

Health Care Systems: Providers

HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS make up the health care system. These unique providers deliver distinctive services to patients and their families. As you read through the list of common providers, you may be surprised to realize how many of these you or a family member may have visited in the past 12 months.



Objective:



Identify the various health care providers that compose the health care industry, and describe the unique characteristics of each provider.

Key Terms:



chronic diseases
diagnostic facilities
outpatient
rehabilitation
surgical

Health Care Providers

The average family is likely to be familiar with various types of health care providers. You may have a family member in an independent living situation. Also, you probably visit the dentist and/or the optometrist annually, and you may have had to visit a hospital. Each of these health care providers is a member of a wider network of health care providers.

HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY

There are many health care providers in the health care industry. To get a bird's eye view of the industry, review the lists below.

Health Care Industry Providers

- ◆ Hospitals
 - Long-term care
 - Short-term care
- ◆ Convalescent care
 - Long-term care
 - Short-term care
- ◆ Independent living
 - Medical
 - Dental
- ◆ Clinic or office
 - Medical
 - Dental
- ◆ Ambulatory care clinic
- ◆ Optical centers
- ◆ Emergency care services
- ◆ Laboratories
- ◆ Home health care
- ◆ Hospice
- ◆ Mental health
- ◆ Genetic counseling centers
- ◆ Rehabilitation centers
- ◆ Health maintenance organizations (HMO)
- ◆ Industrial health care centers
- ◆ School health services

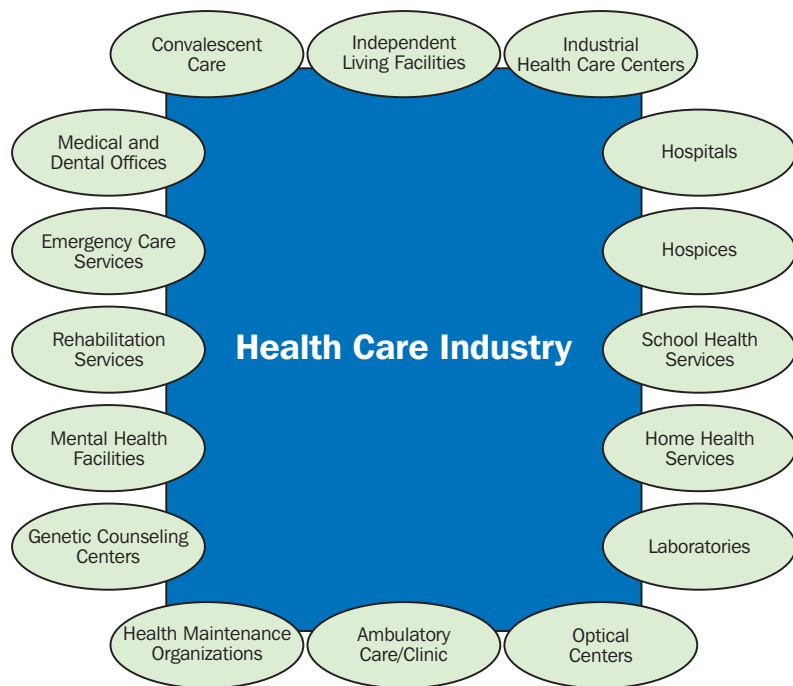


FIGURE 1. Many health care providers comprise the U.S. health care industry.

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH PROVIDER

Each of the above referenced providers delivers a unique service to the health care customer.

Hospitals

General hospitals are **facilities** (places designed or built to serve a special function) where patients are hospitalized for a short time. They provide **diagnostic** (determination of the nature of a disease or injury by examination with X-rays or laboratory tests), medical, **surgical** (repairing or removing a body part by cutting), and emergency care services. Specialty hospitals provide care for specific illnesses, such as **chronic diseases** (conditions continuing over many years or for an extended period of time, such as tuberculosis or psychiatric problems). Patients in these conditions are generally hospitalized for long periods.

Convalescent Care

Convalescent care facilities provide care for elderly people or surgical patients who require nursing services or personal care. Long-term care facilities (nursing homes) also provide

extended care for recovery or **rehabilitation** (services for patients who have been disabled by sickness or injury to aid in their recovery of as many of their original abilities of daily living as possible).

Independent Living

Independent living facilities allow an individual, who can care for himself or herself, to rent or purchase an apartment. Services (e.g., meals, housekeeping, laundry, transportation, social events, and basic medical care) are provided.

Clinics and Offices

Clinics or offices vary in size from small to large. They employ doctors and other health professionals and are sometimes referred to as satellite clinics or centers. Many hospitals operate clinics for **outpatient** (patients who do not require hospitalization but are under a physician's care) services. Medical offices may contain general practitioners or specialty physicians. Services include diagnosis, treatment, examination, basic laboratory testing, minor surgery, and other similar types of care. Dental offices provide general dental care or specialized dental care (e.g., routine cleaning and root canals).

Ambulatory Care

Ambulatory care facilities have several physicians with different specialties who combine their practices to meet the needs of many patients.

Optical Centers

Optical centers may be individually owned by an ophthalmologist or optometrist or by part of a larger chain of stores. Services include vision examinations, eyeglass adjustments, contact lens prescriptions, and general eye disease diagnostics.

Emergency Care

Emergency care services provide special care for victims of accidents or sudden illness; they are sometimes called Urgent Care Centers. Emergency care services may include or coordinate care provided by ambulance services, rescue squads, fire departments, and emergency transport services.

