

# ***Patient Care-Focused Health Care Career Pathways***

Jobs in nursing and related  
patient care



## ***WHAT IS PATIENT CARE-FOCUSED HEALTH CARE?***

Workers in patient care-focused health care provide various services to patients through the cycle of disease prevention, treatment, management, and education to restore or maintain their health. Nurses play an essential role in this field as they spend more time providing direct patient care than physicians and other professionals and face a wide range of job opportunities.

## ***AREAS IN PATIENT CARE-FOCUSED HEALTH CARE***

Nursing staff and medical assistants work in a variety of health care settings that can be divided into two groups: clinical settings, including hospitals, doctors' offices, urgent care centers, and clinics, and public health settings, including schools, community health centers, offices, and government agencies. With experience, certifications, and advanced education, nurses can move into more senior roles like nurse practitioners, midwives, and physician assistants. There are many other entry-level jobs that involve direct patient care and can equip workers with transferable skills to transition into nursing or another health care-related job.

## ***WORK ENVIRONMENT***

Schedules differ depending on work location. Employees in clinical settings that require round-the-clock coverage need to work various shifts and long hours. They may be on call during nights, weekends, and holidays. Others who work in public health settings typically enjoy a more regular schedule. Workers in public facilities are afforded more learning opportunities given the diversity of patients they attend to and can grow into roles that are not available in private practices, while those in private facilities enjoy higher wages and more flexible working hours.

## ***EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK***

With the rising need for various kinds of health care services due to an aging population, the demand for patient care professionals is high and will continue to grow. All jobs in this career map have "favorable" or "very favorable" employment growth prospects from 2018 through 2028, according to the New York State Department of Labor.

# PATIENT CARE-FOCUSED HEALTH CARE JOBS & POSSIBLE ENTRY POINTS

## NURSING CAREERS IN TRADITIONAL CLINICAL SETTINGS

Nurses in hospitals, clinics, and doctors' offices provide care to patients and support them through illnesses. Workers can enter the field as nurse aides, supervised by a licensed practical nurse (LPN) or a registered nurse (RN), to perform basic care duties such as changing clothes, feeding meals, and managing hygiene, or as patient care associates/technicians who also provide medical-related care (e.g., checking vital signs, recording medical histories). LPNs perform tasks such as assisting with minor surgeries and administering injections, still under the supervision of RNs. With additional education they can become licensed RNs.\* RNs have more autonomy, and their responsibilities can include performing diagnostic tests, administering medicine, operating equipment, and advising patients. Newly licensed RNs usually begin working at hospitals as staff nurses to gain experience, which may later lead to a specialization or supervisory roles like head nurse and supervisor of nurses.

**Critical skills:** communication, detailed-oriented, critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, dependability, and emotional stability; physical strength; leadership and administrative skills for supervisory roles; NYS license required for LPNs and RNs

## NURSING CAREERS IN PUBLIC HEALTH SETTINGS

RNs also work in schools, public clinics, government agencies, non-profits, senior centers, and other public health settings. They perform many of the same duties as RNs in the clinical settings but care for communities and populations, which may involve educating the public, implementing public wellness programs, and helping underserved communities.

Entry-level workers can start as public health assistants who perform clerical and basic medical duties. Workers may start their licensed nursing careers as public health nurses. Experienced workers can become consultant public health nurses who provide advice on matters related to the development of new public health programs to ensure they comply with standards, case management nurses who oversee long-term care plans for patients, or family public health nurses who provide prenatal and early childhood care through home visits for underserved communities. Workers with excellent performance and demonstration of leadership may be promoted to senior-level roles such as an administrative public health nurse.

**Critical skills:** communication, people skills, detailed-oriented, critical thinking, problem solving, project management, teamwork, influencing, and negotiating skills; leadership and administrative skills for supervisory roles; NYS license required for RNs

