

# South Dakota Health Care Workforce Trends



September 2024  
August 2026

## Shot in the arm for South Dakota workforce

The Health Care industry plays an important role in South Dakota's economic vitals, accounting for 16% of the private establishment workforce and nearly 20% of payrolls.

## Charting ongoing growth

South Dakota's Health Care industry added more than 10,000 workers (19%) over the last 10 years, more than any other private industry.

## Healthy opportunities

There are almost 3,700 South Dakota job openings in Health Care occupations right now.

## Projections prescribe continued Health Care growth

The Health Care industry is projected to be among the state's largest growth industries to 2034, adding more than 8,000 workers to the state's economy with a growth rate of 13%. Outstanding career opportunities await South Dakota's future Health Care workforce.

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# More numbers behind the trends

- South Dakota's Health Care industry is an important source of employment, with **62,364 workers** (16.2% of all workers in privately owned establishments) in 2025.
- Health Care also plays a big role in **earnings**, accounting for **20.3%** of the state's privately owned establishment payrolls in 2025.
- The **number of workers** in South Dakota's Health Care industry **increased 19.4%** from 2015 to 2025, adding **10,137** workers to the state's economy.
- South Dakota's Health Care industry is **projected to add 8,117 workers** by 2034 (from a level of 62,662 in 2024 to 70,779 in 2032, a 13.0% increase).
- Several of South Dakota's occupations projected to be in **greatest demand** through 2034 are Health Care careers, as shown in the table below.
- And the majority of those high-demand occupations (highlighted in blue below) have been identified as **South Dakota Hot Careers** (high-demand and high-wage occupations). Hot Career occupations have greater than average projected demand (more than 79 openings per year) and an average wage greater than \$47,080 (the median wage across all occupations in 2025). For more information on Hot Careers, visit [dlr.sd.gov/hotcareers](https://dlr.sd.gov/hotcareers).

| South Dakota Health Care Occupations Projected to be in Greatest Demand 2024-2034                     |                    |                                 |                                |                                 |                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                                                                                                       | 2024<br>Employment | Projected<br>2034<br>Employment | Percent<br>Change<br>2024-2034 | Projected<br>Annual<br>Openings | Average<br>Annual<br>Wage 2025 |
| Nursing Assistants                                                                                    | 6,565              | 7,040                           | 7.2%                           | 985                             | \$39,510                       |
| Registered Nurses                                                                                     | 14,208             | 16,133                          | 13.6%                          | 946                             | \$77,140                       |
| Home Health and Personal Care Aides                                                                   | 4,723              | 5,484                           | 16.1%                          | 825                             | \$39,260                       |
| Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses                                                     | 2,115              | 2,255                           | 6.6%                           | 189                             | \$54,990                       |
| Dental Assistants                                                                                     | 1,236              | 1,413                           | 14.3%                          | 188                             | \$50,170                       |
| Medical Assistants                                                                                    | 1,179              | 1,378                           | 16.9%                          | 171                             | \$42,170                       |
| Pharmacy Technicians                                                                                  | 1,284              | 1,427                           | 11.1%                          | 137                             | \$45,750                       |
| Medical and Health Services Managers                                                                  | 1,146              | 1,465                           | 27.8%                          | 123                             | \$130,720                      |
| Nurse Practitioners                                                                                   | 959                | 1,423                           | 48.4%                          | 97                              | \$125,160                      |
| Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians                                                     | 1,283              | 1,408                           | 9.7%                           | 96                              | \$60,940                       |
| Ophthalmic Medical Technicians                                                                        | 442                | 557                             | 26.0%                          | 75                              | \$44,330                       |
| Medical Records Specialists                                                                           | 883                | 1,013                           | 14.7%                          | 73                              | \$54,380                       |
| Source: Labor Market Information Center, South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, August 2026 |                    |                                 |                                |                                 |                                |