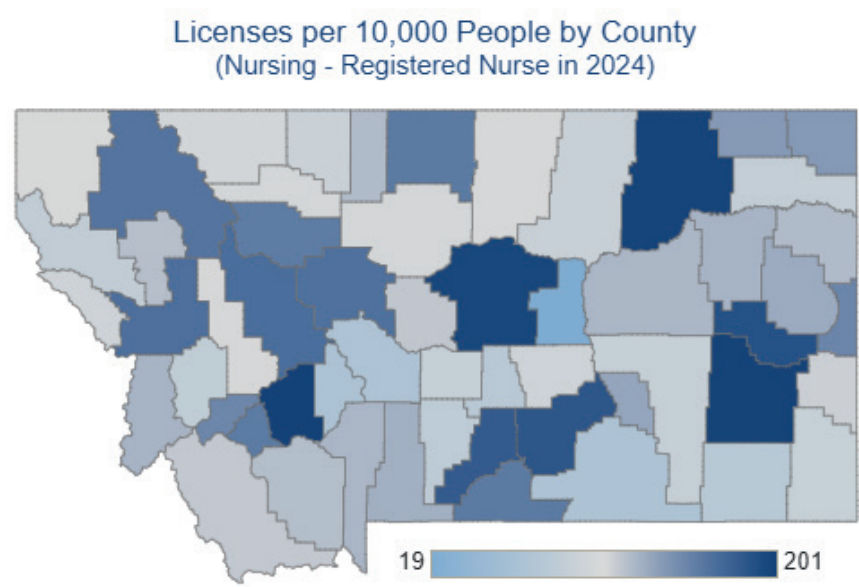
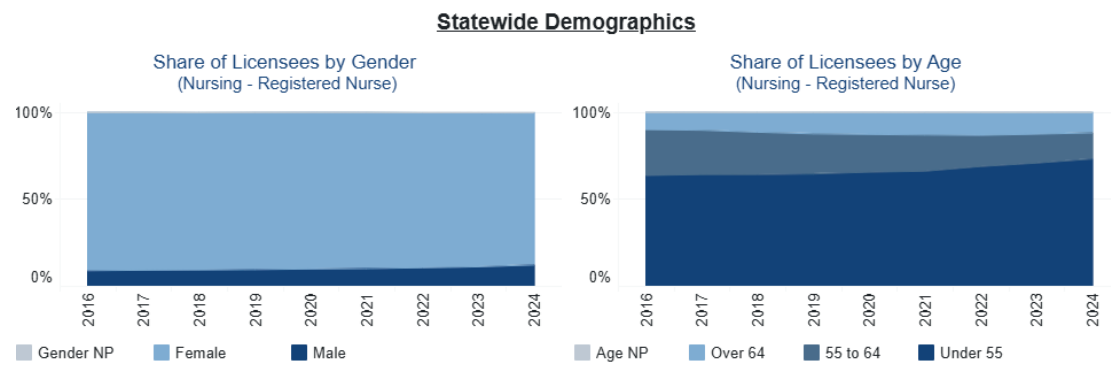


Figure 22 below illustrates the statewide demographics on the share of registered nurse licenses by gender and age.

FIGURE 22: STATEWIDE DEMOGRAPHICS⁸⁷



86. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Occupational Licensing Data Dashboard,” accessed September 17, 2025, <https://dli.mt.gov/data-dashboards/Occupational-Licensing>

87. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Occupational Licensing Data Dashboard,” accessed September 17, 2025, <https://dli.mt.gov/data-dashboards/Occupational-Licensing>

PHARMACY

The role of the pharmacist has expanded from the traditional task of simply dispensing prescription drugs. Today’s pharmacists are integral members of the healthcare team, using their specialized knowledge to ensure medication safety and optimize patient outcomes.

The modern pharmacist performs extensive clinical and consultative duties, extending far beyond dispensing. Their core functions include Medication Management, where they advise practitioners and patients on drug selection, dosing, and interactions to prevent adverse events. They also engage in Patient Monitoring, ensuring the safe and effective use of medications, and offer Health and Wellness Consultation on topics like diet and stress management. Pharmacists often pursue specialization in areas such as oncology, geriatric, or psychiatric pharmacy and work in diverse settings, including community stores, hospitals (serving specialized units like the intensive care unit or emergency room), nursing homes, and research lab.

Pharmacy technicians serve as assistants to the licensed pharmacists and help prepare prescriptions, provide customer service, and perform administrative duties. As pharmacists experience expanded duties, pharmacy techs will also experience expansion of their role.

WORKFORCE DATA: PHARMACY

This section provides key workforce data, including current employment levels, future projections, and compensation, for a selection of pharmacy professions in Montana. It is important to note that this is a highlighted list and not an exhaustive compilation of all pharmacy professions. Detailed descriptions of the specific professionals listed here can be found in the document glossary.

