

Jobs in HEALTH



career opportunities series



Cette publication peut aussi être disponible en français sous le titre:
Emplois dans les services de santé

Cover Photos

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JOBS IN HEALTH

INTRODUCTION

Health services in the Northwest Territories is an exciting and growing field of work. As long as the population and industrial development continue to grow, so will the demand for health services. This is especially true as our population ages.

Many NWT communities are isolated, and therefore, it is not possible to fly patients out, or doctors in, every time someone gets sick. There is a need for qualified health services staff to educate, comfort and treat people locally. By training Northerners to fill positions in all areas of health services, and by working together with communities to build on existing strengths and traditional knowledge, we will enhance quality care for a healthy population.

WHAT ARE HEALTH SERVICES?

Health services are services that are performed by health care professionals that include promoting, maintaining and restoring health. Health services cover a wide range of occupations from people who deliver health services to those who support the delivery of health services. Dentists, doctors, nurses, dieticians and therapists are all members of the health delivery team. Interpreters, clerks, technicians and assistants are needed to help the professionals get their job done. People who work in health services prevent sickness, provide high quality care, treat illness and educate people about health issues.

Some of the different areas in health services include:

MEDICAL

People who work in the medical field are responsible for diagnosing, treating and preventing disease or damage to the body and mind. Doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners are people who work in medicine.

DENTAL

The dental field looks after the health of the teeth, gums and mouth. Hygienists clean your teeth while dentists fill in cavities, repair and remove teeth and perform oral surgery. Dental therapists perform basic oral health services including fillings and extractions.

REHABILITATION

After an injury or illness, the road to recovery is sometimes slow. It can take months or years. Support is provided by physiotherapists, occupational therapists and counsellors who help people to get better and resume their lives.

PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

Often, illness, injury and loss of life can be avoided through safety promotion and education. Environmental health officers, community wellness co-ordinators and health promotion officers work to try to educate people and prevent illness and injury before it happens.

TELEHEALTH

Telehealth uses information and communication technologies such as phones and the Internet to deliver health services to communities.

OTHER FIELDS

There are also a number of jobs in the social science and education fields that are directly related to health services. These jobs help people to achieve an overall state of well-being. Career development officers, counsellors, teachers and adult educators help individuals plan their lives and make healthy choices. For more information on these fields, see the booklet *Jobs in the Social Sciences*.

WILL THERE BE JOBS IN HEALTH SERVICES?

There will always be a need for health service workers. The government, non-profit and Aboriginal organizations, and the private sector often find it difficult to fill vacant positions. The increasing health service demands of the aging northern 'baby boomers', combined with the fact that many government provided health services have been moved to the community level, have created a demand for health service workers that the local Northern labour force currently cannot meet. For example, by moving services to the smaller communities, opportunities are being created for people to work in health related jobs in these communities. There is a need for nurses, community wellness co-ordinators, community health workers and mental health/addictions counsellors who can be accessed by the local residents and who speak the local language.

WHAT JOBS WILL THERE BE IN HEALTH SERVICES?

There are many different types of jobs in the health services field, and they all have different requirements. It is important to remember that the more training and education you have, the greater the opportunities available to you. Math and sciences are basic requirements for most jobs in health services; course work in social sciences is also recommended.



ENTRY LEVEL JOBS

These jobs require little or no previous experience. On-the-job training may be provided and some jobs may require that you have a grade 12 level of education.

- Clerk/Interpreter** Performs clerical services and interprets medical procedures between staff and patients.
- Community Health Worker** Works in communities where no doctor or nurse is available; reports on patient's condition; and arranges medical evacuation when necessary.
- Child Care Worker** Works with children in day care centres, preschool programs and hospital wards.

SKILLED JOBS

For these jobs, you need some previous health services experience and/or training.

- Community Wellness Co-ordinator** Works with members of the health care team to teach people about health care, disease prevention and awareness.
- Community Health Representative** Works with community and health care team to educate, prevent illness, and promote good health.
- Dental Assistant** Helps the dentist provide treatment by taking x-rays, polishing teeth and handling clerical duties.
- Nursing Assistant** Gives basic nursing care, while working under the direction of a registered nurse.
- Home Support Worker** Provides routine health and personal care to patients in their homes.

TECHNICAL JOBS

For these jobs, you need a technical college certificate or diploma. Generally, these are one to three year programs.

