

The Growing Demand for Healthcare Workers in Maine

The United States has faced a shortage of healthcare workers for years; a challenge that was only exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2018, even before the pandemic, there were 27 open healthcare practitioner jobs — such as doctors, surgeons, and registered nurses — for every available unemployed healthcare practitioner across the country.¹ In Maine, there continues to be a need for qualified professionals to provide timely care, and despite barriers, internationally trained healthcare workers routinely punch above their weight in the field.² Despite the many barriers that internationally trained healthcare workers face to practicing medicine in the state, immigrants play a key role in the field.³ From 2015 to 2019, immigrants on average made 6.1 percent of the state’s healthcare workers⁴ — including 15.9 percent of all physicians and surgeons⁵ — while making up 3.7 percent of the workforce.⁶

Like much of the nation, Maine is impacted by labor shortages, demographic changes, and the growing number of baby boomers reaching retirement age and exiting the workforce. For the state to remain competitive and ensure that all its residents can access quality and timely care, it will be crucial to implement policies that not only attract and retain global talent that is complementary to the U.S.-born workforce, but also build career pathways for immigrants who already call the state home.

One way to achieve this goal is to join states like Minnesota and Washington in reducing barriers for international medical graduates (IMGs) and other internationally trained healthcare workers.

In 2019, Maine was home to more than

49,500

immigrants who made up

3.7%

of the state’s workforce.

Immigrants are critical to addressing the state’s workforce shortages across the skills and education spectrum, with 68.7 percent of immigrants in Maine being of working age (ages 16-64) compared to 62.4 percent of their U.S.-born counterparts, and more than one in five immigrants holding a bachelor’s degree or higher.⁷

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More than

1 in 5

immigrants in Maine have a bachelor’s degree or higher.

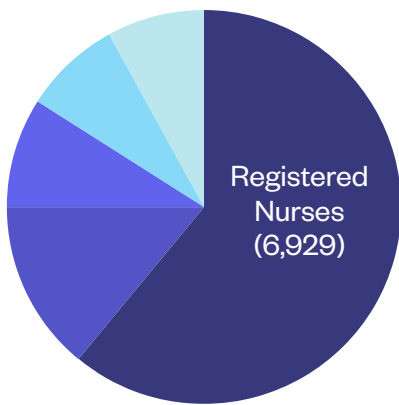
HEALTHCARE JOB DEMAND IN MAINE

Despite a 31.4 percent decline in the total number of online job postings for the state’s healthcare industry between 2018 and 2022, the state has seen dramatic increases in postings for certain healthcare occupations.

Between 2018 and 2022, the average advertised wages for healthcare workers rose⁹ from

\$78,251 → \$101,269

From 2018 to 2022, the **top five in-demand healthcare jobs** in Maine were:¹⁰



- 1 Registered Nurses (6,929 postings)
- 2 Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other (1,528)
- 3 Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses (1,069)
- 4 Nurse Practitioners (900)
- 5 Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians (841)

During the same period, the **top Maine employers** hiring healthcare workers were **Intermed, CompHealth, Maine Medical Center, Genesis Healthcare, and Northern Light Health**.¹¹

ONLINE JOB POSTINGS FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS, 2018-2022¹²

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Technologists

+336.8%

Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers, All Other

+220.0%

Recreational Therapists

+176.5%

Ophthalmic Medical Technicians

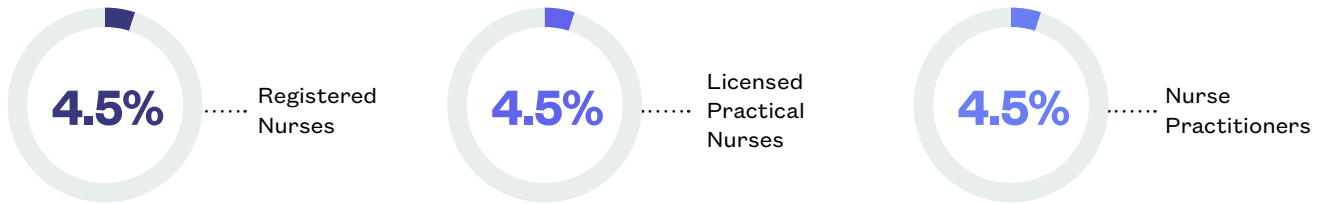
+166.7%

Radiologic Technologists and Technicians

+148.9%

ONLINE JOB POSTINGS FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS (CONTINUED)

The average share of healthcare workers from 2015 to 2019 who were immigrants¹³



As employers struggle to recruit and retain specialized healthcare workers, immigrants play a crucial role in helping to address labor shortages. With an increase in demand for multilingual and culturally competent employees, internationally trained healthcare professionals are uniquely positioned to provide support across all healthcare settings.

