



Health Care Careers

Pandemic's Toll on Workers

Now well into the second year of the pandemic, many front line health care workers are feeling the psychological effects of month after month of battling COVID-19.

The CDC says that caring for others during the pandemic can lead to stress, fear and other strong emotions that can affect your well-being, your job and even the well-being of your friends and family outside of work.

RECOGNIZING THE SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

The first step in fighting stress is to recognize the symptoms. The CDC says to look for:

- Feeling irritation, anger or denial.
- Feeling uncertain, nervous or anxious.
- Feeling helpless or powerless.
- Lacking motivation.
- Feeling tired, overwhelmed or burned out.
- Feeling sad or depressed.
- Having trouble sleeping.
- Having trouble with concentration.

Front line workers may even experience clinically significant stress or impairment, including acute stress disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder or secondary traumatic stress. Compassion fatigue and burnout are also real



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workplace issues for pandemic workers right now.

HOW TO COPE

COVID-19 isn't going away, so it's important to recognize the signs and get help early. The CDC suggests keeping lines of communications open with coworkers, supervisors and other health care employees about job stress. Talk about how the pandemic is affecting your work and identify factors

that cause stress and how you can solve them. Ask about accessing mental health resources in your workplace.

Recognize also that you and your colleagues are performing a crucial role in fighting the pandemic. The rest of us couldn't do it without you and you are doing the best you can with the resources you have available. To help you feel more in control, try to keep a consistent daily routine when

you can with adequate sleep and healthy meals. Physical activity is also important, as are taking frequent breaks from the news, including social media. Be wary of misusing alcohol or other drugs, including prescriptions, and if you feel like you need help, ask for it.

FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

If you see someone in your

life that shows the signs and you think they may need help, here are some resources for you.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, (800) 273-8255 or (888) 628-9454 for Spanish.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline, (800) 799-7233 or (800) 787-3224 for TTY.

Disaster Distress Helpline, (800) 985-5990, call or text.



Travel Nursing

Travel nursing, where nurses sign on to work at hospitals around the country or region, can be a fun and exciting way to see the country and get paid to do it. It's not for everyone, however.

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Keep reading to learn more about travel nursing and if it may be a good fit for you.

THE PROS

Travel nurses are needed everywhere. If you have kept up your qualifications, there's likely a place for you somewhere in the travel nursing arena. You can use travel nursing to build an impressive resume, spend time in different parts of the country, visit distant family and friends or try out potential employers or cities to see if they're right for you.

Travel nursing also typically pays

better than regular nursing and comes with generally flexible schedules. In addition to a salary, travel nurses might also receive bonuses, housing allowances and other reimbursements.

THE CONS

All that seeing other parts of the country comes with moving around a lot. That can put a strain on relationships and makes raising a family difficult. And if you're a person who values routine, all those flexible schedules can be quick to put you out of sorts.

Travel nursing positions often typically lack paid time off, too, and may lack other benefits that full-time jobs offer, like types of retirement or health insurance. Travel nurses may also lack seniority at their assignments or get a poor perception from the permanent nursing staff. If you're prone to loneliness or homesickness, this may also not be the gig for you. The typical contract can last up to three months.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

Before you get started looking for a travel nursing opportunity, here are some questions to ask potential

employers:

- Could there be an opportunity to become permanent staff at a hospital?
- Will any reimbursements for travel include potential wear and tear on my vehicle?
- How long will my contract be for? Are contracts ever extended? How will I find new positions?
- How will pre-employment paperwork be handled?
- How are contract cancellations handled?
- How will I handle multiple state licenses?
- How will I file my taxes?



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Fastest-Growing Fields

Health care jobs are expected to grow 16% from 2020 to 2030, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics says, and that's much faster than the growth rate for other professions.

The projected growth comes from an aging U.S. population and a greater demand for health care services.

Here are some health care occupations that are beating the average growth rate, according to the BLS.

