

Respiratory Therapy Programs are Available at the Following Community Colleges:

American River College
Antelope Valley College
Butte College
Crafton Hills College
Diablo Valley College
East Los Angeles College
El Camino College
Foothill College
Fresno City College
Grossmont College
Los Angeles Valley College
Modesto Junior College
Mt. San Antonio College
Napa Valley College
Ohlone College
Orange Coast College
Santa Monica College
Skyline College
Victor Valley Community College

Sources for Further Information About Respiratory Therapy:

California Community College Health Program Directory (RHORCs)
<http://healthoccupations.org/ccchealth>

Respiratory Care Board of California
<http://www.rcb.ca.gov>

American Association for Respiratory Care
<http://www.aarc.org>

Employment Development Department – Health Care Careers
<http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occmisc/HealthCareCareers.pdf>

<http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occmisc/CareerLaddersConstruction.pdf>

Certifying Agency: Respiratory Care Board of California
(916) 323-9983
<http://www.rcb.ca.gov>

For more information, please contact one of the colleges listed above or explore the web resources. For additional information regarding this brochure please contact: North/Far North Regional Health Occupations Resource Center at (530) 879-9069.



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The California Community Colleges
Allied Health Programs

Step Up to the
Future with

**Respiratory
Therapist**



Respiratory Therapist



Step Up to the Future!

Facts About Respiratory Therapists & Job Opportunities

According to the California Employment Development Department, the need for Respiratory Therapists in the health care industry is expected to remain stable from 2006-2016 in California. There is projected to be 300 average job openings in California every year due to staff turnover and retirement. In 2009, Kaiser Permanente projected that 11% of Respiratory Therapists will retire within 5 years.

Students need to complete a respiratory therapy program and minimally earn an Associate Degree, a two year program. There are also four-year, Bachelor's Degree programs. Respiratory Therapists must pass an exam and be licensed by the State. Prerequisite courses include Human Anatomy, Introduction to Chemistry and Beginning Algebra.

What Does a Respiratory Therapist Do?

Respiratory Therapists care for people with breathing disorders. They work with premature infants with underdeveloped lungs, patients who have had heart attacks or strokes and patients who have



chronic diseases like asthma or emphysema. The typical duties of Respiratory Therapists include administering oxygen to patients, measuring lung capacity, monitoring oxygen concentrations in blood and using equipment such as ventilators to maintain patients' oxygen supply. They administer aerosolized medications that patients inhale and draw blood for arterial blood gas analysis. Respiratory Therapists may perform bronchial hygiene therapy on patients with chronic lung disease to remove mucus from their lungs and make it easier for them to breathe. They also perform tests to evaluate respiratory capacity. Respiratory Therapists teach patients breathing exercises and how to inhale medications properly. Some Respiratory Therapists visit patients at home and check on their breathing equipment and medications, though most Respiratory Therapists work in hospitals.

Personal Characteristics & Working Conditions

- Good science background.
- Ability to work with critically ill patients and in emergency rooms or intensive care units
- Caring, calm and sympathetic nature.
- Mechanical aptitude and manual dexterity – desire to work with equipment such as ventilators or aerosol generators
- Good communication, reading comprehension and listening skills.
- Tolerance of body fluid exposure
- Ability to follow directions and work individually as well as in a team.
- Detail oriented
- Tolerance for being on feet for long periods of time, for up to 12 hour shifts
- May need to work evenings, nights and weekends.



How Much Can I Earn?

The earnings of a Respiratory Therapist vary according to their education, skill level, years of experience and geographic location.

Salaries vary widely throughout California. In 2008, according to the Employment Development Department Labor Market Information Division, the median (mid point) hourly wage was \$26.69 in California with a median annual salary of \$55,529. In San Benito and Santa Clara Counties, the median annual salary was \$68,809 compared to the Sacramento Metro Area where the median salary was \$48,689. In Los Angeles County the median salary was \$55,170. Salaries may be notably lower in other states in the U.S.

For more information on salaries go to: <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/>