

# HEALTH CARE

## MIDDLE-SKILL JOBS IN THE SAN DIEGO-IMPERIAL REGION



# Health Care

This summary highlights key points from the Health Care section a broader study, *Sector Analysis: Demand and Supply of Middle-Skill Jobs in the Priority & Emerging Sectors*. The Health Care sector is one of the largest employers in California, employing nearly 1.6 million professionals across a wide range of well-paying career opportunities. Surprisingly, doctors and nurses comprise less than 40% of health professionals, while allied health professionals make up an estimated 60% of the national Health Care workforce. While many of the careers in this sector require advanced-level preparation, there are plenty of options available for students of various aptitudes, interests, abilities, and degree levels. Because almost all health professions are experiencing shortages, careers in this sector offer promising futures. Caring students looking for a “recession-proof” career will want to explore job opportunities in Health Care.

## Sector Overview



**136,032**  
people employed



**15% (19,845)**  
5-year projected job growth



**7,920**  
businesses



**9%**  
of the sector's  
employment in California



**\$ 74,288**  
average earnings  
per job



**9%**  
of the sector's  
businesses in California

The Health Care sector accounts for 136,032 jobs in the San Diego-Imperial region and 9% of all Health Care jobs in California. There are approximately 7,920 establishments in the region, making up 9% of California's Health Care businesses. This sector is projected to grow 15% (or 19,845 jobs) in the next five years in the San Diego-Imperial region. The average earnings per Health Care job are \$74,288.<sup>1</sup>

## Sample of Local Employers and Resources



UC San Diego Health System

Sharp Health System

St. Paul Senior Services

AccentCare

Rady Children's Hospital

Scripps Health System

Family Health Centers of San Diego

Kaiser Permanente

Seaport Home Health & Hospice

Mental Health Systems

El Centro Regional Medical Center

<sup>1</sup>Emsi. Class of Worker: QCEW + Non-QCEW + Self-Employed. Timeframe: 2018-2023. Data set 2019.01.

# Middle-Skill Jobs

Middle-skill jobs are occupations that community college students would be best prepared for after obtaining a certificate or degree. The top middle-skill jobs for the Health Care sector are included below.

## Middle-Skill Jobs Attainable with a Community College Education, San Diego-Imperial Region (2018-2023)<sup>2</sup>

Occupational Title	Annual Job Openings Demand	Entry-Level <sup>3</sup> Hourly Earnings	Median Hourly Earnings
Registered Nurses	1,822	\$37.32	\$45.00
Nursing Assistants*	1,425	\$12.95	\$14.71
Medical Assistants	1,330	\$15.19	\$17.33
Medical Secretaries	1,099	\$15.45	\$18.90
Home Health Aides*	863	\$11.47	\$13.03
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	630	\$21.89	\$25.89
Dental Assistants	616	\$15.62	\$17.67
Massage Therapists*	361	\$11.66	\$13.94
Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians	318	\$17.34	\$25.91
Pharmacy Technicians	294	\$14.73	\$17.74
Dental Hygienists	245	\$41.36	\$45.21
Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	238	\$17.40	\$20.42
Phlebotomists	176	\$17.41	\$20.71
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics <sup>4*</sup>	162	\$11.20	\$13.45
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	161	\$16.79	\$21.55
Radiologic Technologists	122	\$28.10	\$37.33
Physical Therapist Assistants	113	\$21.73	\$26.96
Respiratory Therapists	110	\$32.69	\$38.06
Surgical Technologists	91	\$24.49	\$28.25
Community Health Workers	82	\$15.20	\$18.76
Medical Equipment Preparers	72	\$16.53	\$20.35
Dental Laboratory Technicians	71	\$15.69	\$20.47
Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	70	\$16.77	\$20.74
Occupational Therapy Assistants	55	\$21.34	\$29.79
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	49	\$40.48	\$45.72
Opticians, Dispensing	47	\$15.92	\$18.77
Dietetic Technicians*	37	\$11.70	\$13.47
Ophthalmic Medical Technicians	16	\$17.49	\$21.23

\*These occupations have median hourly earnings below the Self-Sufficiency Standard.

<sup>2</sup> Emsi. Class of Worker: QCEW + Non-QCEW + Self-Employed. Timeframe: 2018-2023. Data set 2019.01.