<i>Dental Hygienist</i>	Cleans teeth, takes x-rays, charts condition of mouth and teeth and teaches cavity prevention.
<i>Health Records Technician</i>	Prepares and organizes patients' medical records.
<i>Laboratory Technologist</i>	Performs laboratory testing of blood, cells and other specimens to assist doctors in diagnosis.
<i>Ophthalmic Technician</i>	Helps eye doctors with eye examinations and technical tasks and assists with surgical procedures of the eye.
<i>Radiology Technologist</i>	Takes, develops and prepares x-rays.
<i>Diagnostic Imaging Technologist</i>	Takes, develops and prepares imaging such as MRI's and Ultrasounds.
<i>Licensed Practical Nurse</i>	Provides nursing care to patients under the supervision of a registered nurse or doctor.
<i>Telehealth Clinical Co-ordinator</i>	Develops and manages the Telehealth Program.

SEMI-PROFESSIONAL JOBS

For these jobs, you usually need a college diploma or the equivalent. Generally, these are one to three-year programs

<i>Diagnostic Imaging Technologist</i>	Makes X-ray exposures and produces a patient's X-ray film.
<i>Dental Therapist</i>	Provides dental care to people living in remote areas by following treatment prescribed by a dentist.
<i>Health Promotion Officer</i>	Provides information, produces educational materials, and develops activities to address health issues.
<i>Mental Health / Addictions Counsellor</i>	Guides community mental health programs and treats people with personality, social, and psychological disorders. Helps a person identify addiction problems, develops treatment plans and provides counselling.
<i>Respiratory Therapist</i>	Specializes in the treatment of people with breathing problems, such as asthma.
<i>Rehabilitation Assistant</i>	Works with people who are hospitalized, helping them to become more active and independent in everyday activities.
<i>Family Counsellor</i>	Helps families identify problems and goals and provides counselling services.

PROFESSIONAL JOBS

For these jobs, you need a university degree, which at the undergraduate level may be a four-year program and at the graduate level may be 2 – 6 extra years of study.

<i>Audiologist</i>	Assesses and provides treatment and counselling for those with hearing problems.
<i>Dentist</i>	Cleans, fills, straightens, extracts and replaces teeth. Treats gums and roots. Helps prevent dental problems.
<i>Dietician</i>	Plans, organizes and directs food service activities in hospitals. Counsels people with nutritional problems.
<i>Doctor</i>	Identifies and treats illnesses and injuries and helps keep people healthy.
<i>Health Administrator</i>	Coordinates activities and sets policies for hospitals, health facilities and/or health boards.
<i>Midwife</i>	Cares for expectant mothers, delivers babies and cares for mothers and babies after the delivery.
<i>Occupational Therapist</i>	Develops treatment plans to help individuals to be functionally independent, regardless of mental, physical, psychological or social disabilities.
<i>Pharmacist</i>	Prepares, dispenses and educates patients on proper medication use.
<i>Physiotherapist</i>	Develops treatment plans to restore or achieve the best physical movement or function, and to relieve pain.
<i>Psychologist</i>	Diagnoses and provides therapy for emotional and behavioural disorders.

<i>Nurse</i>	Promotes health, prevents illness, treats patients, and cares for the disabled and ill.
<i>Nurse Practitioner</i>	Advanced practice nurse who diagnoses and treats health problems and prescribes drugs.
<i>Social Worker</i>	Provides counselling, child protection and other support services to people having social and emotional problems.
<i>Speech Language Pathologist</i>	Works in prevention; diagnosis and treatment of a person's ability to speak and understand language.
<i>Public Health Co-ordinator</i>	Co-ordinates and promotes public health programs, provides direct nursing care, and administers the Public Health Unit.
<i>Clinical Educator</i>	Develops, implements, evaluates and revises training programs for various health services sectors and jobs.

MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISORY JOBS

In addition to education, experience is required to be promoted into management and supervisory jobs.

