

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	NO. 10-10
	DATE September 30, 2010

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS

FROM: JANE OATES /s/
Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Release and Availability of Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) *Allied Health Access (AHA!) Guidebook: How to Develop Programs for Youth in Allied Health Careers*

1. Purpose. To announce the release and availability of ETA's *Allied Health Access (AHA!) Guidebook: How to Develop Programs for Youth in Allied Health Careers*.

2. Background. On May 23, 2010, President Obama signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 into law. This landmark health care reform bill is one of the most expansive pieces of legislation enacted in decades and requires the federal government, as well as the private sector, to implement numerous changes to existing policies and practices over the next several years. Through its measures, this legislation will greatly increase the need for primary care in this country; thereby increasing the number of jobs in allied health in support of primary care. In response to the bill's passage, and consequently, the need to meet the demand for skilled workers in the health care industry, the Department of Labor (DOL) is making considerable investments in projects that focus on preparing participants for employment in the health care sector. This *Allied Health Access Guidebook: How to Develop Programs for Youth in Allied Health Careers* is one of many resources in support of that effort.

Other DOL efforts include:

- Awarding more than 30 percent of its grants under the High-Growth Job Training Initiative (HGJTI) and the Community-Based Job Training Grants (CBJTG) to programs that train workers for careers in the health care sector. Within these grants, approximately 60 percent of health care grants were directed to nurse training.
- Awarding of 39 grants, authorized by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) to provide training for healthcare subsectors such as Health Information Technology, Long-Term Care and Allied Health occupations. These grants support community colleges, community-based organizations, state workforce agencies and other public entities to deliver training that leads to employment in a range of health care fields and other growing industries.
- Awarding of four grants authorized by the Recovery Act to promote virtual service-delivery models in healthcare careers. One grant, awarded to the American Association of Community Colleges, will be used to develop a Healthcare Virtual Career Platform

that assists individuals to explore and pursue health care careers. Three grants were awarded to national community organizations, Goodwill Industries International, the International Association of Jewish Vocational Services and SER-Jobs for Progress National Inc., which will assist individuals in career exploration in healthcare and other emerging and in-demand careers. These grants will help ensure access to appropriate computer technology equipment is available, and that staff and customers have adequate computer literacy and are aware of online career resources. The Healthcare Virtual Career Platform is under development and may be accessible to the public in summer 2011.

3. Publication Description. The health care industry as a whole – and especially the allied health care sector – has great promise for employing youth and young adults. Occupations in the allied health care field are not only in hospitals and doctors’ offices. There are growing numbers of positions needed in long-term care facilities, rural and urban health care centers and clinics, specialty facilities in rehabilitation therapies, firms providing administrative services to insurance companies, medical and dental practices, and many more.

While some allied health opportunities are in highly technical, demanding specialties, many allied health careers are open to anyone with a good basic education (e.g. a high school diploma or GED), good work habits – the “soft skills” of punctuality, communication, teamwork and reliability – and a modest amount of training. Just as important, many of these jobs can be used as excellent entry points to a career pathway leading to better pay and a bright future. National credentials, which can be earned in as little as six months to two years, are offered as alternatives to more lengthy and costly undergraduate degrees.

For these reasons, an allied health career can be an excellent field for youth who are at-risk, out-of-school, or have some other barrier to employment. Initial entry into the field is relatively easy, but it is important that the various career pathways that are available beyond these entry-level positions are presented. With the right support and encouragement, many individuals may find a successful long-term career in allied health. Although the beginning of the path may be an entry-level position, additional education and professional development can quickly lead to ever-increasing levels of responsibility and compensation.

The purpose of the *Allied Health Access Guidebook* is to provide youth program planners and service providers with practical information about allied health occupations in order to create or expand programs and services leading to allied health opportunities for youth and young adults. The guidebook has five sections. These include:

- What is Allied Health?
Description of the industry as well as the current and projected demand
- Allied Health Occupations
Basic labor market information on specific occupations and various career pathways
- Developing Programs for Youth in Allied Health Careers
Practical steps to creating a program in local areas
- Case Studies
Examples of programs developed around the country with valuable lessons learned

- Appendix
Additional resources to assist in program development

The intent of this guidebook is to provide a useful tool for program planners as they begin to assess the potential for an allied health program in their area, develop a program, and implement a plan. In addition, a simple checklist is provided on the first page of the appendix that may prove useful to youth service providers and planners as they begin to think about what is needed to start an allied health program in their community.

4. Availability. The *Allied Health Access (AHA!) Guidebook* may be downloaded at www.workforce3one.org under the Youth Services Directory. The HGJTI and CBJTG grant activities is available in the Investment Center (<http://www.doleta.gov/brg/grants>) and information on the Recovery Act awards is available online at http://www.doleta.gov/factsheet/ARRA_Health_and_Other.pdf.

5. Attachment. The *Allied Health Access (AHA!) Guidebook: How to Develop Programs for Youth in Allied Health Careers*.