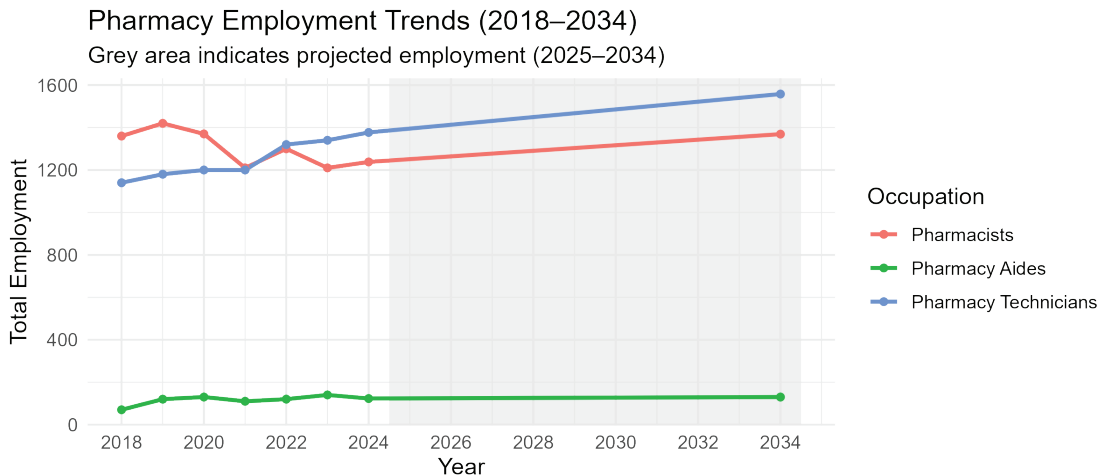
Table 33 and Figure 22 highlight the following metrics for the selected professions: Current Employment (estimated number of workers in the state), Employment Projection (the projected employment figures for the year 2034, indicating expected job growth or decline), and Mean Annual Wage (the average annual wage earned by professionals in the state).

TABLE 33: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE DATA FOR PHARMACY PROFESSIONALS⁸⁸

Pharmacy		
Job Title	Employment Projection	Mean Annual Wage
Pharmacists	1,238	1,369 135,130
Pharmacy Aides	123	130 36,660
Pharmacy Technicians	1,377	1,558 46,940

88. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>.

FIGURE 23: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT TRENDS FOR PHARMACY PROFESSIONALS⁸⁹



LICENSING AND EDUCATION: PHARMACY

Pharmacy professionals complete a broad range of educational training, from the completion of a GED or high school diploma to support roles through a Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) degree for licensed practitioners. This range of training is necessary to fill the diverse roles required to manage and dispense medications across various healthcare settings.

LICENSING INFORMATION

Pharmacy professionals in Montana must meet specific educational and competency requirements established by the Montana Board of Pharmacy to obtain and maintain authorization to practice. These requirements dictate the necessary certification, registration, and licensure standards.

Pharmacists must complete an accredited Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) degree, complete a required number of supervised internship hours, and pass two rigorous national examinations: the North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination (NAPLEX), and the Multistate Pharmacy Jurisprudence Examination (MPJE), which specifically tests knowledge of pharmacy law. Pharmacy Technicians must meet specific educational and examination criteria. Technicians must be registered with the Board of Pharmacy and are often required to pass a national certification examination, such as that administered by the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB), to practice.

Table 34 highlights the number of current active licenses in Montana for Pharmacy Professions. It is important to note that not all pharmacy-related professions (such as pharmacy aides or non-dispensing administrative staff) require licensure through the State of Montana; therefore, this table is not an exhaustive representation of the total pharmacy workforce.

89. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>; Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, “Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics: Tables,” 2018–2024, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>.

TABLE 34: NUMBER OF ACTIVE MONTANA LICENSES FOR PHARMACY PROFESSIONALS⁹⁰

Profession	Active Montana Licenses
Certified Pharmacy Technicians License	1,734
Pharmacists	2,454

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

Educational opportunities for Pharmacy careers in Montana exist at the certificate and doctorate level. Montana institutions offer these programs to ensure a local pipeline of both highly educated clinical Pharmacists and skilled Pharmacy Technicians.

TABLE 35: EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS IN MONTANA FOR PHARMACY PROFESSIONS⁹¹

Academic Program	Degree or Certificate	College or University
Pharmacy (PharmD)	Graduate	University of Montana
Pharmacy Technicians	Certificate	Bitterroot College, Helena College, UM Western, University of Providence

RELEVANT INSIGHT: PHARMACY

INCREASING CAPACITY

The University of Montana (UM) is actively engaged in developing and streamlining educational pathways to build the state’s pharmacy workforce, focusing on both future Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians. To ensure a continuous pipeline of highly qualified licensed Pharmacists, the University of Montana has established the GrizRX Assurance Program. This supportive program is open to high school seniors interested in UM’s Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) program, allowing students to complete their required pre-pharmacy undergraduate courses while benefiting from mentorship and support provided directly by the Skaggs School of Pharmacy. Students who successfully complete the GrizRX program are guaranteed 10 reserved seats in the competitive UM Doctor of Pharmacy program, providing a clear and supported path to professional licensure.⁹²

The University of Montana, through the Office of Health Research and Partnerships, also offers a Pharmacy Technician Apprenticeship Program to develop this technical workforce. This program provides a dynamic opportunity for individuals aspiring to enter the pharmaceutical field as certified Pharmacy Technicians, offering a structured curriculum that combines 400 hours of online instruction with practical, on-the-job experience. Apprentices gain knowledge and skills in key areas, including medication dispensing, inventory management, customer service, and pharmaceutical regulations, applying their learning in real-world pharmacy settings under the guidance of experienced professionals.⁹³

90. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “eBiz License Search”, accessed September 16, 2025, <https://ebizws.mt.gov/PUBLICPORTAL/searchform?mylist=licenses>

91. Montana Office of Rural Health & Area Health Education Center, Montana State University, “Pathways to Health Careers,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/pathways>.

