

Next-Act

Career Management & Transition Specialists

Thinking about a career change? Consider a Career in Healthcare
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Ancient Chinese wisdom postulates that for every crisis there is an opportunity. The healthcare crisis of our nation – and our area – is no exception. In fact, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics ranks the healthcare market as one of the top three growth industries in the US market. In our area alone, there are over 675 active healthcare job postings on the Internet, far more than many other types of position. Nor is this a passing trend. Forecasted to continue well into the century, the job opportunities range from traditional nursing or direct care (and yes, there is a severe shortage in direct care positions) to ancillary, related occupations.

Why the demand for workers?

The World Health Organization reports “chronic shortages” of healthcare workers in 57 countries, amounting to a deficit of nearly 4 million workers worldwide. And it’s no wonder. Look at the changing demographics of our own country. With the aging of the “baby boomer” generation comes an unprecedented demand for health services. But you can’t pin all the blame on the boomers. The simple fact is that we are living longer, thereby extending the demand for services into our later years. These factors will continue to drive the need for skilled healthcare workers and corresponding occupations, with the greatest increase expected to come in the gerontology and senior healthcare industries. Opportunities will abound.

Looking for long term job security? Consider nursing

Imagine a \$30,000 sign-on bonus to take a new job. Unheard of? In some areas, nurses are in such high demand that hospitals are scrambling to entice nursing professionals with signing bonuses and other attractive perks. The market is highly competitive, with each hospital “outbidding” the other to secure talent, often taking skilled people from each other. I know a qualified nursing professional who boasts that she has worked for every hospital in the area and has significantly increased her income each time she has switched jobs.

Of course, specialized training is required, but don’t let that scare you off. There are several two and four-year nursing education programs available in the area, many of which provide the opportunity to “work-and-learn”. That makes it is very easy to take a healthcare job while pursuing a professional degree.

There are also many fully-accredited online education programs that enable workers to return to college on a part-time basis. (Check out www.nrursingschools.com or www.onlinenursing.org). In many cases, the employer will reimburse you for taking the online programs so that you can work, learn and get paid for learning.

Not sure if healthcare is right for you? Volunteer!

If you are unsure if a healthcare career is right for you, consider volunteering. It could be in a hospital, a senior facility or perhaps with an organization or healthcare association that helps others. This is a very common way for someone to experience working in a new setting while helping others.

As a member of the Board of Directors for two healthcare related not-for-profit associations, I can assure you that the industry cherishes volunteers. With reduced funding for programs from State and Federal sources, many programs and services are simply cash-strapped and turn to

volunteers to help bridge the gap. At the same time, volunteers can pick up valuable skills while giving back to others.

How do you volunteer? It's simple. Most health care facilities have a volunteer department; just call and schedule a time to meet. But be clear about your goals: tell the volunteer coordinator what you want to accomplish and learn.

Other healthcare career opportunities

The growth in healthcare has spurred job growth in ancillary industries. Remember, healthcare is a business. As such, it relies on efficiency financially stability and a fully staffed work force to meet the needs of its clients. As a result, career opportunities exist in:

- **Healthcare Business Administration:** The business of healthcare needs competent managers and administrative personnel (i.e., accounting, human resources, facilities management & maintenance, etc.) to manage the business on a day-to-day basis.
- **Healthcare Marketing:** We have a choice today of where we can go to secure healthcare services. This has led to strong growth in healthcare marketing, as hospitals and healthcare providers compete to attract patients. Consider the amount of health care advertising you see today – it's generated by marketing. Positions in marketing, public relations and community outreach are available as well.
- **Development:** Reduced reimbursements for services from the government and insurance companies, a trend that will continue as healthcare grows, puts significant financial strains on hospitals and not-for-profit healthcare associations. People who can help balance the budget through development (i.e., fund raising) are in high demand. What is needed for success? A passion for what your organization does, a willingness to network and persistence, persistence, persistence!
- **Healthcare Related Sales:** Watch television for 30 minutes and you're guaranteed to see at least two-or three television advertisements for medications or other healthcare products and services. Behind the advertising are local sales representatives who call upon physicians and hospitals to buy their products. It is highly competitive, but very lucrative. In these positions, you try to educate physicians to write prescriptions for the pharmaceuticals you represent, to influence a hospital to add a drug to its pharmacy, or to introduce purchasing agents to a line of healthcare products.

Sales opportunities exist beyond products. They also include the growing senior services market. Assisted living facilities, long term care insurance and other ancillary products & services also present excellent career opportunities.

Sound interesting to you? What do you do next?

If a career in the lucrative healthcare industry appeals to you, there are three steps you can take – beginning now:

1. **Research & Learn:** In this article, you have been introduced to the idea of a career in healthcare. Your next step would be to continue your research. Discussions with people you know in the healthcare industry is a good start, as is surfing the web. A great place to check out is www.healthcarejob.org.
2. **Experience:** You may have heard in the past: *People fail not because they can't do the job but because the job doesn't "fit" them.* That's why it's critical to do your research and then experience what it's like to work in healthcare on a day-to-day basis. You will learn from talking to others, but that's not enough. This is where volunteering – spending time in a hospital or other healthcare provider setting - proves invaluable. You will know quickly if the "fit" is right for you.

3. Prepare & Communicate: When you have made the decision to pursue a career in healthcare, then it's time to prepare to land that new opportunity and enter into your new career.

Most likely, you will either be coming from another career or returning to the workforce. In any case, you will need to prepare a resume that highlights the qualities, skills and accomplishments that would be assets in your new career. This is critical, as the tired chronological resume that most people use (one that shows dates, titles and where you worked – otherwise known as a tombstone) would not work. You need to “sell” your skills, experience and accomplishments to the reader. Seek the help of a career professional if you don't feel comfortable selling yourself. You will also need a cover letter that explains what you seek and what you can contribute to the organization.

Dan Moran is President & Founder of Next-Act, a career management & transition firm located in Colonie. He specializes in helping people make career choices and seek new jobs. He also trains those starting a new business on how to get clients with the *Get Clients Now!* program. You can reach Dan at 641.8968 or dmoran@next-act.com.