



Health Care Careers e-Letter

September 2009

Dear Reader,

Health system reform continues to dominate headlines in national newspapers, speaking programs at medical conferences, and editorial content in professional literature. The reform debate is historic, addressing all of the many facets of America's current health system.

Allied health and its workforce issues are a relatively small piece of the reform puzzle, but an important if unrecognized one, with the nation's needs for access to care growing.

The AMA supports reforms that make the health system better for patients and physicians. The House reform bill (H.R. 3200) is an important starting point for achieving meaningful health reform this year.

[Learn more about the AMA's vision for health reform.](#)

For an historical perspective on allied health and federal policy, be sure to order your copy of "[A View from Washington: Federal Policy in Relation to Allied Health Over Two Decades](#) (PDF)," by Thomas W. Elwood, Executive Director of the Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions. All proceeds from the book's sales will go to ASAHP's Scholarship of Excellence Fund.

We [welcome your responses](#) on this or other health care career issues.

*Best Regards,
Fred Donini-Lenhoff, editor*

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Note: Thanks to everyone who registered for our first-ever webinar on emerging trends in health care workforce development! We've had strong interest in this event, with more than 100 registrants. Stay tuned in future issues of the e-Letter for information on accessing an archive version of the webinar.

1. The 2009 survey of health professions programs coming soon

The 2009 version of the Annual Survey of Health Professions Education Programs should be e-mailed to program directors soon. This survey will collect data for the 2008-2009 academic year.

2. Order your Health Care Careers Directory now

Order your copy now of the updated 2009-2010 [Health Care Careers Directory](#). Our newly expanded edition now includes more than 8,000 educational programs in 81 different health care fields.

To order your copy, call 800 621-8335. To receive a copy of the order form, send an e-mail to meded@ama-assn.org. For fastest service, be sure to specify the phrase "HCCD" in the e-mail's subject line.

3. Featured profession: Polysomnographic technologist

Polysomnographic technologists (also known as sleep technologists) perform sleep tests and work with physicians to provide information needed for diagnosing and treating sleep disorders. The technologist monitors brain waves, eye movements, muscle activity, multiple breathing variables, and blood oxygen levels during sleep using specialized recording equipment.

Check out these informative links, from the [AMA \(PDF\)](#), [American Association of Sleep Technologists](#), and [Health Professions Network](#), respectively, for more information on education and careers in the field.

Finally, be sure to consult the AMA's chart of [health care career income ranges](#), for salary in this and other health professions fields.

4. Featured program: Roane State Community College, polysomnography

Each issue we profile a randomly selected educational program from the Health Care Careers Directory.

This month we feature the [polysomnography program at Roane State Community College](#) in West Knoxville, Tenn.

The RSCC Polysomnography program is a one-year certificate program; graduates are eligible to apply to take the Board of Registered Polysomnographic Technologists Exam.

The cost of registration, uniforms, textbooks, liability insurance, licensing examination fee, physical exam, and background check averages approximately \$1,100 per year.

5. Celebrate health professions' events in September and October

Following is a list of events in September and October honoring various health professions; many thanks to e-Letter reader Debbie Schwarzberg for compiling this list.

The complete list for 2009 is available on the Web site of the [Health Professions Network \(HPN\)](#).

[National Surgical Technologist Week](#), Sept. 20–26

[Health Professions Network Fall Meeting](#), Sept. 23–26, Tampa, Fla.

[Medical Ultrasound Awareness Month](#), October

[National Dental Hygiene Month](#), October

[National Medical Librarians Month](#), October

[National Physical Therapy Month](#), October

[The National Society for Histotechnology 35th Annual Symposium and Convention](#), Oct. 2–7, Birmingham, Ala.

[Nuclear Medicine Week](#), Oct. 4–10

[Sleep Technologist Appreciation Week](#), Oct. 5–11

[National Physician Assistant Week](#), Oct. 6–12

[Symposium on Quality Improvement to Prevent Prematurity](#), Oct. 8–9, Arlington, Va.

[Medical Assistants Recognition Week](#), Oct. 19–23

[Respiratory Care Week](#), Oct. 25–31

6. Grant funds available for arts in health care programs

[Proposals](#) are now being sought from health care and/or arts organizations that have established arts in health care programs with evidence of initial impact.

Since 2001, Johnson & Johnson and the Society for the Arts in Healthcare have provided program funding to 117 organizations in the US and Canada representing leading initiatives in high-quality health care through the use of arts.

Note: Letter of inquiry deadline is Oct. 15.

7. Paws here for a promising career

An article in the [New York Times](#) (July 5), "Helping Patients Get Back on All Four Feet," profiles the growing career opportunities for animal health care technicians. Demand for practitioners is strong, and entry-level technicians earn an average salary of more than \$30,000. In addition, those holding positions at biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies earn an average of more than \$73,000.

8. The top 50 medical career blogs

The [Medicine 3.0 blog](#) lists 50 blogs of note for those interested in a career in health care. Blogs are divided into categories, such as nursing, physician, dentist, medical technician, medical assisting, and medical transcription/coding/billing.

9. Health care leaders in high demand

Aside from clinical health care professionals, hospitals need talented managers and executives with expertise in human resources, finance, marketing, and other business skills ([New York Times](#), August 20).

"The demand for talented leaders in healthcare is only going to go up," Jane Groves, a senior vice president at Integrated Healthcare Strategies, told the *Times*.

Indeed, hospital payrolls grew by 4,200 new jobs in July, with health care one of the few bright spots in a sluggish economy ([HealthLeaders Media](#), August 7).

At the same time, growth is well off the pace of previous years (12,800 jobs added in July 2008, and 8,100 jobs in July 2007), according to government data.

10. Radiologist assistant educational programs: One new, one renewed

The [American Registry of Radiologic Technologists](#) has added Ohio State University to its list of recognized radiologist assistant educational programs and extended its recognition of Midwestern State University to include the university's master's degree program.

11. Health career awareness program needed for adults

The Vermont AHEC (Area Health Education Center) network is looking for best or promising practices for health care career awareness programming with adults. This could include job shadowing, presentations at community sites, or other outreach that specifically targets:

- Veterans
- Displaced workers
- Incumbent low-wage workers
- Limited English proficiency workers

The AHEC is especially interested in programming that promotes careers in nursing, allied health, long-term care, and health information technology.

Contact [Alice Christian](#), Executive Director of Champlain Valley AHEC.

12. College grad stumbles upon rewarding career in speech-language pathology

A video on the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's (ASHA) Web site shares the story of [Fernan Tolentino](#), who graduated from the University of California, Davis, with degrees in Asian-American Studies and Communications, but couldn't find a job.

He answered a job notice that advertised for a speech aide, thinking the position involved helping college kids with their public speaking. That turned out to be the first step in a journey that will end with Tolentino obtaining his master of science in Speech and Language Pathology next year.

13. Joint Commission requesting comment on substance use guidelines

The [Joint Commission](#) is inviting public comment on a proposed set of measures that focus on assessing and treating tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use and dependence in the hospital setting.

The comment period ends Sept. 30.

The [Graduate Medical Education \(GME\) e-Letter](#) is a free monthly e-mail newsletter that covers a wide range of issues affecting GME -- everything from resident work hours and health workforce concerns to updates on accreditation activities and development of new subspecialties.

About us

The [Health Care Careers e-Letter](#) is produced by the American Medical Association (AMA).

This monthly newsletter covers educational trends and career-related issues in the health professions.

Give us your story ideas and feedback

Direct comments to [Fred Donini-Lenhoff](#), (312) 464-4635

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