NURSE PRACTITIONERS

The projected growth rate for nurse practitioners is an astronomical 52%. Nurse practitioners are advanced practice registered nurses that are trained to assess patient needs, order and interpret diagnostic and lab tests, diagnose disease,

and formulate and prescribe treatment plans. They typically have more training and certifications than your average registered nurse, but less so than a doctor.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANTS

Occupational therapy assistants and aides help patients develop, recover and improve as well as maintain the skills needed for daily life. The growth rate for this field is 34%, much faster than average.

ATHLETIC TRAINERS

These specialized medical professionals prevent, diagnose and treat muscle and bone injuries and illnesses, usually sustained during sports. Many of them work in educational settings, such as at colleges and universities, but some are also employed in fitness centers or for professional sports teams. The growth rate for this job is 23%.

GENETIC COUNSELORS

This is another advanced field — typically requiring at

least a master's degree, that has huge projected growth rate of 26%.

Genetic counselors assess individual or family risk for a variety of inherited conditions and work in university medical centers, hospitals, labs and more.

ORTHOTISTS AND PROSTHETISTS

These specialists design and fabricate medical supportive devices and ensure their proper fit. You'll need both a master's degree and certification.

Eyes, Ears, Noses and More

We understand the world around us through our five senses — vision, hearing, smell, taste and touch.

There are health care specialists to help us keep each one sharp. Keep reading to learn more about the health care fields that tend to each one.

EYES

Optometrist, opticians and ophthalmologists all treat problems with our eyes, but each in different areas. Optometrist are like primary care doctors for our eyes. They test and correct your vision and can also diagnose, treat and manage changes in vision. Ophthalmologists can do everything an optometrist can do, but can also perform eye surgeries, diagnose and treat all eye conditions and conduct research. Opticians are trained to design and fit visual aids such as eyeglasses and contact lenses. They take the prescription from an optometrist or an ophthalmologist and translate it into corrective vision for the patient.

EARS

The otorhinolaryngologist is your ear, nose and throat doctor. Now you see why you just call him the ear, nose and throat doctor or, even better, the ENT. This is a specialty in the medical field that can



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medically and surgically manage conditions of the head and neck. Otolaryngology, sometimes also called neurotology, is a branch of medicine which focuses on the inner ear, auditory nerve and base of the skull. Audiologists study and treat hearing disorders, including balance issues that are related to the ear. These are the health care specialists that test your hearing and can help treat hearing loss and other disorders.

NOSES AND THROATS

We're back to the ENT again. ENTs are specially trained to care for the nasal and sinus cavities can diagnose, manage and treat allergies, sinusitis, smell disorders and nasal obstructions. They also manage disease of the larynx and upper digestive tract and esophagus, including voice disorders and difficulty swallowing. They can treat infectious diseases, tumors, facial trauma and can even perform cosmet-

ic and reconstructive surgeries.

IMMUNOLOGISTS

Immunologists sometimes get called in for treatment of ENT disorders related to allergies. They treat health issues related to your immune system; when it overreacts, it causes an allergy. Because many allergy symptoms are related to the ears, nose and throat, your ENT may send you to an immunologist for more treatment.

RESPIRATORY THERAPIST

If you're having trouble breathing or smelling, you may also see a respiratory therapist. This health care professional is trained in critical care and cardiopulmonary medicine to help people who are having trouble breathing. Respiratory therapy can help some patients breathe easier, especially if they are suffering from a chronic illness such as emphysema or chronic bronchitis.

Working in a Pharmacy

Pharmacists do far more than just count the pills out. Working in a pharmacy is a specialized career that provides easily accessible patient care.

For many patients, the pharmacist, pharmacy technician or other employee may be the health care professional with whom they spend the most time.

