

issues in Labor Statistics



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Workdays for People in Healthcare Occupations

Every 2 years, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) publishes projections of employment growth (or decline) by occupation, and many job seekers and students consult these data while making career decisions. In addition to looking at growth rates of various occupations, job seekers may also wish to consider the scheduling of work hours by occupation. For example, people employed in some occupations are more likely than other people to work at night or on weekends. This Issues paper uses data from the American Time Use Survey to examine the workdays of two healthcare occupation subgroups—healthcare practitioner and technical occupations, and healthcare support occupations. (See box.) Employment in these occupations is expected to increase by 2.4 million jobs, or 22 percent, between 2006 and 2016,¹ ranking healthcare occupations among the fastest growing occupations in the economy.

According to 2003–07 data from the American Time Use Survey, people employed in the two healthcare occupation subgroups were more likely than those in other occupations to work on weekend days. Thirty-nine percent of

healthcare support employees and 35 percent of healthcare practitioners worked on an average weekend day. By comparison, only 31 percent of those employed in nonhealthcare occupations did so. When they worked on weekend days, people employed in both healthcare occupation subgroups also worked more hours than those employed in other occupations. On weekend workdays, those in healthcare practitioner and technical occupations worked an average of 6.5 hours, and those in healthcare support occupations worked an average of 7.3 hours. By contrast, those employed in all other occupations worked an average of 5.5 hours on weekend days on which they worked. (See table.)

Among all full-time employed workers, those in both healthcare occupation subgroups were more likely to work between 10 p.m. and 5

Healthcare practitioner and technical occupations generally require postsecondary education. These occupations are projected to grow 20 percent between 2006 and 2016 and create over 1.4 million jobs. They tend to be among the more highly-paid occupations, and include

- Physicians and surgeons
- Registered nurses
- Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses
- Physical therapists
- Dentists
- Pharmacists
- Physician assistants
- Emergency medical technicians and paramedics
- Medical records and health information technicians

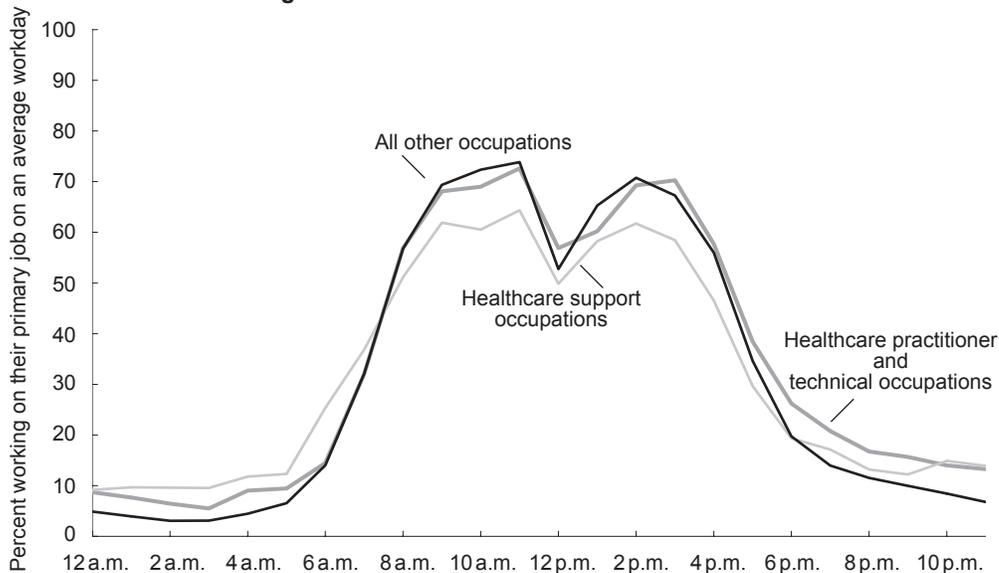
Healthcare support occupations generally require a high school diploma and short-to-moderate-term on-the-job training. These occupations are projected to grow 27 percent between 2006 and 2016 and create close to 1 million jobs. They tend to be among the lower paid occupations, and include

- Nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides
- Occupational therapist assistants and aides
- Physical therapist assistants and aides
- Dental assistants
- Medical assistants

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¹ Occupational projections for 2006–16 appear in “Occupational Employment Projections to 2016,” by Arlene Dohm and Lynn Shniper in the November 2007 Monthly Labor Review, on the Internet at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2007/11/art5full.pdf. The projections numbers stated in this article are for healthcare practitioner and technical occupations (SOC 29-0000) and healthcare support occupations (SOC 31-0000) combined.

Percent of full-time employed people working, by time of day on days worked, 2003–07 annual averages



Note: Data refer to full-time employed people age 15 and older and are averages of all days of the week. Workdays are those days on which people did some paid work for their primary job.

a.m. on workdays than were those in other occupations. For example, on days they did at least some work, 9 percent of people in healthcare practitioner and technical occupations were working at 4 a.m., as well as 12 percent of those in healthcare support occupations. By contrast, only 4

percent of those in other occupations were working at 4 a.m. (See chart.)

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additional information on what times of day people in various occupations worked, week-day-weekend work patterns of various occupations, and a technical description of the American Time Use Survey call (202) 691-6339 or send e-mail to atusinfo@bls.gov.

Information in this summary

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Percent of full-time employed people working and average hours spent working on days worked, by occupation and day of the week, 2003–07 annual averages from the American Time Use Survey

Occupation	On an average weekday		On an average weekend day or holiday ¹	
	Average hours of work on days worked	Percent of employed people who worked	Average hours of work on days worked	Percent of employed people who worked
Healthcare practitioner and technical occupations	8.78	80.0	6.50	35.1
Healthcare support occupations	7.94	77.4	7.31	38.6
All other occupations	8.32	88.1	5.54	31.2

¹ Holidays are New Year's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. Data from Christmas Day in 2003, Thanksgiving Day in 2003–05, and New Year's Day in 2007 were not collected.

NOTE: Data refer to people age 15 or older. Work estimates include only paid work done for people's primary jobs.