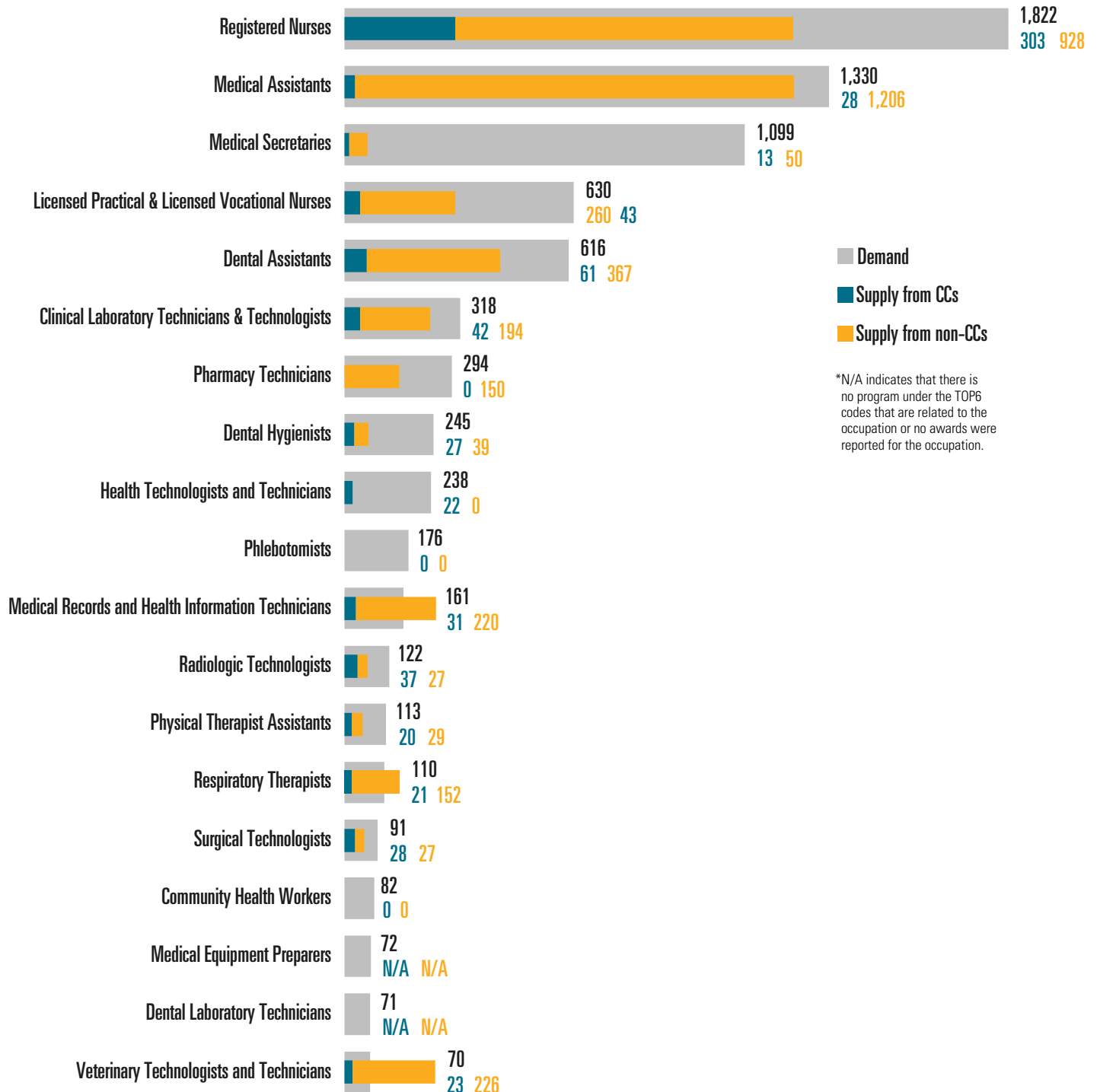
<sup>3</sup> Individuals at the 25th percentile earn entry-level wages, while individuals at the median level earn median wages due to a more experience, more training, etc.

<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system combines "Emergency Medical Technicians" and "Paramedics" into one code; however, EMTs generally earn less than Paramedics and combining the two professions may not accurately reflect their wages. The SOC coding system will split this occupation into two separate and distinct codes in a future date, leading to a more accurate assessment of data for EMTs from Paramedics.

# Labor Market Demand, Program Supply, and Supply Gaps

Top middle-skill jobs are defined as occupations with the most labor market demand, stable employment growth, and entry-level wages at or above the Self-Sufficiency Standard. Comparing labor market demand with program supply suggests that the **top middle-skill jobs in this sector have supply gaps in the San Diego-Imperial region**. Labor market demand is defined as the number of average annual job openings per year that employers expect to fill for a particular occupation. Program supply is the number of awards (e.g., degrees, certificates) from community colleges and other training providers.

## Health Care Top Middle-Skill Jobs: Demand vs. Supply, San Diego-Imperial Region



<sup>9</sup> The Self-Sufficiency Standard is the hourly wage that a single adult needs to earn to meet basic needs in San Diego County or Imperial County. [selfsufficiency.org](https://selfsufficiency.org). The Self-Sufficiency Standard for a single adult in San Diego County is \$15.99.

# Key Findings and Recommendations

Between July and December 2018, industry experts and the community colleges in the San Diego-Imperial region met and reviewed labor market demand and program supply for middle-skill jobs in the Priority and Emerging Sectors. The objectives of the meetings were to identify labor market supply gaps in middle-skill jobs; understand where programs exist or do not exist to fill in the supply gaps; and discuss how the region's community colleges could close the supply gaps. The following summarizes the findings and recommendations for the Health Care sector.