92. “GrizRX Assurance Program- Pharmacy School, University of Montana, <https://www.umt.edu/academics/programs/grizrx-pre-pharmacy/>

93. Office of Health Research and Partnerships. University of Montana. https://www.umt.edu/health-research-partnership/workforce_development/

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

Physician Assistants (PA) deliver a broad range of medical and surgical services to diverse populations in rural and urban settings. They are health professionals who practice medicine as members of a team. As part of their comprehensive responsibilities, PAs conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, counsel on preventive health care, assist in surgery, and prescribe medications.⁹⁴ They are certified by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) and are also state-licensed. In 2021, the American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA) adopted “physician associate” as the profession’s official title. Both physician assistant and physician associate continue to be used across healthcare and education.

WORKFORCE DATA: PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

This section provides key workforce data, including current employment levels, future projections, and compensation, for a selection of Physician Assistants in Montana. A detailed description of the specific professionals listed here can be found in the document glossary.

Table 36 and Figure 23 highlight the following metrics for the selected professions: Current Employment (estimated number of workers in the state), Employment Projection (the projected employment figures for the year 2034, indicating expected job growth or decline), and Mean Annual Wage (the average annual wage earned by professionals in the state).

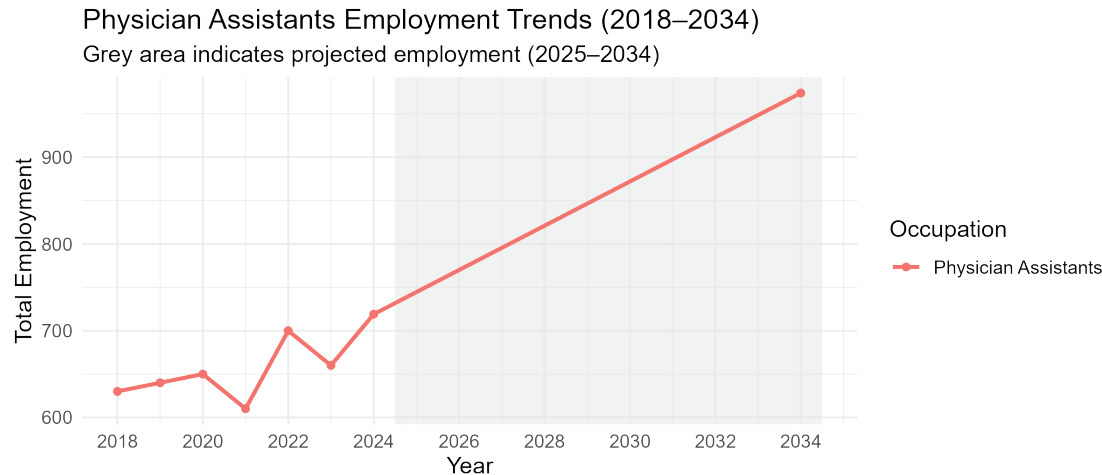
TABLE 36: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE DATA FOR PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS⁹⁵

Physician Assistants		
Job Title	Employment Projection	Mean Annual Wage
Physician Assistants	719	974 132,220

94. Montana Healthcare Workers Strategic Plan 2017

95. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>.

FIGURE 23: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT TREND DATA FOR PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS⁹⁶



LICENSING AND EDUCATION: PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

Physician Assistants complete an extensive educational path that begins with a bachelor’s degree and concludes with graduation from an accredited PA program.

LICENSING INFORMATION

Physician Assistant professionals in Montana must meet specific educational and competency requirements established by the Montana Board of Medical Examiners to obtain and maintain authorization to practice. These requirements dictate the necessary certification, registration, and licensure standards.

Physician Assistants are required to graduate from a PA program accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). Following graduation, candidates must pass the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE), administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA).

Licensure standards in Montana were notably updated by House Bill 313 in 2023. Under this legislation, PAs with fewer than 8,000 hours of postgraduate clinical experience must practice under a collaborative agreement with a physician or an experienced PA. Once a practitioner surpasses 8,000 hours of clinical experience, they are exempt from the mandatory collaborative agreement requirement, allowing for a transition toward independent practice while remaining integrated within the healthcare team.

Table 37 highlights the number of current active licenses in Montana for Physician Assistants.

96. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>; Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, “Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics: Tables,” 2018–2024, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>.

TABLE 37: NUMBER OF ACTIVE MONTANA LICENSES FOR PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS⁹⁷

Profession	Active Montana Licenses
Physician Assistants	1,589

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

Educational opportunities for Physician Assistant careers in Montana are currently available at the graduate level. Table 38 highlights the educational pathways available in Montana.

TABLE 38: EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS IN MONTANA FOR PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS⁹⁸

Academic Program	Degree or Certificate	College or University
Physician Assistant/ Associate	Graduate	Rocky Mountain College, University of Montana (Starting August 2026)

RELEVANT INSIGHT: PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

ADDING HEALTHCARE CAPACITY

Montana is actively expanding its healthcare capacity through the planned development of additional Physician Assistant (PA) programs. In addition to the established program at Rocky Mountain College, the newly accredited PA program at the University of Montana, and the developing program at Carroll College, pending accreditation in 2028, are all designed to bolster the state’s workforce. The University of Montana anticipates welcoming its inaugural cohort in the fall of 2026, while Carroll College plans to follow with its first cohort in 2028 pending accreditation.

