



5 Best Allied Health Careers in Demand with Excellent Growth

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Allied health careers are in demand! This is great news if you've always dreamed of an interesting, stable career in healthcare—without the extensive studies needed to become a doctor or surgeon.

According to U.S. News, allied health professionals already make up **over 60% of all healthcare professionals**.

What's more: the demand for allied health professionals is predicted to grow from 15.6 million jobs in 2010 to *19.8 million positions in 2020*.

It's important to realize that a number of allied health professions are in higher demand than others around the country—and will be for the foreseeable future.

The [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) predicts that between 2014 and 2024, the following five allied health professions will be in highest demand: certified occupational therapy assistants, physical therapy assistants, audiologists, hearing aid specialists, and speech language pathologists.

Let's take a closer look at the allied health careers in demand today:

1. Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA)

Certified occupational therapy assistants top the list with a predicted job growth of 43% by 2024.

These professionals work with disabled patients, as well as patients who are recovering from an injury or disease.

They help them develop or recover skills they need to perform tasks for daily functioning.

Typically, occupational therapy assistants are responsible for executing and monitoring treatment plans that have been created by occupational therapists.

Examples of possible duties include:

- Helping someone with a back injury build strength and learn how to lift correctly
- Helping a patient recover coordination after suffering a stroke
- Teaching a child with autism how to use apps on a tablet to interact with others

Certified occupational therapy assistants work in public and private healthcare facilities, including hospitals, home healthcare facilities, and educational institutions.

To become a certified occupational therapy assistant, you'll need an associate's degree from a certified program; plus, you'll need a state license.

Pay ranges from **\$36,420** to **\$76,790** per year, with the median pay being **\$56,950** annually.

States with the highest employment level for certified occupational therapy assistants are Texas, Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. States with the highest pay for these professionals are Nevada, Texas, New Jersey, Arkansas, and Maryland. There are also many opportunities for traveling certified occupational therapy assistants.

2. Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA)

Second on the list are physical therapist assistants (PTAs), who are predicted to see a job growth of 40% in the next eight years.

PTAs can work in many different environments:

- hospitals
- clinics
- nursing care facilities
- home healthcare services
- physicians' offices

They work under the supervision of physical therapists to implement recovery plans for patients.

These professionals help patients perform exercises, learn how to use functional aides, plus, they provide education about aftercare. They also observe patients and document their progress for physical therapists to review.

In order to become a PTA, you need an associate's degree from an accredited program, as well as a state license or certification. You'll also receive on the job training.

Annual wages range from **\$31,840** to **\$75,530**, with the median salary being **\$54,410**.

States that have the highest level of employment of PTAs are Texas, Ohio, California, Florida, and Pennsylvania. Top-paying states are Texas, Alaska, California, New Jersey, and Florida.

And for professionals who want to explore multiple locations and options, traveling physical therapy assistants are in high demand.

SEE ALSO: [Why a Travel Physical Therapy Profession is the Next Big Thing](#)

3. Audiologist

With a projected growth of 29%, audiologists are third on the list.

These professionals diagnose, treat, and manage patients' ear problems. The problems can include hearing issues, balance problems, or other conditions in the area of the ear.

Some of their typical duties include:

- Examining and diagnosing patients' hearing, balance, and other ear problems
- Determining and prescribing effective treatment plans
- Prescribing hearing aids
- Counseling patients on communication methods such as lip reading or using assistive technologies

Audiologists work in public and private hospitals, educational institutions, physicians' offices, and personal care stores.

To become an audiologist, you'll need to complete a four-year doctorate in audiology from an accredited program. You'll also need a state license.

Annual salaries range from **\$47,580** to **\$110,960**, with the median income being **\$73,060** per year.

The highest employment levels of audiologists are found in Texas, California, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. The states where audiologists typically earn the highest wages are New Mexico, District of Columbia, North Dakota, California, and Colorado.

Traveling audiologists are also in high demand.

4. Hearing Aid Specialist

Hearing aid specialists will see a job growth of 27%, which places them fourth on the list.

These professionals usually work in personal care retail settings.

They administer and analyze auditory tests. Based on the results, they determine the nature and extent of a patient's hearing loss and subsequently fit the patient with a hearing aid.

They also provide education and instruction on how to operate and maintain hearing aids.

To become a hearing aid specialist, you need to complete a two-year program. In addition, most states require you to be licensed. You'll also have to complete a year of on the job training under supervision of a licensed hearing aid specialist before you can practice independently.

Annual income ranges from **\$26,660** to **\$79,400**, with the median yearly salary amounting to **\$49,600**.

California, Florida, Ohio, Texas, and Washington have the highest employment levels for hearing aid specialists. The states where these professionals earn the highest wages are Maine, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Florida.

5. Speech Language Pathologists

Speech language pathologists are expected to see a job growth of 21%.

These professionals work in private and public educational services, private healthcare offices, nursing care facilities, and social assistance organizations.

Their job involves evaluating and diagnosing communication and swallowing disorders in patients, as well as devising treatment plans.

Examples of their duties include:

- Teaching children with a cleft palate to form words
- Helping deaf people improve their speech
- Educating patients on how to strengthen the muscles used for swallowing

In order to become a speech language pathologist, you need a master's degree in speech pathology from an accredited program, as well as a state license. Additional certifications may be required depending on the specialization.

Speech language pathologists earn between **\$44,940** and **\$111,000** each year, with the average salary being **\$71,550**.

Texas, California, New York, Florida, and Illinois offer the highest levels of employment. The highest salaries are found in Connecticut, California, Alaska, District of Columbia, and New York. Traveling speech language pathologists are also in high demand across the country.

Conclusion

If you're interested in any of these careers, then take the time to research them thoroughly. Speak to people who are already working in the field. You can even ask to shadow someone for a day to gain an accurate impression of the work.

And if you decide to pursue one of these allied health careers, your job outlook and career prospects will be very bright!

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