## NURSING CAREER ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

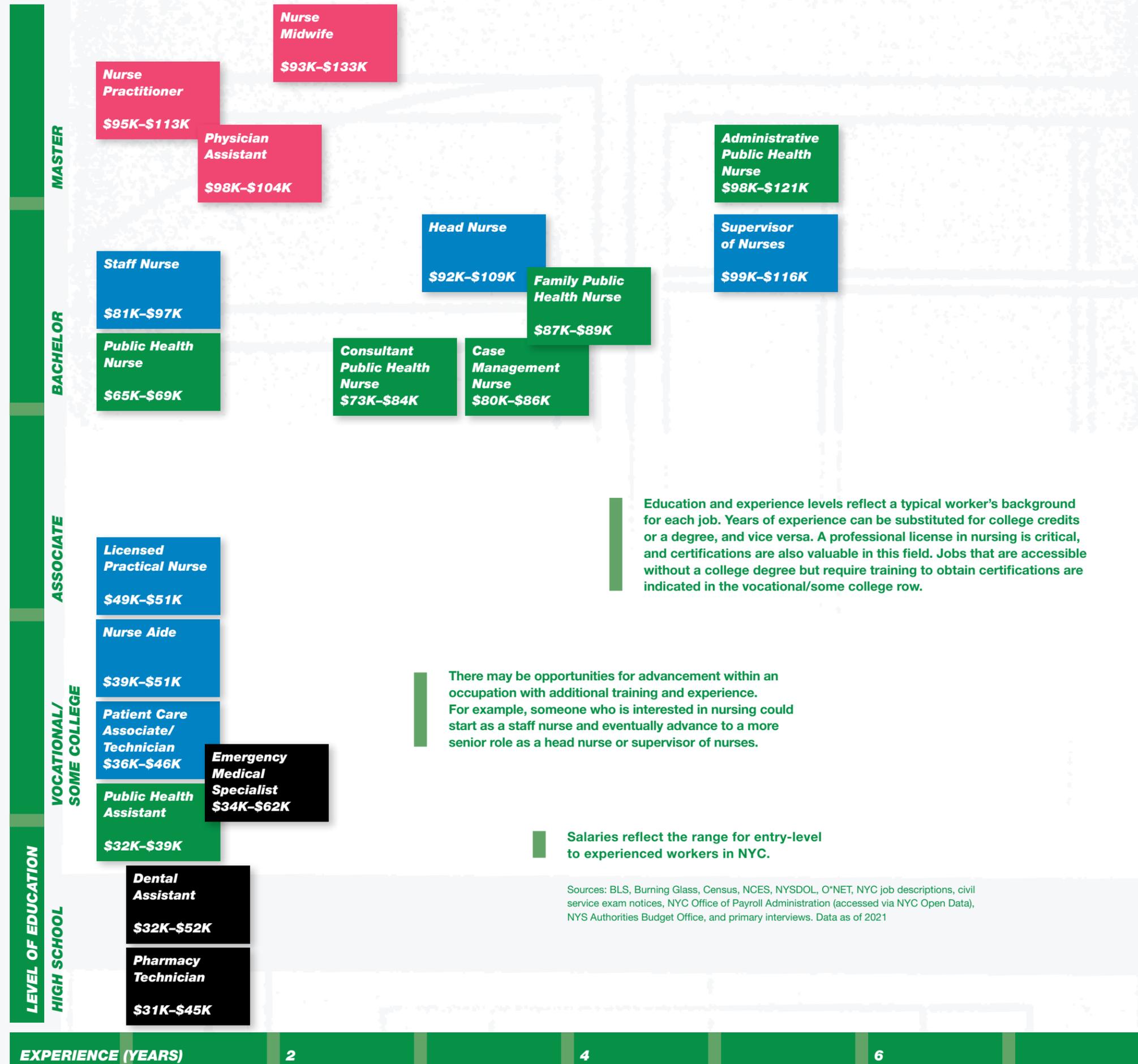
RNs in a skilled nursing practice provide primary and specialty health care with a high level of independence that is just below or similar to the level of physicians. Nurse practitioners can independently diagnose, treat, and manage illnesses and consult with physicians on an as-needed basis. Nurse midwives provide care for women, with a special focus on pregnancy, labor and delivery, newborn, and gynecologic care. These nurses must maintain their nursing licenses and obtain at least a master's degree in their specialization. Physician assistants work with doctors to provide medical care. Like nurse practitioners, they have autonomy in illness diagnosis, treatment, and writing prescriptions but have a more generalized medical education and training.

**Critical skills:** communication, people skills, detailed-oriented, ethical decision making, critical thinking, analytical, and leadership skills; specialized knowledge; NYS license

## OTHER PATIENT CARE-FOCUSED OPPORTUNITIES

Dental assistants support dentists in performing preventative care and treatment by preparing patients for procedures, organizing equipment, conducting x-rays, and managing office duties. Pharmacy technicians assist pharmacists with preparing and dispensing drugs and over-the-counter medicines; they also monitor drug inventory and maintain pharmacy records. Emergency medical specialists provide initial evaluation of patients' conditions and perform on-site emergency care. Experienced workers can move into supervisory roles, obtain training and a license for a related job (e.g., dental hygienist), or even transition into nursing. These are just three examples of workers besides nurses and medical assistants who help and care for patients. Respiratory therapists, physical and occupational therapists and their assistants, and many other jobs entail providing patient care.