Additionally, Montana recently joined the PA Licensure Compact with the passage of HB 183, signed into law on April 3. According to the American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA), this compact allows qualified PAs to apply for a single compact privilege that enables them to practice in any participating state.⁹⁹ By streamlining the licensing process and eliminating the need for multiple state-specific licenses, this legislation makes it significantly easier for PAs to relocate to or serve patients in underserved areas throughout Montana.

97. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “eBiz License Search”, accessed September 16, 2025, <https://ebizws.mt.gov/PUBLICPORTAL/searchform?mylist=licenses>
98. Montana Office of Rural Health & Area Health Education Center, Montana State University, “Pathways to Health Careers,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/pathways>.
99. AAPA, “PA Compact Update: Montana Joins PA Licensure Compact with Passage of HB 183,” April 10, 2025, <https://www.aapa.org/news-central/2025/04/pa-compact-update-montana-joins-pa-licensure-compact-with-passage-of-hb-183/.P>

PHYSICIANS

Within the profession of physicians, there are three medical education pathways available for physicians, Doctor of Osteopathy (DO), Doctor of Medicine (MD), and Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (DPM). However, following completion of their formal education, all physicians go on to complete residency programs and pass licensing exams to practice medicine. In the workforce data, the profession of physicians does not differentiate or includes the distinction between MDs or DOs in the data.

Doctor of Medicine (or MDs) graduate from an allopathic medical school. The training model emphasizes a disease-focused training, with emphasis on evidenced based interventions and treatment protocols. Schools are often based or affiliated with an academic medical center.¹⁰⁰

Doctor of Osteopathic medicine is a graduate from an osteopathic medical school. One difference in schooling is that osteopathic medical schools provide training for their students to use manual medicine as part of treatment. This could include hands-on work with joints, muscles, or tissues.¹⁰¹ Additionally, DOs generally take a holistic approach to treating patients, versus addressing specific problems. When possible, DOs will look for a less invasive option first but are able to prescribe medication and recommend surgery when needed.¹⁰²

According to the American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine, a “podiatrist is a Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (DPM), known also as a podiatric physician or surgeon, qualified by their education and training to diagnose and treat conditions affecting the foot, ankle and related structures of the leg.”¹⁰³

WORKFORCE DATA: PHYSICIANS

This section provides key workforce data, including current employment levels, future projections, and compensation, for a selection of physician professions in Montana. It is important to note that this is a highlighted list and not an exhaustive compilation of all physician professions. Detailed descriptions of the specific professionals listed here can be found in the document glossary.

Table 39 and Figure 24 highlight the following metrics for the selected professions: Current Employment (estimated number of workers in the state), Employment Projection (the projected employment figures for the year 2034, indicating expected job growth or decline), and Mean Annual Wage (the average annual wage earned by professionals in the state).

100. University of Montana, “Allopathic Medicine,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://www.umt.edu/pre-medical-sciences/career-options/allopathic-medicine.php>.

101. Mayo Clinic, “Healthy Lifestyle: Osteopathic Medicine,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/expert-answers/osteopathic-medicine/faq-20058168>.

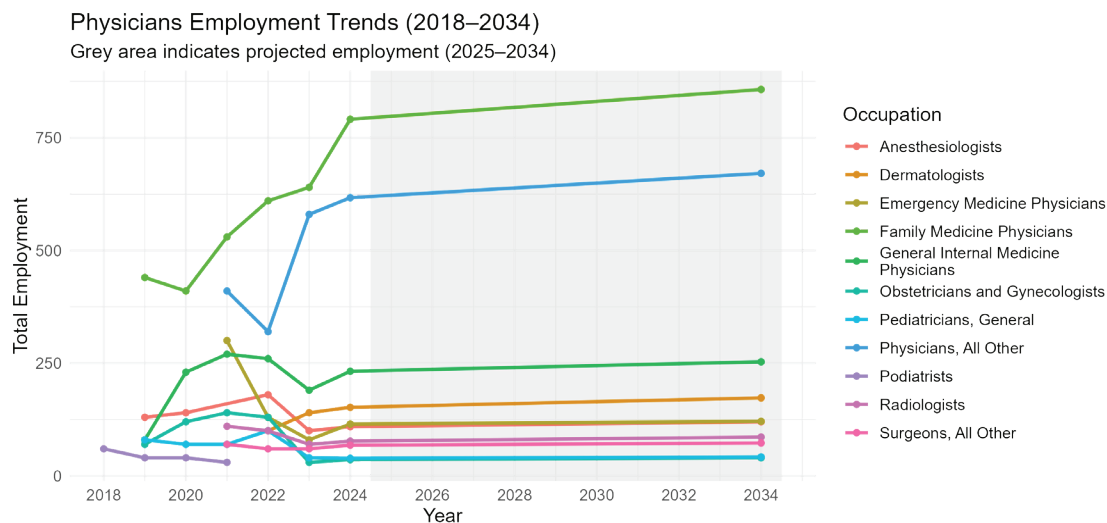
102. Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine, “Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine Program,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://tourocom.touro.edu/do/>.

103. American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine, “Doctor of Podiatric Medicine,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://aacpm.org/becoming-a-podiatric-physician/>.