From 2018 to 2022, the number of healthcare job postings that required **bilingual skills** in Maine increased by¹⁴

+180.0%

HEALTHCARE JOB POSTINGS BY RURAL-URBAN CLASSIFICATION¹⁵

The number of job postings between 2018 and 2022 by Maine County Classification:

For **small/medium metro counties**¹⁶ the number of postings decreased by

-24.7%

For **rural counties**¹⁷ the number of postings decreased by

-42.8%

PHYSICIANS

In 2015, long before the COVID-19 pandemic, Maine faced severe physician shortages, with some counties across the state registering 113 physicians per 100,000 residents.¹⁸ Future projections remain dire. Maine is expected to need an additional 120 primary care physicians by 2030, significantly impacting the accessibility of healthcare.

ONLINE JOB POSTINGS FOR PHYSICIANS, 2018-2022²⁰

Between 2018 and 2022,
online job postings for
orthopedic surgeons
increased by

+40.6%



In Maine, the average share
of **physicians, surgeons,**
and **podiatrists** who were
immigrants was **15.9%**.²¹

Addressing the barriers that prevent additional qualified, internationally trained healthcare workers from practicing in Maine will be vital to helping the state meet its growing healthcare needs.

ENDNOTES

- 1 New American Economy, "Immigrant Healthcare Workers Are Critical in the Fight Against Covid-19," April 2020, <https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/report/covid-19-immigrant-healthcare-workers/>.
- 2 Unless stated otherwise, all data in this report is reflective of Maine.
- 3 We define an immigrant as anyone born outside the country to non-U.S. citizen parents who is a resident in the United States. This includes naturalized citizens, green card holders, temporary visa holders, refugees, asylees, and undocumented immigrants, among others.
- 4 American Immigration Council analysis of the IPUMS microdata from the 2015-19 American Community Survey, 5-Year Sample.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 American Immigration Council analysis of data from the 1-year 2019 American Community Survey. See American Immigration Council, "Map the Impact: Maine," accessed on April 10, 2023, <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/maine/>.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 American Immigration Council analysis of data compiled by Lightcast 2023, <https://kb.emsidata.com/methodology/emsi-data-basic-overview/>.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 American Immigration Council analysis of the IPUMS microdata from the 2015-19 American Community Survey, 5-Year Sample.
- 14 American Immigration Council analysis of data compiled by Lightcast 2023, <https://kb.emsidata.com/methodology/emsi-data-basic-overview/>.
- 15 Using the 2013 NCHS Urban-Rural Classification Scheme for Counties, Maine counties were grouped into two different population groups: medium and small metropolitan, and rural counties. NCHS medium and small metropolitan counties were combined for the middle classification. Rural counties were identified using the micropolitan and non-core NCHS classifications.
- 16 Small and medium metro counties in Maine include Androscoggin, Penobscot, Cumberland, Sagadahoc, and York counties.
- 17 Rural counties in Maine include Aroostook, Franklin, Hancock, Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford, Piscataquis, Somerset, Waldo, and Washington counties.
- 18 New American Economy, "Life Support: The Shortage of Physicians in America's Rural Counties and How Foreign-Born Doctors Can Help," September 2015, <http://research.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/lifesupport929-1.pdf>.
- 19 Stephen M. Petterson, Angela Cai, Miranda Moore, and Andrew Bazemore, "Maine: Projecting Primary Care Physician Workforce, 2010-2030," Robert Graham Center, September 2013, <https://www.graham-center.org/content/dam/rgc/documents/maps-data-tools/state-collections/workforce-projections/Maine.pdf>.
- 20 American Immigration Council analysis of data compiled by Lightcast 2023, <https://kb.emsidata.com/methodology/emsi-data-basic-overview/>.
- 21 American Immigration Council analysis of the IPUMS microdata from the 2015-19 American Community Survey, 5-Year Sample.