**1 Outcomes data (e.g., program supply numbers) is limited to what is reported:** The labor market data does not disaggregate the number of “completers” (i.e., students who complete a program) from the number of completers who are also licensed to practice (i.e., students who complete a program and pass the licensing exam). Additionally, community colleges vary in their reporting practices for outcomes data. For example, some colleges report program outcomes to the state licensing board, but not to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO).<sup>6</sup>

To better understand the completion (supply) numbers in Health Care programs, the DSN should collaborate with the region's community colleges to develop a tracking mechanism that disaggregates the number of completers who pass the licensing examinations from those who simply complete the program. This will help develop a more robust analysis of the demand, supply, and supply gaps for this sector.<sup>7</sup>

**2 Health Care employers report having difficulty hiring qualified candidates who have strong soft skills and are as diverse as their client base:** More than 70% of the Health Care workforce are female, compared to 50% in the general population. Employers prefer candidates with solid soft skills (e.g., teamwork, customer service), basic computer skills (e.g., data entry, record keeping), and job-readiness skills (e.g., workplace etiquette).<sup>8</sup>

The DSN should work with the community colleges to ensure that their curricula include soft, computer, job-readiness skills. The Health Workforce Initiative developed “Hi-Touch Health Care: The Six Critical Soft Skills” and an assessment to determine which module is most appropriate for a program to address employers' need for soft skills.<sup>9</sup>

**3 Program growth is limited because of equipment, space, and instructors:** Community college faculty reported that Health Care programs are at capacity and have long wait lists. Additionally, finding qualified instructors is challenging due to external accreditation requirements. Regulatory agencies require individuals to meet strenuous minimum qualifications to become instructors, and programs to meet specific teacher-to-student ratios, making programs expensive to implement.

To increase program capacity, the community colleges should review current offerings and determine if the Health Care programs are a priority for their future goals. If so, such programs could benefit from new and/or updated equipment funded by local SWP resources. Funding faculty externships could also ensure that curriculum is up-to-date and current with industry trends.

**4 Supply gaps persist in top Health Care jobs due to limited practicum and clinical placement opportunities:** Finding suitable work experience for students is significantly challenging because of the number of public and private institutions that compete for limited spaces.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, very few job openings are available for new graduates, which limits the region's ability to increase the supply of qualified workers. As a result, employers hire from outside San Diego County (e.g., traveling nurses) to fill the labor market demand.

To assist new graduates in obtaining the critical work experience required for Health Care employment, the community colleges should:

- Explore non-traditional training models when programs are at capacity. For example, simulation centers are used in various parts of the country to help students earn training or clinical hours. However, the region should keep in mind that simulation centers may be used for nursing programs, but not others; external accrediting agencies place limitations on what percent of training could be simulated.
- Work with employers to increase the number of externships between students and incumbents. Soon-to-retire Health Care workers have valuable experience that can be shared with new entrants into the field.
- Continue to host an allied health clinical placement solutions summit, which increases communication and awareness between industry and education. The summit allows educators and employers to discuss solutions and challenges to work experience requirements. For example, colleges have challenges with clinical placements; however, employers also have challenges in finding instructors for their own staff's continuing education

<sup>6</sup> California Community Colleges LaunchBoard. San Diego-Imperial. Health Credit and Non-Credit. 2016-17.

<sup>7</sup> Emsi. Class of Worker: QCEW + Non-QCEW + Self-Employed. Timeframe: 2018. Data set 2019.01.

<sup>8</sup> San Diego Workforce Partnership. Health Care. Labor Market Analysis. San Diego County. October 2014.

<sup>9</sup> ca-hwi.org/curriculum/soft-skills-training

<sup>10</sup> San Diego Workforce Partnership. Health Care. Labor Market Analysis. San Diego County. October 2014.

## Key Findings and Recommendations *(continued from inside)*

**5 Private training providers supply a significant number of “completers,” students who complete a related program for in-demand Health Care jobs:** Well-known, in-demand jobs such as Registered Nurses and Medical Assistants have several training providers in the San Diego-Imperial region. As a result, these top middle-skill jobs appear to have labor surpluses when program supply numbers from the community colleges and non-community colleges are combined.

To increase student awareness about the necessary requirements of Health Care occupations, the community colleges should market the value of their programs and how they are aligned with regulatory agencies’ requirements. Students should be informed that “fast-tracked” programs may not necessarily meet state licensing requirements.

To address the supply gaps of Health Care jobs that are not as well-known as occupations such as Registered Nurses, the community colleges could expand existing programs that train for occupations with small labor market demand, or create small cohort programs.

**6 Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) for the sector have not been validated by employers:** This brief examines job gaps, but does not explore the specific KSAs taught at the colleges and compare them to the labor market’s demand for Health Care KSAs.

To determine if the region’s community colleges are training for the right KSAs, the DSN should convene employers in a “regional advisory group” where employers can review program KSAs, provide feedback, and validate the KSAs’ current relevance and demand in the labor market

### Important Disclaimers

All representations included in this report have been produced from primary research and/or secondary review of publicly and/or privately available data and/or research reports. This study examines the most recent data available at the time of the analysis; however, data sets are updated regularly and may not be consistent with previous reports. Efforts have been made to qualify and validate the accuracy of the data and the report findings; however, neither the Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research (COE), COE host district, nor California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office are responsible for the applications or decisions made by individuals and/or organizations based on this study or its recommendations.



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