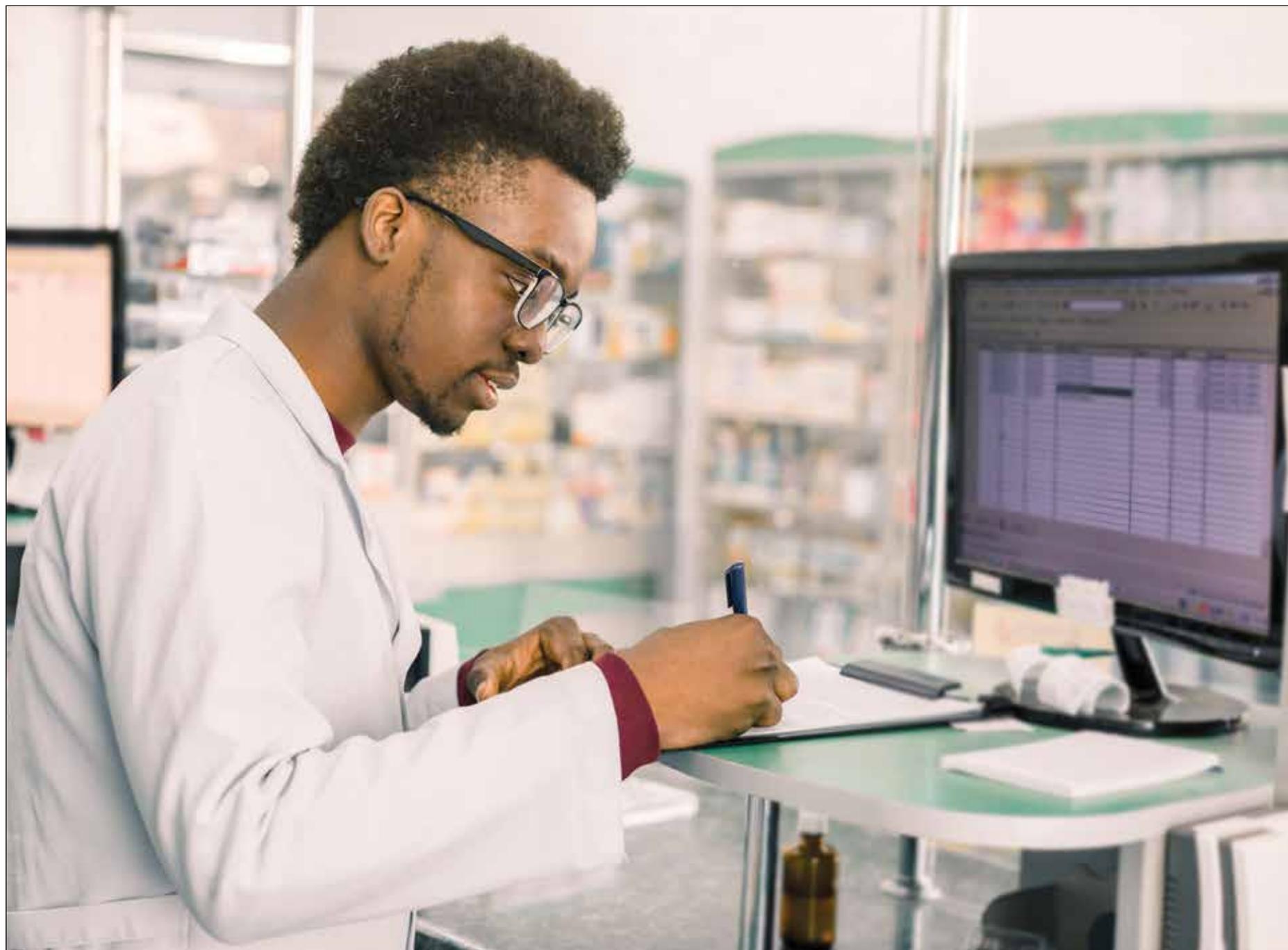
PHARMACISTS

These are highly trained health professionals with an in-depth knowledge of pharmaceutical products and their uses. They can fill medication prescriptions from doctors and may discuss medical alternatives and treatment plans. In some states, they can administer vaccines and prescribe medications for routine illnesses. They maintain records and stock medications to fill their patients' needs.

Becoming a pharmacist requires a doctoral or professional degree, usually a doctor of pharmacy degree.