TABLE 39: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE TRENDS FOR PHYSICIANS¹⁰⁴

Physicians		
Job Title	Employment Projection	Mean Annual Wage
Anesthesiologists	109	120 459,360
Dermatologists	152	173 358,880
Emergency Medicine Physicians	115	121 -
Family Medicine Physicians	791	857 275,990
General Internal Medicine Physicians	232	253 223,380
Obstetricians and Gynecologists	36	40 -
Pediatricians, General	39	42 -
Physicians, All Other	617	671 -
Radiologists	77	86 336,800
Surgeons, All Other	68	73 -

FIGURE 24: MONTANA EMPLOYMENT TRENDS FOR PHYSICIAN EMPLOYMENT¹⁰⁵



104. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>.

105. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Job Projections” (Microsoft Excel file, 2024–2034), accessed April 13, 2026, <https://lmi.mt.gov/>; Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, “Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics: Tables,” 2018–2024, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>.

LICENSING AND EDUCATION: PHYSICIANS

Physician professionals complete an extensive educational path that begins with a bachelor’s degree and concludes with a doctoral degree. Following medical school, physicians must also complete a multi-year residency program to gain specialized clinical training.

LICENSING INFORMATION

Physician professionals in Montana must meet specific educational and competency requirements established by the Montana Board of Medical Examiners to obtain and maintain authorization to practice. These requirements dictate the necessary certification, registration, and licensure standards for medical doctors and doctors of osteopathy.

Physicians are required to graduate from an accredited medical or podiatry school and successfully complete an approved residency program for initial licensure. Candidates must also pass a multi-part national examination sequence: the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) for MDs, the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination (COMLEX-USA) for DOs, or the American Podiatric Medical Licensing Examination (APMLE) for podiatrists. These exams evaluate the practitioner’s ability to apply medical knowledge and principles for safe and effective patient care.

Table 40 highlights the number of current active licenses in Montana for physicians.

TABLE 40: PHYSICIAN PROFESSIONS THAT HOLD ACTIVE MT LICENSES¹⁰⁶

Profession	Active Montana Licenses
Physician License (MDs and DOs)	8,629
Podiatrist License	73

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

TABLE 41: EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS FOR PHYSICIAN PROFESSIONS¹⁰⁷

Academic Program	Degree or Certificate	College or University
Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO)	Graduate	Touro College, Rocky Vista University
Doctor of Medicine (MD)	Graduate	Montana WWAMI (partnership between Montana State University and University of Washington)

106. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “eBiz License Search”, accessed September 16, 2025, <https://ebizws.mt.gov/PUBLICPORTAL/searchform?mylist=licenses>

107. Montana Office of Rural Health & Area Health Education Center, Montana State University, “Pathways to Health Careers,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/pathways>

The following table (Table 42) provides information about residency programs offered in Montana. Once medical students have completed their medical education, they are required to complete a residency.

TABLE 42: RESIDENCY PROGRAMS IN MONTANA¹⁰⁸

Program	Locations	Number of Residents
Montana Family Medicine Residency (RiverStone Health)	Billings, MT	24 residents/ 8 per class
Family Residency of Western Montana (University of Montana)	Missoula, MT and Kalispell, MT	30 residents/ 10 per class
Billings Clinic Internal Medicine Residency	Billings, MT	24 residents/ 8 per class
Benefis Internal Medicine Residency ¹⁰⁹	Great Falls, MT	30 residents/ 10 per class
Billings Clinic Psychiatry Residency	Billings, MT	12 residents/ 3 per class
Miles City Frontier Training Program	Year 1: RiverStone Health - Billings, MT Years 2-3: Holy Rosary Healthcare - Miles City, MT	6 residents/ 2 per class

RELEVANT INSIGHT: PHYSICIANS

ADDING HEALTHCARE CAPACITY

In the past five years, Montana has implemented several strategic initiatives to increase physician capacity, including the expansion of two new Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) programs within the state. Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine opened its first Montana campus in Great Falls in 2023, welcoming an initial cohort of 109 students and subsequently increasing its second-year enrollment to 125 students. Rocky Vista University established a campus in Billings in 2023, where the student body has seen significant growth, doubling from an inaugural class of 80 students to 160 students by 2025.

Beyond undergraduate medical education, Montana has also focused on expanding its graduate medical education through additional residency training programs. In 2025, Benefis Health System in Great Falls launched a new Internal Medicine residency program, welcoming its first class of 10 residents. The Miles City Frontier Training Program launched in 2026 in partnership with the Montana Family Medicine Residency in Billings. Two residents per year will participate spending their intern year in Billings and then years 2 and 3 in Miles City. The goal is to train Family Medicine physicians to be able to practice in rural and frontier settings. These efforts to build a local physician pipeline are important to long-term retention, as practitioners who complete both their medical education and residency within the state are statistically much more likely to remain in Montana to serve its rural and frontier communities.

