

An overview of issues and opportunities for the allied health workforce

## Did you know ...?

Allied health is driving growth in the larger health care sector.

Between 1999-2003 :

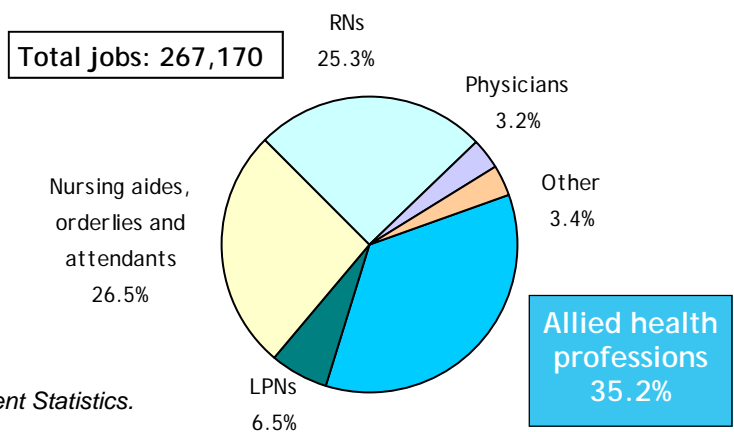
- Over 42% of total job growth in the health care sector was due to growth of allied health jobs.
- Job growth in allied health outpaced growth by: 22.4% in the total N.C. workforce 5.5% in the broader health care sector.

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics.

## What do we know about the allied health workforce?

- There are persistent disparities between rural and urban areas in the supply of allied health workers, e.g. in 2004, 13 counties did not have a respiratory therapist; 10 of these were rural and 7 were in northeastern North Carolina.
- There is a greater reliance on assistive personnel in rural areas.
- State investments in allied health education yield relatively high returns because a large percentage of students (75% on average) remain in-state after graduating from state community colleges and universities.
- North Carolina is facing increased demand for allied health workers yet educational programs that produce these graduates face serious challenges:
  - too few qualified applicants
  - high attrition rates
  - faculty shortages
  - lack of sites for clinical education.

## Health Care Jobs in North Carolina, 2003



## The challenge to estimate allied health workforce supply

Despite the fact that the demand for allied health workers is strong and expected to grow, state policy makers still struggle with basic questions:

- How many professionals are practicing in the state?
- Is N.C. producing too many, too few, or the right number of professionals to meet the needs of the population?
- How many educational programs are in the state?
- Are the types and locations of educational training programs appropriate?

Because the vast majority of the allied health workforce is not licensed, it is difficult to estimate whether North Carolina's citizens have adequate access to a well-distributed and well-prepared allied health workforce.

## The role of the Council for Allied Health

To answer these challenges, the Council for Allied Health has partnered with the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research and the North Carolina Area Health Education Centers (NC AHEC) Program to conduct allied health workforce studies. North Carolina is the only state that has a Council of Allied Health that exists to provide the General Assembly, the UNC Education System and the N.C. Community College System with data on the allied health workforce.

The Council's workforce studies have enabled the North Carolina Community College System, the UNC system and private colleges to engage in educational program planning informed by data. The Council has also provided the infrastructure through which employers, educators and members of the allied health workforce have come together to address allied health workforce shortages.

North Carolina's economy is undergoing a significant economic restructuring. Strong support for the Council will not only ensure that North Carolinians have access to an adequate supply of allied health professionals across the state, but will also support the growth of health care jobs that can provide employment for laid-off workers.

THE HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT WORKFORCE IN NORTH CAROLINA: Current Trends, Future Directions  
A Report of the Technical Panel on the Health Information Management Workforce

Scanning the Radiologic Sciences Workforce in North Carolina  
A Report of the Technical Panel on the Radiologic Sciences Workforce

July 2003

The Council for Allied Health in North Carolina  
The Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research and the  
The Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research, UNC-Chapel Hill