**Critical skills:** interpersonal, detailed-oriented, listening, organizational, math, dexterity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills; physical strength for emergency medical specialists; leadership and administrative skills for supervisory roles



Education and experience levels reflect a typical worker's background for each job. Years of experience can be substituted for college credits or a degree, and vice versa. A professional license in nursing is critical, and certifications are also valuable in this field. Jobs that are accessible without a college degree but require training to obtain certifications are indicated in the vocational/some college row.

There may be opportunities for advancement within an occupation with additional training and experience. For example, someone who is interested in nursing could start as a staff nurse and eventually advance to a more senior role as a head nurse or supervisor of nurses.

Salaries reflect the range for entry-level to experienced workers in NYC.

Sources: BLS, Burning Glass, Census, NCES, NYSDOL, O\*NET, NYC job descriptions, civil service exam notices, NYC Office of Payroll Administration (accessed via NYC Open Data), NYS Authorities Budget Office, and primary interviews. Data as of 2021

\* The NYS "BSN in 10" law passed in 2017 requires RNs to earn at least a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing within 10 years of licensure.

# PATIENT CARE HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

COLLEGE NAME	PROGRAM NAME	Certificate/Training	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Advanced Certificate	Master's Degree	Doctoral Degree
<b>NYC</b>							
CUNY BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN CC	Nursing/Paramedic		●				
CUNY BRONX CC	Nursing		●				
CUNY CITY COLLEGE	Physician Assistant					●	
CUNY CITY TECH	Nursing		●	●			
CUNY COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND	Nursing		●	●	●	●	●
CUNY HOSTOS CC	Nursing		●	●			
CUNY HUNTER COLLEGE	Nursing			●	●	●	●
CUNY KINGSBOROUGH CC	Emergency Medical Services— Paramedic/Nursing		●				
CUNY LAGUARDIA CC	Nursing		●	●			
	Paramedic		●				
CUNY LEHMAN COLLEGE	Nursing			●	●	●	●
CUNY MEDGAR EVERS COLLEGE	Nursing		●	●	●		
CUNY QUEENSBOROUGH CC	Nursing		●				
CUNY YORK COLLEGE	Nursing			●			
	Physician Assistant						●
	Public Health					●	●
SUNY DOWNSTATE HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY	Midwife				●	●	
	Nursing			●	●	●	●
	Physician Assistant						●
	Public Health					●	●
<b>HUDSON VALLEY</b>							
ORANGE COUNTY CC	Nursing		●				
ROCKLAND CC	Nursing		●				
SULLIVAN COUNTY CC	Nursing		●				
SUNY WESTCHESTER CC	Nursing		●				
	Paramedic		●	●			
SUNY ULSTER	Nursing		●	●			
<b>LONG ISLAND</b>							
NASSAU CC	Nursing		●	●			
STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY	Nursing			●			●
	Public Health/Physician Assistant						●
SUFFOLK COUNTY CC	Emergency Medical Technician: Paramedic		●				
	Nursing		●	●			
<b>NEW JERSEY</b>							
BERGEN CC	Nursing/Paramedic Science		●				
ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE	Nursing		●	●			
HUDSON COUNTY CC	Nursing/Paramedic Science		●				
KEAN UNIVERSITY	Nursing			●	●	●	
	Physician Assistant						●
MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY	Nursing/Public Health						●
NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY	Nursing			●	●	●	
	Public Health Education						●
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY	Nursing			●	●	●	●
UNION COUNTY COLLEGE	Emergency Medical Studies/Nursing		●	●			
	Paramedic Emergency Health Science		●				
<b>ONLINE</b>							
PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY-WORLD CAMPUS	Nursing			●	●	●	
	Nursing Management		●				
	Nurse Administrator/Educator					●	

CC denotes Community College.

Certificate/training programs listed in this table reflect those that directly lead to an accredited certification. Schools may also offer courses or programs that prepare students for certification exams offered by other organizations, such as the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB) and the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB). Schools may list these programs under the Continuing Education or Workforce Training sections of their websites.

Check with the New York State Education Dept. as to whether degrees earned outside of New York State meet the eligibility criteria for licensure in New York (e.g., for nursing occupations or other jobs that require a license to practice).

Private institutions also offer related programs. Check in your local area or for online programs.