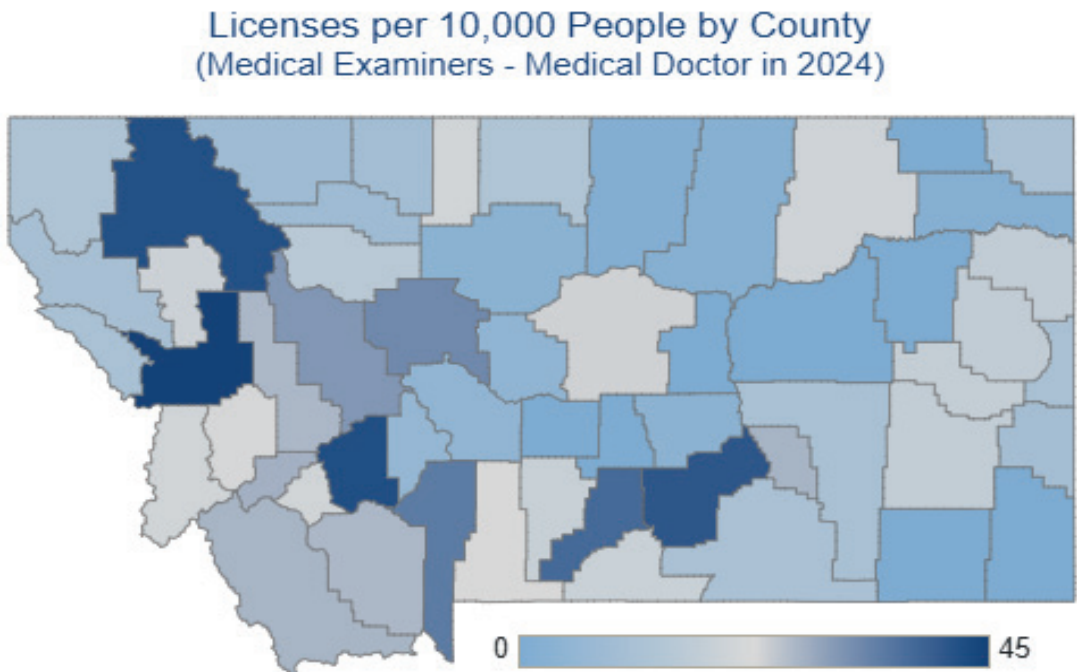
108. Graduate Medical Education Council, Montana State University, “Workforce Development,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/workforce-development/gmecouncil>.

109. Benefis Health System, “Internal Medicine Residency,” accessed April 13, 2026, <https://www.benefis.org/residencies-clinical-development/internal-medicine-residency/program-residents>.

PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE

Physicians were identified in the 2025 Montana Healthcare Workforce Assessment as both an unmet need and a hard-to-fill position.¹¹⁰ The statewide data shows a ratio of 74 physicians per 10,000 residents across 8,363 total active licenses. Figure 25 shows the distribution of physicians per 10,000 residents by county of residence. The map shows higher concentrations of physicians in Western and Southcentral Montana, with lower concentrations shown across Northeastern and Eastern regions of the state. The patterns observed in Figure 23 reflect the residential distribution of physicians and do not directly indicate where providers practice or where services are delivered. As such, this map should not be interpreted as a direct measure of access, especially in rural areas where providers may practice across county boundaries. However, Figure 25 is useful in highlighting regions throughout the state with lower concentrations of physicians, which may still suggest less access to care in the Northeastern and Eastern regions of Montana.

FIGURE 25: LICENSES PER 10,000 PEOPLE BY COUNTY¹¹¹

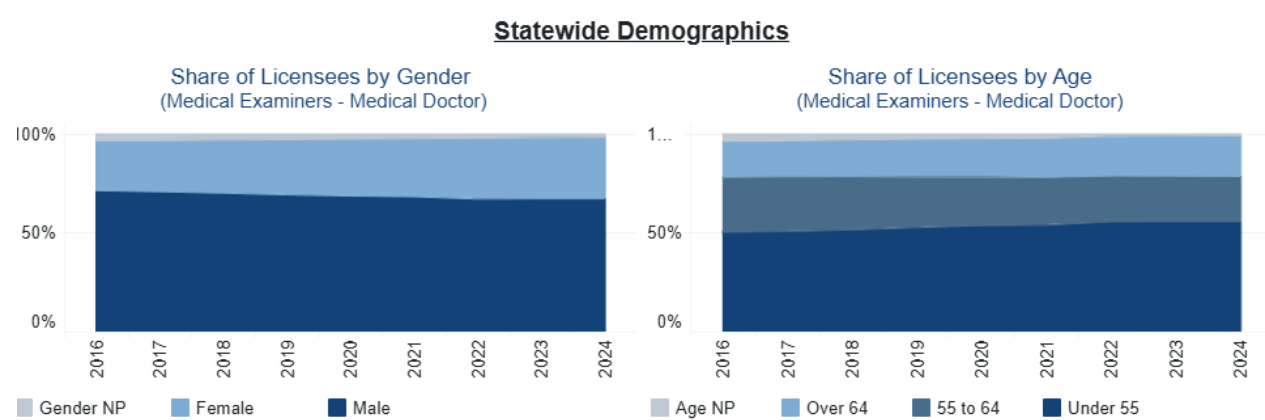


110. JG Research and Evaluation, “Montana Healthcare Workforce Assessment,” accessed December 9, 2025, <https://healthinfo.montana.edu/workforce-development/mhwac/plan-docs/Montana%20Healthcare%20Workforce%20Assessment.pdf>

111. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Occupational Licensing Data Dashboard,” accessed September 17, 2025, <https://dli.mt.gov/data-dashboards/Occupational-Licensing>

Figure 26 below shows the statewide demographics of physicians by gender and age.