PHARMACY TECHNICIANS

Pharmacy technicians work under a licensed pharmacist and help manage the pharmacy. They may order medications, keep the shelves clean and fill prescriptions in the proper dosages. Technicians



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also check for allergies and food and drug interactions. They may suggest over-the-counter medications for some patient ailments.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics says the job requires at least a high school diploma or equivalent. Many pharmacy technicians work part time, the bureau says.

PHARMACY ASSISTANT

These health care workers help manage the pharmacy by doing regular administrative tasks such as preparing audits and ordering office supplies.

They may also keep employee records and run background checks as necessary and conduct safety train-

ing and compliance checks.

PHARMACOLOGIST

Pharmacologists work with pharmaceutical companies, hospitals and other organizations to treat diseases. These health care professionals often collaborate with scientists in clinical programs to develop new medicines. They can

study medicines and data about patients to formulate new treatments.

Northeastern University says that most pharmacologists go on to be bench scientists at biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies. They may also work as professors and researchers at universities or pharmaceutical companies.

Dental Health Specialists

More than one in four adults in the United States have untreated tooth decay and nearly half of adults over 30 show signs of gum disease.

Those statistics alone are enough to make you want to brush and floss, both of which are key to overall great health. So is regular treatment by a dental health professional. Here are some jobs in dental health worth exploring.

DENTISTS

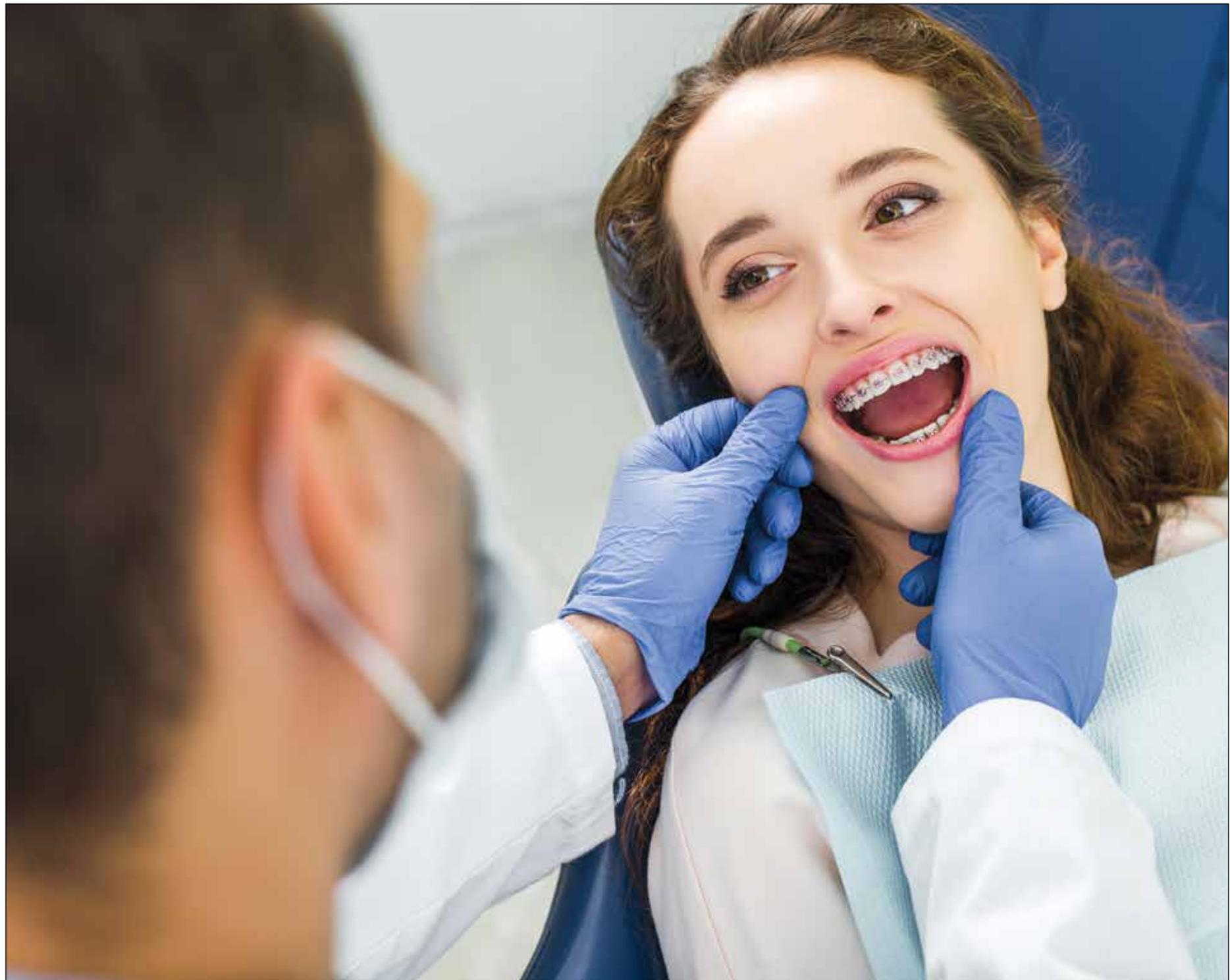
These are the general specialists for your teeth, gums and related parts of the mouth. Dentists must be licensed in the state in which they work and must usually have a doctor of dental surgery or doctor of medicine in dentistry. Demand for dentistry is growing.