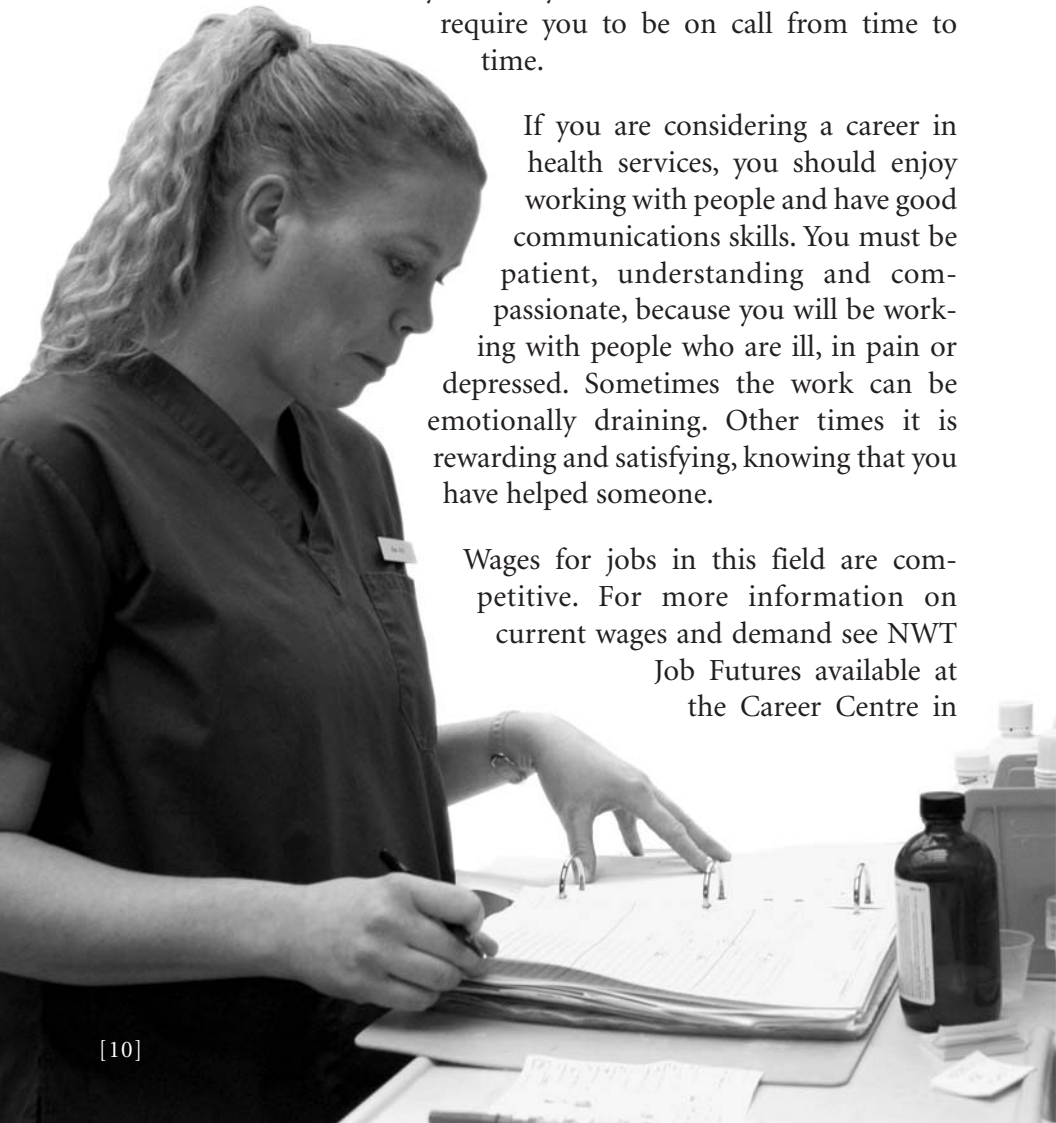
<i>Area Manager</i>	Oversees a number of staff in functional areas such as critical care services, maternal and child services, mental health services and surgical services.
<i>General Manager</i>	Oversees all of health services. Area Managers report to them.

WORKING CONDITIONS

People working in health services can work in many different places. In small communities, health practitioners are found in nursing stations and sometimes in schools. In larger centres they are in hospitals, doctor's offices, dentist's offices and labs. Some health care professionals travel to communities to provide regular treatment and are away from home for extended periods of time. In emergencies, doctors and nurses are required to make spur of the moment trips to stabilize and transport critically injured patients. Sometimes nurses are hired to work in exploration or mining camps. Many jobs in health are Monday to Friday, while others are shift work and require you to be on call from time to time.

If you are considering a career in health services, you should enjoy working with people and have good communications skills. You must be patient, understanding and compassionate, because you will be working with people who are ill, in pain or depressed. Sometimes the work can be emotionally draining. Other times it is rewarding and satisfying, knowing that you have helped someone.

Wages for jobs in this field are competitive. For more information on current wages and demand see NWT Job Futures available at the Career Centre in



your community or online at www.jobfutures.stats.gov.nt.ca and talk to people at work in the field.