FIGURE 26: STATEWIDE DEMOGRAPHICS¹¹²



112. Montana Department of Labor & Industry, “Occupational Licensing Data Dashboard,” accessed September 17, 2025, <https://dli.mt.gov/data-dashboards/Occupational-Licensing>

GLOSSARY

Definitions of professions were identified using the US Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupation Outlook Handbook.¹¹³

- **Acupuncturists** diagnose, treat, and prevent disorders by stimulating specific acupuncture points within the body using acupuncture needles. May also use cups, nutritional supplements, therapeutic massage, acupressure, and other alternative health therapies.
- **Athletic trainers** specialize in preventing, diagnosing, and treating muscle and bone injuries and illnesses.
- **Audiologists** diagnose, manage, and treat patients who have hearing, balance, or related problems.
- **Cardiologists** diagnose, treat, manage, and prevent diseases or conditions of the cardiovascular system.
- **Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians** conduct tests on pulmonary or cardiovascular systems of patients for diagnostic, therapeutic, or research purposes.
- **Chiropractors** assess, treat, and care for patients by manipulating the spine and musculoskeletal system.
- **Clinical and counseling psychologists** assess, diagnose, and treat mental and emotional disorders of individuals through observation, interview, and psychological tests.
- **Clinical laboratory technologists and technicians** perform medical laboratory tests for the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disease
- **Community and social service specialists** promote wellness to help people cope with or overcome challenges.
- **Community health workers** promote wellness by helping people adopt healthy behaviors. They implement programs and advocate for people who may have limited access to health resources and social services.
- **Data scientists** use analytical tools and techniques to extract meaningful insight from data.
- **Dental assistants** provide patient care, take x rays, keep records, and schedule appointments.
- **Dental hygienists** examine patients for signs of oral diseases, such as gingivitis, and provide preventive care, including oral hygiene.
- **Dental laboratory technicians and medical appliance technicians** make or repair dentures, eyeglasses, prosthetics, and related products.
- **Dentists** diagnose and treat problems with patients' teeth, gums, and related parts of the mouth.
- **Dermatologists** diagnose and treat diseases relating to the skin, hair, and nails.
- **Diagnostic medical sonographers** operate ultrasound equipment to create images of the inside of the body.
- **Dietetic technicians** assist in the provision of food service and nutritional programs, under the supervision of a dietitian.

113. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, "Occupational Outlook Handbook," accessed April 13, 2026, <https://www.bls.gov/ooh>.

- **Dietitians and nutritionists** plan and conduct food services or nutritional programs to help people lead healthy lives.
- **Emergency Management Directors** prepare plans and procedures for responding to natural disasters or other emergencies. They also help lead the response during and after emergencies.
- **Emergency medicine physicians** make immediate medical decisions and act to prevent death or further disability. Provide immediate recognition, evaluation, care, stabilization, and disposition of patients.
- **Emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and paramedics** assess injuries and illnesses, provide emergency medical care, and may transport patients to medical facilities.
- **Environmental Science and Protection Technicians**, including health perform laboratory and field tests to monitor the environment and investigate sources of pollution, including those that affect health, under the direction of an environmental scientist, engineer, or other specialist. May collect samples of gases, soil, water, and other materials for testing.
- **Environmental Scientists and Specialist**, including health conduct research or perform investigation for the purpose of identifying, abating, or eliminating sources of pollutants or hazards that affect either the environment or public health. Using knowledge of various scientific disciplines, may collect, synthesize, study, report, and recommend action based on data derived from measurements or observations of air, food, soil, water, and other sources.
- **Epidemiologists** investigate and describe the determinants and distribution of disease, disability, or health outcomes. May develop the means for prevention and control
- **Exercise physiologists** develop fitness and exercise programs to help people improve their health
- **Family medicine physicians** diagnose, treat, and provide preventive care to individuals and families across the lifespan. May refer patients to specialists when needed for further diagnosis or treatment.
- **Health Education Specialists** develop programs to teach people about conditions affecting well-being.
- **Health information technologists and medical registrars** advise organizations on computerized healthcare systems and analyze clinical data.
- **Home health and personal care aides** monitor the condition of people with disabilities or chronic illnesses and help them with daily living activities.
- **Internists** diagnose and provide nonsurgical treatment for a wide range of diseases and injuries of internal organ systems. Provide care mainly for adults and adolescents and are based primarily in an outpatient care setting.
- **Licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and licensed vocational nurses (LVNs)** provide basic medical care.
- **Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists** operate Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scanners.
- **Marriage and family therapists** diagnose and treat cognitive, behavioral, or similar disorders in the context of couples and other relationships.
- **Medical and health services managers** plan, direct, and coordinate the business activities of healthcare providers.

