

Fast Facts

Immigrant Workers in the Massachusetts Health Care Industry

- In 2005, health care (along with social assistance) was **the largest employment sector in the state with almost half a million workers.**
- In the same year, the **health sector made \$29 billion in sales through 19,158 establishments.**
- Foreign-born (immigrant) health care workers **are filling critical vacancies** across the spectrum of health care with concentrations at both the high-skilled and low-skilled ends of the spectrum.
- In 2005, **foreign-born Medical Scientists led the way as more than half of all workers in this occupational category, followed by Pharmacists at 40 percent, Physician Assistants at 28 percent and Physicians/Surgeons at 28 percent.**
- In the same period, **Nursing Psychiatric and Home Health Aides represented 33 percent of all workers in this category.** These workers also compose a substantial part of the "gray market" in home health care not counted in official statistics.
- Overall, foreign-born workers showed a **significant presence in 22 different health care occupations.**
- The Massachusetts Division of Unemployment Assistance projects 49,000 job openings between 2000 and 2010 for "Health Diagnosing and Treating Practitioners that includes 23,480 new jobs. **Health care remains the fastest growing employment sector in the state in spite of the recent economic downturn.**
- **Graying baby boomers, longer living periods, technological advances and the state's Health Care Reform movement** will all accelerate growth in the need for health care workers.
- **The demand for Registered Nurses and Home Health Aides** will increase dramatically.
- In addition to filling critical vacancies and bringing valuable education and training, foreign-born health care workers bring **cultural competence and enhanced cross-cultural communications** to the health care settings that are serving an increasingly diverse patient population.
- Hospitals, Community Health Centers and Long-Term Care Facilities have a significant presence in the state's major regions. These regions also show a significant growth in immigrant populations. **This means that immigrants are both a source of workers as well as consumers of health care in these regions.**
- To ensure the workforce necessary for the growth and vibrancy of the state's health care economy, workforce development strategies and initiatives **must link the supply of immigrants to the demands of our health care industry.**