DENTAL HYGIENISTS

These are the health care specialists you generally see before the dentist comes in. They clean your teeth and check for signs of oral diseases and provide preventive care. To become a dental hygienist, you need an associate degree in dental hygiene, which normally take three years to complete.

DENTAL ASSISTANTS

Dental assistants take X-rays, keep records and schedule appointments in the dentist's office. Some states require



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examination and licensure, but some allow on-the-job training. Check with your state licensure board for local requirements.

ORTHODONTISTS

Orthodontists treat irregular

teeth, inappropriate bites and facial growths. They use devices such as braces, retainers and bands to change the position of teeth. You'll need a bachelor's degree and a dental degree, as well as a certificate of orthodontics. You may also be

required to get separate certifications depending on your area of practice.

ENDODONTIST

These dental specialists care for problems that affect the pulp or the inside of the teeth.

Endodontists are dentists who undergo at least two more years of training to diagnose and treat tooth pain. They treat tooth decay, tooth abscess and injuries, such as cracked teeth. You may see an endodontist for procedures such as root canals.

Medical Records Management

Medical records are more important than ever in this age of regulation.

Medical records and health information specialists manage, organize and code health information data for use in a variety of systems. They verify and validate health information, including patients' medical histories, symptoms, treatments and test results and more.

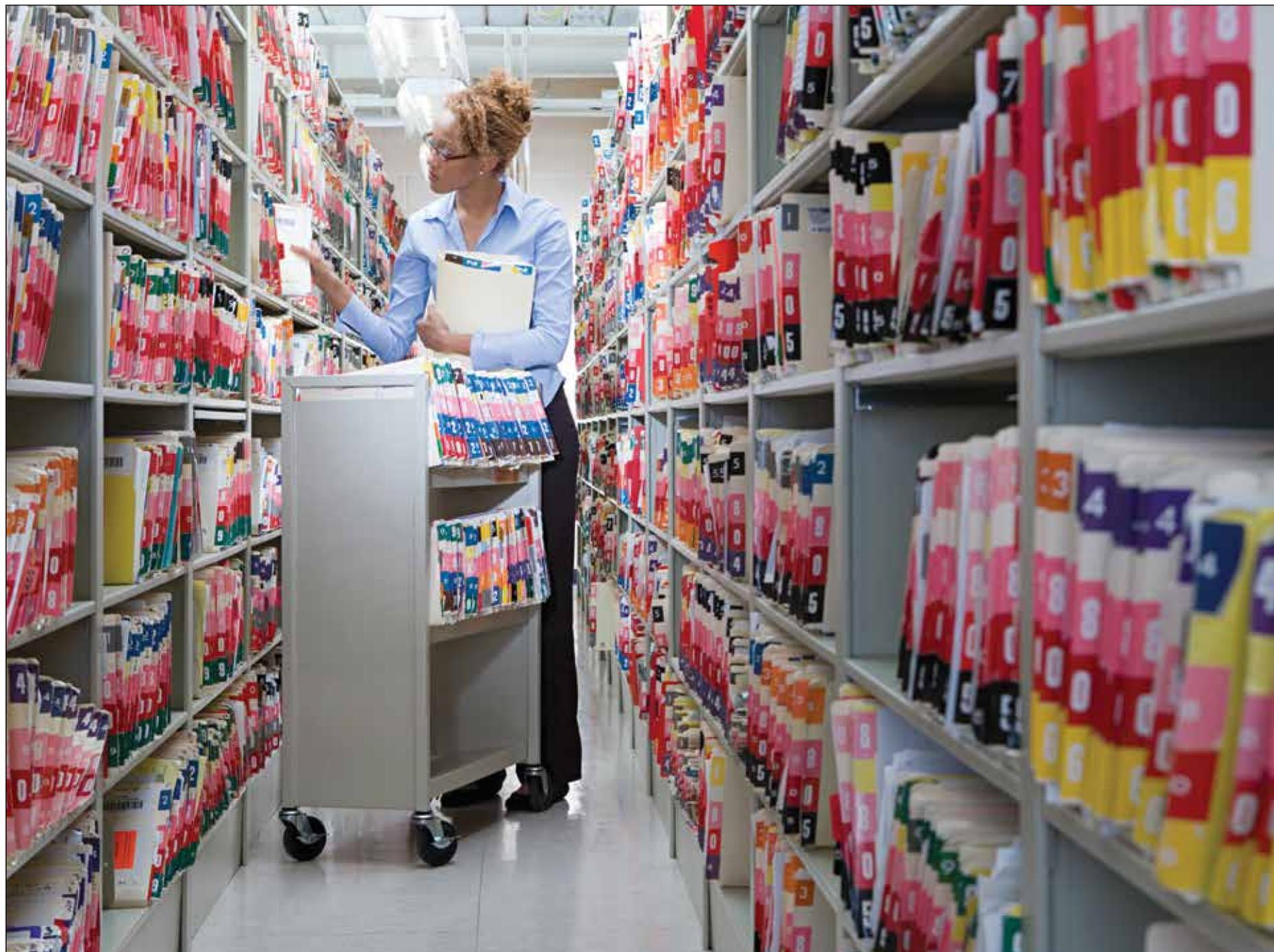
WHAT DO THEY DO?