## North Carolina's economy in transition: 1990-2004

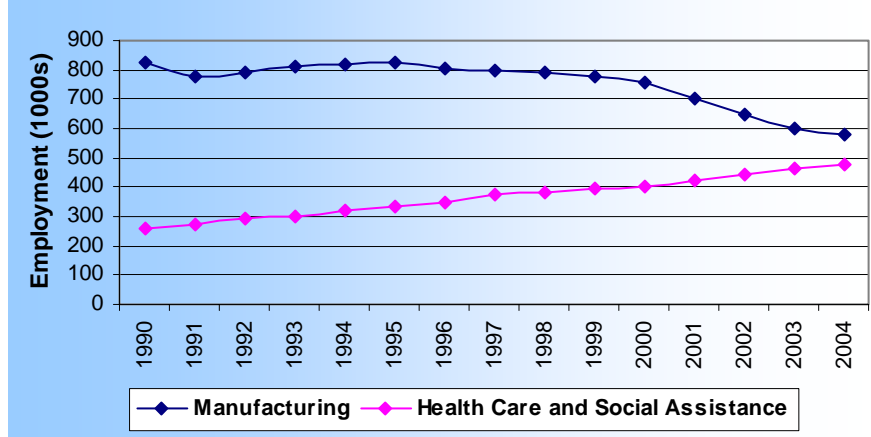
### Percentage of total employment

As recently as 1990, the manufacturing sector accounted for 27% of jobs statewide and 32% of jobs in rural counties. After more than a decade of plant closings and downsizing, the manufacturing industry now accounts for only 15% of the state's total workforce.

Between 1990 and 2004, rural areas:

- lost 100,437 manufacturing jobs
- gained 62,777 jobs in health care and social assistance.

### Manufacturing and Health Care and Social Assistance Employment



Source: North Carolina Employment Security Commission. *Employment and Wages by Industry, 1990-2004*.

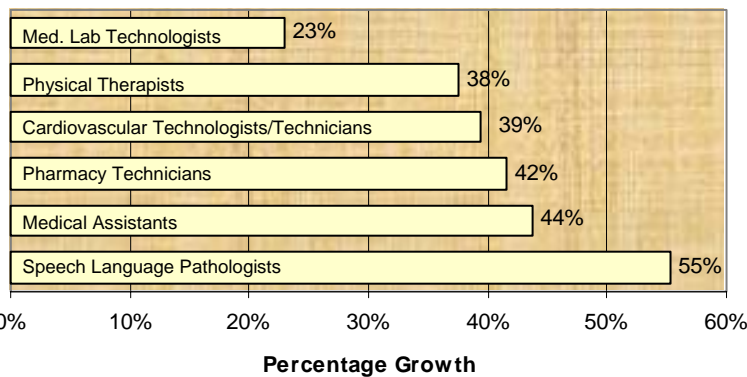
## Allied health jobs projected to grow

Allied health is projected to add 28,570 jobs between 2000 and 2010 – a 36% increase over 2000 employment.

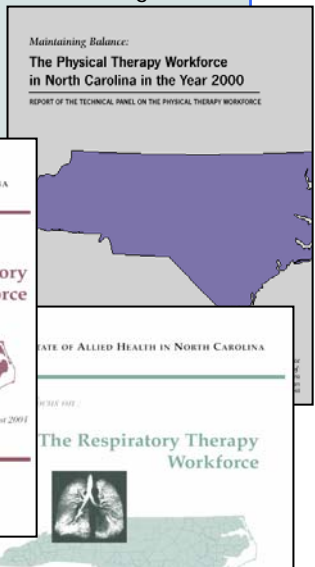
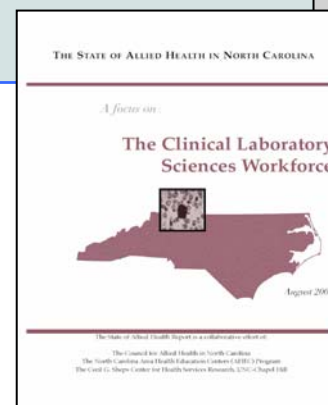
Allied health jobs represent a stable and relatively profitable employment sector, being:

- relatively less vulnerable to international competition
- more resilient to economic recession
- not as susceptible to outsourcing trends seen in manufacturing and other sectors.

### Projected Allied Health Employment Growth in North Carolina, 2000-2010



Source: North Carolina Employment Security Commission. *North Carolina Occupational Trends. Employment by Occupational Group in 2000 and Projected to 2010*.



### THE STATE OF ALLIED HEALTH IN NORTH CAROLINA

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