WHERE TO GET TRAINING

AURORA COLLEGE

Aurora College offers a variety of programs and courses that can help you get a job in health services. These programs and services include: Office Administration, Nursing Access, Bachelor in the Science of Nursing, Community Health Worker, Licensed Practical Nurse, Nurse Practitioner, RN Refresher, Introduction to Advanced Practice, Homemaker/Personal Care Attendant, Long Term Care Aide, Social Work Access and Social Work. Student Services at Aurora College will explain current course offerings. Although these courses and programs are a good introduction to many jobs in health services, some jobs will require additional schooling or on-the-job training.

Call your local campus or visit www.auroracollege.nt.ca to find out about current programs and courses being offered.

COLLEGES IN SOUTHERN CANADA

Other courses and programs available at colleges in southern Canada that can lead to jobs in health services include the following: Dental Therapy, Dental Hygiene, Laboratory Technology, Radiology Technology, Pharmacy Technology, Home Care Support and Respiratory Therapy. Check with your regional Career Centre for college information or look on the Internet for online calendars.

UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS

For professional jobs in health services, you need a university degree. There are many Canadian universities that offer professional programs in the following areas: Medicine, Midwifery, Nursing, Dentistry, Audiology, Nutrition, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Psychology. Graduates from these programs can find positions in health services. Universities also offer academic programs for professions that are common to most large businesses, such as human resources, industrial and labour relations, business and management, and accounting. Programs such as these can also lead to

employment in health services. Check with your regional Career Centre for information on the universities, or look on the Internet for online course calendars.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

To find out if you qualify for financial help while you study, contact the following:

NWT Student Financial Assistance

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, GNWT

P.O. Box 1320 Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9

For further information call: (867) 873-7190

24-Hour Toll-Free Line – Tel.: 1-800-661-0793

www.nwtsfa.gov.nt.ca



HOW TO APPLY FOR A JOB IN HEALTH SERVICES

The most common way of applying for a job is to send your resume and a cover letter to the Government of the NWT, to Health Authorities, and to executive directors of organizations where you would like to work. However, because of the very strong interest in jobs, some employers only accept an electronic application, which can be accessed and completed on the organization's website. Make sure you indicate which job or jobs you are interested in, and why you think you are qualified for those jobs. If you are interested in a career in health services you should talk to people who are working in the field to see if it is right for you. Look for health services jobs advertised in the newspapers, on Health Authority websites, on the GNWT website at www.gov.nt.ca, or on www.jobsnorth.ca.

Your local Career Centre can help you to prepare for your job search and write your resume and cover letter.

WORKPLACE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Employers and workers have responsibilities to each other. The *Labour Standards Act* sets out the general rules, minimum requirements, and principles of employment standards in the Northwest Territories. The *Act* covers such areas as hours of work, minimum wage, termination of employment, annual vacation and general holidays, and pregnancy and parental leave. It is up to you to know what rights and responsibilities you have as an employee.

For more information, contact Labour Services at 1 (867) 873-7486 or toll free at 1 (888) 700-5707 or visit the Department of Education, Culture and Employment website at: <http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/Divisions/Labour/index.htm>

CAREER PLANNING

Career planning is an ongoing process that starts in your youth and continues throughout adulthood. When you think about making changes in your working life, try to make decisions based on your personality, passions, aptitudes, skills and commitments. Also consider what training and education you want and what opportunities are available to you. By finding the best fit between your interests, skills, values and available jobs, you'll have more control over your life and find greater satisfaction in your work.

For more information or assistance with career planning and decision-making, contact your local Career Centre, adult educator, or school counsellor.

Put a lot of effort into your career today to make the most of your work. Always continue creating new opportunities for yourself.



NWT CAREER CENTRES, CANADA/NWT SERVICE CENTRE

Your regional Career Centre can help you to do the following:

- Learn about your skills, interests and values
- Find career, training and employment information
- Search for jobs
- Write resumes
- Apply for jobs
- Prepare and practice for a job interview
- Make a personal career or education plan

The regional Career Centres, Canada/NWT Service Centre are located in the following communities:

Fort Simpson	Deh Cho Hall	(867) 695-7333
Fort Smith	Sweetgrass Building	(867) 872-7425
Hay River	Courthouse Building	(867) 874-5050
Inuvik	Mack Travel Building	(867) 777-7365
Norman Wells	Town Square	(867) 587-7120
Yellowknife	Greenstone Building	(867) 766-5100

Other booklets in the Career Opportunities Series include:

- Jobs in Mining
- Jobs in Oil and Gas
- Jobs in Construction
- Jobs in Tourism
- Jobs in Aviation
- Jobs in Community Government
- Jobs in Diamond Manufacturing
- Jobs in Social Sciences
- Jobs in the Service Sector
- Jobs in Information and Communications Technology
- Jobs in Arts, Culture and Heritage

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