Laboratories

Laboratories are often a part of other facilities, but they may operate as an independent health care service (e.g., medical and dental labs).



FIGURE 2. Laboratories are often a part of other facilities, but they may operate as independent health care services.

Home Health Care

Home health care facilities provide medical care in a patient's home. Services include nursing care, personal care, therapy (e.g., physical, occupational, speech, and respiratory) and homemaking (e.g., food preparation and cleaning).

Hospice

Hospice provides care for the terminally ill (with life expectancies of six months or less). Care can be provided in a patient's home or in a hospice facility.

Mental Health

Mental health facilities provide care to patients with mental disorders and diseases. Facilities include guidance and counseling centers, psychiatric clinics and hospitals, chemical abuse treatment centers (alcohol and drug), and physical abuse treatment centers (child or spousal abuse).

Genetic Counseling

Genetic counseling centers may be independently owned or located within another health care facility. Genetic counselors work with couples or individuals concerning pregnancy. They conduct prenatal screenings, check for genetic abnormalities and birth defects, and interpret test results. Genetic counselors also provide medical options and may provide counseling services.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation facilities are located in hospitals, clinics, or private centers. These facilities provide care to patients with physical or mental disabilities. The employees help patients obtain maximum self-care and maximum function. Services may include physical, occupational, recreational, speech, and hearing therapy.

Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs)

HMOs provide total care that is directed toward preventive health care. Services include examinations, basic medical services, health education, and hospitalization or rehabilitation services, as needed. HMOs may be operated by large industries or corporations or by private agencies and often use the services of other health care providers.

Industrial Health Care

Industrial health care centers (occupational health clinics) are found in large companies or industries. These clinics provide health care for employees of the industry or business by performing basic examinations, teaching accident prevention and safety, and providing emergency care.

School Health Services

School health services (located in some schools and colleges) provide emergency care services for victims of accidents and sudden illness. Employees perform speech, vision, and hearing tests; promote health education; maintain a safe and sanitary school environment; and may provide counseling services to students.



ON THE JOB...

CAREER CONNECTION: Nursing Instructors

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics at <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes251072.htm#>, top nursing instructors and teachers at the postsecondary level teach patient care in classroom and clinical units to nursing students. Some positions include teaching and research.

The national estimates for this occupation are as follows:

Employment	Employment (Relative Standard Error)	Mean Annual Wage
54,050	1.9%	\$66,010

Percentile wage estimates for this occupation:

Percentile	10%	25%	50% (Median)	75%	90%
Annual wage	\$38,650	\$49,340	\$62,390	\$79,070	\$99,660

Industries with the highest levels of employment in this occupation:

Industry	Employment	Percent of Industry Employment	Annual Mean Wage
Colleges, universities, and professional schools	26,650	0.94	\$66,770
Junior colleges	19,840	2.60	\$63,710
Technical and trade schools	3,400	2.20	\$57,900
General medical and surgical hospitals	3,090	0.06	\$77,570
Business schools and computer and management training	460	0.56	\$84,460

Industries with the highest concentration of employment in this occupation:

Industry	Employment	Percent of Industry Employment	Annual Mean Wage
Junior colleges	19,840	2.60	\$63,710
Technical and trade schools	3,400	2.20	\$57,900
Colleges, universities, and professional schools	26,650	0.94	\$66,770
Business schools and computer and management training	460	0.56	\$84,460
General medical and surgical hospitals	3,090	0.06	\$77,570

Top paying industries for this occupation:

Industry	Employment	Percent of Industry Employment	Annual Mean Wage
Specialty (except psychiatric and substance abuse) hospitals	60	0.03	\$112,180
State government (OES designation)	(data not released)	(data not released)	\$91,110
Educational support services	40	0.03	\$90,300
Business schools and computer and management training	460	0.56	\$84,460
General medical and surgical hospitals	3,090	0.06	\$77,570

Use this same website to verify the employment data for this career in your state. How does the national data differ from your state data? What is the job outlook for this career?

Summary:



There are many health care providers in the health care industry. The average family and individual has accessed one or more of these providers. Hospitals are one of the most frequented health care providers. General hospitals are facilities where patients are hospitalized for a short time. They provide diagnostic, medical, surgical, and emergency care services.

Specialty hospitals provide care for specific illnesses, such as chronic diseases. Patients are generally hospitalized for long periods. There are many other health

care providers, including convalescent care, independent living, clinic or office, ambulatory care clinic, optical centers, emergency care services laboratories, home health care, hospice, mental health, genetic counseling centers, rehabilitation centers, Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO), industrial health care centers, and school health services.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. Explain what service a home health care provider may deliver.
2. Explain what service a mental health provider may deliver.
3. Explain what service a hospice provider may deliver.
4. Define the term “chronic diseases.”
5. List five types of health care providers other than those mentioned in the previous four questions.

Expanding Your Knowledge:



What types of health care providers has your family visited in the past 12 months? Interview your parents and family members to make a list of those health care providers. What other health care providers exist in your community? Can you find some specialist providers not listed in this E-unit? Research your community using the phone book, the Chamber of Commerce, and city online resources.

Web Links:



Provider Types

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001933.htm>

CDC for Healthcare Providers

http://www.cdc.gov/cdcforyou/healthcare_providers.html

Career Guide

<http://www.bls.gov/oco/cg/cgs035.htm>