

## **HEALTHCARE WORKERS IN HIGH DEMAND DURING COVID-19 CRISIS**

COVID-19 has brought American economy to its knees. Retail shops, restaurants, personal care businesses, gyms, shopping malls and scores of other businesses remain shuttered across California more than 3 months after the state issued a stay-at-home order to slow the coronavirus epidemic. California lost a record 2.3 million jobs in April and its unemployment rate nearly tripled to 15.5%, reflecting the swift and widespread economic pain caused by the COVID-19 outbreak and the forced business shutdowns. “The unprecedented job losses are like nothing before seen in California history in a current data series that dates back to 1976 and are a direct result of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic,” according to the state’s Employment Development Department.

Many of these jobs may come back once we come out of this crisis but some jobs may be lost permanently. But do not lose heart. In this bleak picture there are still a few bright spots.

The brightest spot belongs to healthcare industry. You’ve seen images on television of homebound citizens leaning out of apartment windows to hail and cheer front-line health workers coming home after their long shifts. These workers are recognized as “heroes.”

Today, medical technicians, emergency workers, first responders and nurses are on the front lines of the COVID-19 response. The nature of the virus, which poses the biggest threat to individuals over 65, has raised the demand for healthcare workers involved in eldercare. This demand for healthcare professionals is not likely to disappear once the virus has been contained.

Healthcare is widely regarded as a recession-proof industry. Right now, as businesses of all nature close their doors and lay off employees, nurses and emergency workers are putting in overtime hours around the clock. Hospitals are paying bonuses and other incentives to hire and retain their nursing staff.

Stories such as these and the heroic efforts exerted by workers throughout the industry are spurring young workers just entering the job market to gravitate toward nursing careers. If you’re one such young individual at the cusp of starting a lifetime career, Homestead Schools may have an answer for you.

You see, Homestead has been training young people to become certified nurse assistants, home health aides and licensed vocational nurses for over 12 years. These are entry-level programs that give you a foothold in the healthcare arena and during this current crisis these professionals are in greatest demand for they can visit patients stricken with COVID-19 in their homes and provide comfort and care. Many graduates of Homestead Schools are exactly working in this capacity and earning above-average pay.

Homestead also offers degree programs for RNs that want to advance their careers in management and education by adding bachelor’s and master’s credentials to their resume. Hospitals will offer “bounties” to hire these highly regarded nursing professionals to their staff to handle the onrush of COVID-19 patients.

So, there you go. If you're in the process of deciding a career path for yourself with a job that will offer financial security and personal satisfaction, you need to go no farther than Homestead Schools. You must have a high school diploma but, above all, a desire to help people in their hour of need.

Homestead experienced first hand this surge in demand from those wanting to enter the nursing profession. We were recruiting candidates for the vocational nursing program for a class that will open in the next couple of weeks. Competing for 24 available slots, we had 36 qualified candidates. We had to put 12 disappointed prospective students on the wait list for a class to open later in the fall.

This pandemic has brought new attention to the importance of healthcare workers in society. The demand for these front-line professionals won't let up, even as the curve begins to flatten. Instead, we are just at the start of a decade of enormous growth for the healthcare industry.

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