



Key facts about Ontario's 24 colleges

Ontario Colleges: Producing a Strong Health Care Workforce

Building Ontario's Workforce
for the 21st Century

Ontario's health care challenge

Ontario requires a comprehensive plan to address the employment challenges in our health care system. Demographic shifts and an aging workforce are creating pressures in a range of health care fields, including medical radiation sciences, laboratory technology and nursing, as well as in home care services and centres for the elderly.

Planning to meet the challenges must begin now, and Ontario colleges, which deliver education and training programs for approximately 70 per cent of the province's 50 major health occupations, will play a central role in that effort.

"Shortages of health care professionals are not just a long-range forecast, they are quickly becoming the reality. And I'm not talking about developing countries, or the booming cities of China or Indonesia...I'm talking about Ontario."
- George Smitherman, Minister of Health

Ontario's Health Care Workforce

More than 270,000 people are employed in health occupations:

- About 55 per cent of workers employed in the sector have a postsecondary diploma or certificate, while 34 per cent have a university degree
- The average salary for those with a postsecondary certificate or diploma is \$42,700, compared with \$33,800 for those who have some postsecondary education
- From 1994 to 2004, the number of workers with a postsecondary diploma or certificate increased by 19 per cent, while the number of those with high school education dropped 50 per cent¹
- The proportion of the population aged 45 to 64 working in health occupations is increasing at a higher rate than the rest of the workforce, according to the Canadian Institute for Health Information. This trend, when coupled with the tendency of health professionals to retire before age 65, points to supply shortages:
- A 2003 study of Ontario's nursing workforce concluded that by 2008, Ontario will lose between 15,000 and 30,000 RNs aged 50 and over, and between 5,000 and 9,000 RPNs in the same age category
- A national review of the medical laboratory technology workforce in 2002 estimated that the number of Ontario medical laboratory technologists (MLTs) eligible for retirement is 276 per year for the period 2007 to 2011, representing a potential loss of approximately 21 per cent of the province's MLT workforce.

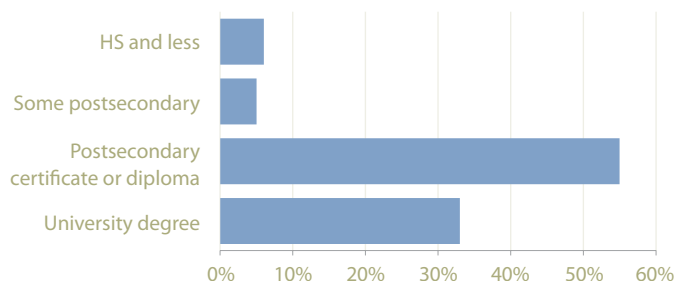
Over the past four years alone, colleges have contributed approximately 30,000 graduates to the health sector's workforce

Ontario's Colleges: A Vital Source of Human Capital for the Health Care Sector

- The health care system is dependent on colleges to supply graduates with the right knowledge, skills and abilities to work in a wide range of care settings
- Approximately 8,000 Ontario college students graduate from health sciences programs each year. Colleges offer multiple pathways for students entering the health care workforce, as well as career-building opportunities for those already employed in the sector. Students can choose from more than 40 health sciences programs offered through colleges, including:
 - dental hygiene, dental assistant
 - diagnostic sonography
 - dietary assistant
 - health promotion specialist
 - hearing instrument specialist
 - massage therapy
 - medical laboratory technology and assistant
 - medical radiation technology
 - nursing (in conjunction with university partners) and practical nursing
 - opticians
 - personal support worker
 - paramedics
 - pharmacy technician
 - physiotherapist assistant and occupational therapist assistant
 - respiratory therapy

Figure 1

Level of education of those in health occupations in Ontario

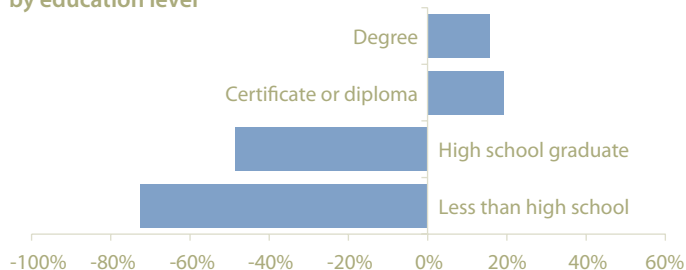


Source: Statistics Canada (2004). Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics.

¹ Data are based on the North American Industry Classification System, which includes health and social services in the same sector.

Figure 2

Health care and social assistance industry 10 year trend by education level



Source: Statistics Canada (2006). Labour force survey estimates, by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

“Building strong institutions for education is essential to secure the numbers and qualities of health workers required by the health system.” - World Health Organization

In 2004-05, Ontario colleges produced:

- 1,400 practical nurses
- 2,500 personal support workers
- 500 paramedics
- 1,000 graduates of Preparatory Health Sciences programs designed to help students qualify for admission to health sciences programs
- 1,400 Collaborative Nursing degree graduates in conjunction with university partners
- 350 dental hygienists
- 125 medical imaging, or radiological technologists
- 265 pharmacy technicians

College Health Care Graduates Get Jobs

College health care programs boast some of the highest employment rates in the college system (within six months of graduation).