Medical records and health information specialists will review patient records for completeness and accuracy. They also organize and update information in databases and registries, use classification systems to assign clinical codes for insurance reimbursement and data analysis, record data, and maintain confidentiality. Some job titles in this field include cancer registrars, health information technicians and medical coders.

HOW TO BECOME ONE

These health care professionals need a high school diploma, but may need some postsecondary education such as a certificate or even a degree in health information technology.

This may include courses in medical terminology, health data requirements and standards, classifications and coding systems, and other course work in health, computer sci-



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ence and biology.

There are also certifications in the field, including the certified professional coder (CPC), the certified coding associate (CCA), certified tumor registrar (CTR) and the registered health information technician (RHIT). You may have to pass an exam for these certifications and some may need to be

renewed regularly with continuing education and other requirements.

WHERE THEY WORK

Health information specialists work in hospitals, doctors' offices, educational services and for governments. They usually work full time, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor

Statistics, but they may work evening or overnight shifts, especially in hospitals. The best wages came to those in the federal government, followed by professional services.

GROWTH POTENTIAL

An aging population combined with a growing use of electronics records systems in

the health care field means an expectation of growth in the medical information industry. The bureau expects about 9% growth from 2020-2030, which is about the average for all occupations. Leading the way in growth are jobs in health information technologies, medical registrars and other technical workers.