- **Medical assistants** complete administrative and clinical tasks, such as scheduling appointments and taking patients' vital signs.
- **Medical equipment preparers** prepare, sterilize, install, or clean laboratory or healthcare equipment. May perform routine laboratory tasks and operate or inspect equipment.
- **Medical records specialists** compile, process, and maintain patient files.
- **Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants** perform secretarial duties using specific knowledge of medical terminology and hospital, clinic, or laboratory procedures. Duties may include scheduling appointments, billing patients, and compiling and recording medical charts, reports, and correspondence.
- **Medical transcriptionists** use electronic devices to convert voice recordings from physicians and other healthcare workers into formal reports.
- **Neurologists** diagnose, manage, and treat disorders and diseases of the brain, spinal cord, and peripheral nerves, with a primarily nonsurgical focus.
- **Nuclear medicine technologists** prepare and administer radioactive drugs for imaging or treatment.
- **Nurse anesthetists, nurse midwives, and nurse practitioners** coordinate patient care and may provide primary and specialty healthcare.
- **Nurse midwives** diagnose and coordinate all aspects of the birthing process, either independently or as part of a healthcare team. Must have specialized, graduate nursing education.
- **Nursing assistants** provide basic care and help patients with daily living activities.
- **Obstetricians and gynecologists** provide medical care related to pregnancy or childbirth. Diagnose, treat, and help prevent diseases of women, particularly those affecting the reproductive system. May also provide general care to women. May perform both medical and gynecological surgery functions.
- **Occupational health and safety specialists and technicians** collect data on, analyze, and design improvements to work environments and procedures.
- **Occupational therapists** evaluate and treat people who have injuries, illnesses, or disabilities to help them with vocational, daily living, and other skills that promote independence.
- **Occupational therapy assistants and aides** help occupational therapists provide treatments and procedures to clients, or they do routine tasks such as preparing treatment rooms.
- **Ophthalmic Medical Technicians** assist ophthalmologists by performing ophthalmic clinical functions. May administer eye exams, administer eye medications, and instruct the patient in care and use of corrective lenses.
- **Ophthalmologists** diagnose and perform surgery to treat and help prevent disorders and diseases of the eye. May also provide vision services for treatment including glasses and contacts.
- **Opticians, Dispensing** design, measure, fit, and adapt lenses and frames for clients according to written optical prescription or specification.
- **Optometrists** diagnose, manage, and treat conditions and diseases of the human eye and visual system, including examining eyes and prescribing corrective lenses.

- **Oral and maxillofacial surgeons** perform surgery and related procedures on the hard and soft tissues of the oral and maxillofacial regions to treat diseases, injuries, or defects. May diagnose problems of the oral and maxillofacial regions. May perform surgery to improve function or appearance.
- **Orthodontists** examine, diagnose, and treat dental malocclusions and oral cavity anomalies. Design and fabricate appliances to realign teeth and jaws to produce and maintain normal function and to improve appearance.
- **Orthopedic surgeons** diagnose and perform surgery to treat and prevent rheumatic and other diseases in the musculoskeletal system.
- **Pediatric surgeons** diagnose and perform surgery to treat fetal abnormalities and birth defects, diseases, and injuries in fetuses, premature and newborn infants, children, and adolescents. Includes all pediatric surgical specialties and subspecialties.
- **Pediatricians** diagnose, treat, and help prevent diseases and injuries in children. May refer patients to specialists for further diagnosis or treatment, as needed.
- **Peer support specialists** are mental health workers who have had experience with a psychiatric disorder—such as PTSD, depression, or addiction—and have been trained to counsel or assist others with that condition. Familiar with the disorder themselves, these specialists act as role models for clients facing similar difficulties.
- **Pharmacists** dispense prescription medications and provide information to patients about the drugs and their use.
- **Pharmacy aides** record drugs delivered to the pharmacy, store incoming merchandise, and inform the supervisor of stock needs.
- **Pharmacy technicians** help pharmacists dispense prescription medication to customers or health professionals.
- **Phlebotomists** draw blood for tests, transfusions, research, or blood donations.
- **Physical therapist assistants and aides** are supervised by physical therapists to help patients regain movement and manage pain after injuries and illnesses.
- **Physical therapists** help injured or ill people improve movement and manage pain.
- **Physician assistants** examine, diagnose, and treat patients under the supervision of a physician.
- **Physicians and surgeons** diagnose and treat injuries or illnesses and address health maintenance.
- **Podiatrists** provide medical and surgical care for people with foot, ankle, and lower leg problems.
- **Prosthodontists** diagnose, treat, rehabilitate, design, and fit prostheses that maintain oral function, health, and appearance for patients with clinical conditions associated with teeth, oral and maxillofacial tissues, or the jaw.
- **Psychiatrists** diagnose, treat, and help prevent mental disorders.
- **Psychiatric technicians and aides** care for people who have mental conditions or developmental disabilities.
- **Psychologists** study cognitive, emotional, and social processes and behavior by observing, interpreting, and recording how people relate to one another and to their environments.
- **Public Relations Specialists** create and maintain a positive public image for the clients they represent.

- **Radiation therapists** administer doses of radiation to patients who have cancer or other serious diseases.
- **Radiologists** diagnose and treat diseases and injuries using medical imaging techniques, such as x rays, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), nuclear medicine, and ultrasounds. May perform minimally invasive medical procedures and tests.
- **Recreational therapists** plan, direct, and coordinate recreation-based medical treatment programs for people with disabilities, injuries, or illnesses.
- **Registered nurses (RNs)** provide and coordinate patient care and educate patients and the public about various health conditions.
- **Rehabilitation counselors** work with clients to overcome or manage the personal, social, or psychological effects of disabilities on employment or independent living.
- **Respiratory therapists** care for patients who have trouble breathing, for example, because of chronic conditions such as asthma.
- **School counselors** help students develop academic and social skills.
- **Social and community service managers** coordinate and supervise programs and organizations that support public well-being.
- **Social workers** help people prevent and cope with problems in their everyday lives.
- **Speech-language pathologists** assess and treat people who have communication disorders.
- **Substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors** advise people on a range of issues, such as those relating to alcoholism, addictions, or depression.
- **Surgical assistants and technologists** help with surgical operations.
- **Training and Development Specialists** plan and administer programs that improve the skills and knowledge of their employees.

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