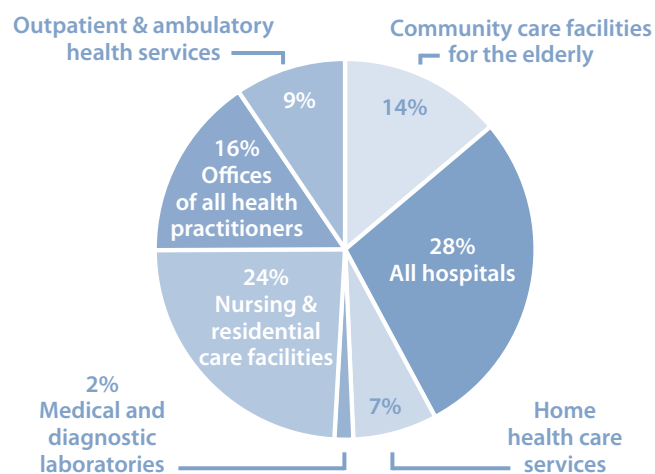
Table 1

Health care graduates employment rate

Program	Employment Rate
Opticianry	100%
Medical Imaging Technology - Radiography	98%
Registered Nursing (post-graduate programs)	97%
Paramedicine	97%
Respiratory Therapy	97%
Nursing	96%
Medical Laboratory Technology	95%
Dental Hygiene	93%
Practical Nursing	92%
Personal Support Work	90%

Figure 3

Graduate employment by health setting



Over 90 per cent of college health graduates were satisfied with the usefulness of their college education in achieving their goals after graduation; 91 per cent would recommend their program to others; 93 per cent of employers were satisfied with employee educational preparation for the type of work carried out.

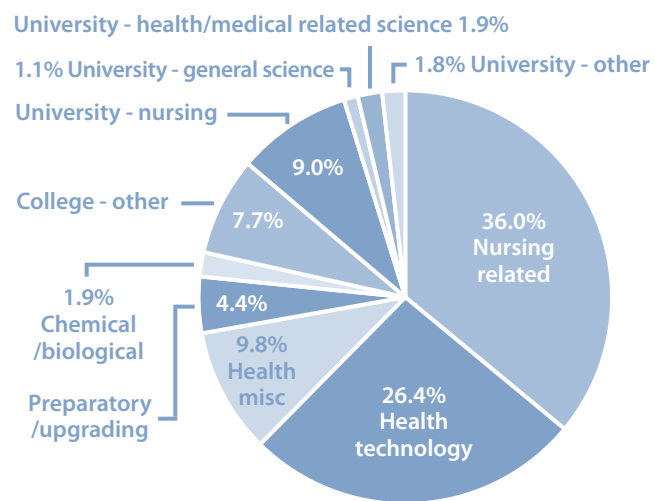
Consistent with national patterns, hospitals represent the largest employment setting for college health sciences graduates.

Further Education of Preparatory Health Sciences Graduates

A large majority of preparatory health sciences program graduates pursue further health sciences education within six months of their graduation.

Figure 4

Further education destinations of 2003-04 graduates of preparatory health programs in Ontario colleges



86% of graduates continue their education within 6 months

Ontario Colleges: Hubs for Innovation and Research in Health Sciences

Colleges are closely aligned with their community and industry partners. Not only are they producing highly skilled health care workers, colleges are also contributing to health care research and innovation. Some examples include:

- Researchers at Fanshawe College are working with environmental scientists, doctors, government regulators and scientific equipment manufacturers to study rapid fluctuations in air quality and their impact on human health
- Mohawk College and partner Six Nations Polytechnic in Oshweken have been recognized as Ontario's Aboriginal Nursing Hub of Excellence by Ontario's Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The designation reflects their successful partnership and achievements in recruiting and retaining aboriginal practical nursing students and preparing them to practice in First Nations communities
- To enhance student learning in life-like clinical situations, Algonquin College has created the Simulation Centre for Health Studies as a dedicated resource for integrating high fidelity simulation into curricula.
- Centennial College and partners George Brown College, the Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences, Ryerson University, and the University of Toronto received financial contributions from Health Canada to develop, implement and test undergraduate inter-professional curricula in disaster/emergency preparedness for health care professionals
- Fleming College and community partners built St. Joseph's at Fleming, a long-term care facility which also houses the Institute for Healthy Aging. The facility provides an intergenerational care environment, facilitates student and practitioner learning, and promotes best practices in geriatric and long-term care in the Peterborough area

- Ten colleges have formed the Colleges Ontario Network for Industry Innovation to work with business and industry on research and development initiatives, with each member contributing sectoral expertise. George Brown College in Toronto is the network's hub of expertise for health and life sciences.

"A strong human infrastructure is fundamental to closing today's gap between health promise and health reality."
- World Health Organization

College Degree Programs

Colleges offer the following applied baccalaureate degrees in health disciplines:

- Bachelor of Applied Health Sciences: Health Informatics
- Conestoga College
- Bachelor of Applied Health Sciences: Athletic Therapy
- Sheridan College

Colleges work together with universities and other organizations to offer programs to meet the needs of the community and learners. The Collaborative Nursing baccalaureate programs, in which 22 colleges partner with universities to deliver baccalaureate degree nursing programs, are offered throughout the province, including:

- Canadore College and Nipissing University
- Sault College and Laurentian University
- Loyalist College and Brock University
- Conestoga College, Mohawk College and McMaster University.

College-university partnerships also include concurrent diploma and degree programs and articulation agreements for advanced standing.

Algonquin • Boréal • Cambrian • Canadore • Centennial • Conestoga • Confederation • Durham
Fanshawe • Fleming • George Brown • Georgian • Humber • La Cité Collégiale • Lambton • Loyalist
Mohawk • Niagara • Northern • Sault • Seneca • Sheridan • St. Clair • St. Lawrence

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