Respiratory Therapist

Step Up to the Future!

What Does a Respiratory Therapist Do?

Respiratory Therapists care for people with breathing disorders. They work with premature infants with underdeveloped lungs, patients who have had heart attacks or strokes and patients who have chronic diseases like asthma or emphysema. The typical duties of Respiratory Therapists include administering oxygen to patients, measuring lung capacity, monitoring oxygen concentrations in blood and using equipment such as ventilators to maintain a patient's oxygen supply. They administer aerosolized medications that patients inhale and draw blood for arterial blood gas analysis. Respiratory Therapists may perform bronchial hygiene therapy on patients with chronic lung disease to remove mucus from their lungs and make it easier for them to breathe. They also perform tests to evaluate respiratory capacity. Respiratory Therapists teach patients breathing exercises and how to inhale medications properly. Some Respiratory Therapists visit patients at home to check on their breathing equipment and medications, though most Respiratory Therapists work in hospitals.

Facts About Respiratory Therapists & Job Opportunities

According to a document entitled "Key Findings, 2014, Health Occupations in California," prepared by the Centers of Excellence, the need for Respiratory Therapists in the ambulatory healthcare and nursing and residential care employer settings was expected to see a projected growth rate of 4%, with a total of 866 job openings over the subsequent 12-month period.

According to the California Employment Development Department, the need for Respiratory Therapists in the health care industry is expected to increase by 17.7% from the years 2012-2022 with 450 average annual openings.

Students need to complete a two-year Respiratory Therapy program and earn an associate's degree. Advanced degrees are available in this field and include bachelor's and master's degree programs. Respiratory Therapists must pass exams to become Registered Respiratory Therapists (RRTs) and must also be licensed by the State. Prerequisite courses may include Algebra, Chemistry, Human Anatomy, and Physiology.

Personal Characteristics & Working Conditions

- Excellent people skills: Able to put patients of all ages and backgrounds at ease, gain their confidence, provide clear instructions, and act assertively to manage emotionally charged situations.

- Excellent communication and critical thinking skills: Able to observe subtle changes in the health and behavior of patients, communicate accurate clinical information, and work with a multidisciplinary team.

- Technical knowledge: Able to demonstrate a strong foundation in safety procedures, computer literacy, reading comprehension and knowledge of key science and mathematical concepts.

- Position Requirements: Able/willing to work weekends, holidays, nights and 8-12 hour shifts, be in good health, stand for long periods of time, exhibit manual dexterity, tolerate exposure to blood, bodily fluids and unpleasant odors, pass criminal background check, and be cleared for State licensure.

Sources for Further Information About Respiratory Therapy:

California Community College Health Program Directory
www.ca-hwi.org

American Association for Respiratory Care
www.aarc.org

Employment Development Department - Health Care Careers
www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occmisc/CareerLaddersConstruction.pdf

Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care
www.coarc.com

California Society for Respiratory Care
www.csrc.org

Certifying Agency: Respiratory Care Board of California (916) 999-2190
www.rcb.ca.gov

Salaries are notably lower in other states in the U.S. For more information on salaries go to:
http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/

http://salarysurfer.cccco.edu

Respiratory Therapy Programs are Available at the Following Community Colleges:

American River College
Antelope Valley College
Butte College
Crafton Hills College
Diablo Valley College
East Los Angeles College
El Camino College
Foothill College
Fresno City College
Grossmont College
Hartnell College
Los Angeles Valley College
Modesto Junior College
Mt. San Antonio College
Napa Valley College
Ohlone College
Orange Coast College
Santa Monica College
Skyline College
Victor Valley Community College

For more information, please contact one of the colleges listed above or explore the web resources. For additional information regarding this brochure please contact: The Health Workforce Initiative at Butte College (530) 892-3060 www.ca-hwi.org

ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT through the CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Health Workforce Initiative

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Respiratory Care Associate Degree Program Application is open from February 1 - February 28

Bachelor's Degree Program Respiratory Care Application is open from February 1 - February 28

The application Period has been extended. It will remain open until the cohort has been filled.

For further info:

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Regular Hours:
Monday - Thursday
8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Friday:
8:00 am - 4:30 pm

Summer Hours
Monday - Thursday:
7:30 am - 5:30 pm
Friday:
Closed Fridays

The California Community Colleges
Allied Health Programs

Step Up to the Future as a Respiratory Therapist