

Health Care Assistants

An employment guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Health Care Assistants (NOC 3413)

Health Care Assistants may also be called:

- *nurse aides*
- *orderlies*
- *patient service associates*
- *home support worker*
- *personal care attendant*

1. What Would I Do?

Health care assistants help care for people who are old or sick. You may help nurses, hospital staff and physicians in the basic care of patients in hospitals. You may also provide care in community settings including home support and residential care facilities.

Your duties can include:

- basic personal care of patients including bathing, dressing, grooming and feeding
- weighing, lifting and repositioning patients and transporting them in wheelchairs or stretchers
- supervising patients' exercise routines
- making beds and maintaining patients' rooms

- setting up and providing leisure activities for patients
- accompanying patients on outside recreational activities and performing other duties related to patient care and comfort
- taking patients' blood pressure, temperature and pulse
- observing or monitoring patients' status and documenting patient care on charts
- administering first aid in emergency situations

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Nurse Aides, Orderlies and Patient Service Associates**

<https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/3413>

2. Am I Suited For This Job?

Health Care Assistants:

- *enjoy working with people who are old or sick*
- *have excellent interpersonal and observational skills*
- *must be patient and sensitive*
- *must be healthy and able to stand, move and lift heavy weight*
- *must be fluent in English*

Health care assistants work in hospital wards, residential long-term care facilities, or for home support agencies. Shifts are usually 8–12 hours and you are often expected to work on weekends, holidays or evenings. On-call and part-time work is common.

This work can be physically demanding, with constant standing, walking and lifting. You may also experience stress and fatigue from working with sick or disabled patients. You may be exposed to infectious diseases, and to violent behaviour from patients with mental illnesses.

Source: WorkBC

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, the median annual salary for health care assistants is \$43,680.

Many employers pay for vacation, sick leave, and extended medical insurance. Some also pay dental insurance and partial retirement benefits.

In BC's regions you can expect to make:

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
<u>British Columbia</u>	17.24	21.62	26.50
<u>Cariboo Region</u>	17.01	20.91	24.00
<u>Kootenay Region</u>	18.11	20.00	24.00
<u>Lower Mainland–Southwest Region</u>	17.25	21.80	32.21
<u>Nechako Region</u>	16.91	22.83	24.00
<u>North Coast Region</u>	16.91	22.83	24.00
<u>Northeast Region</u>	17.20	23.00	24.00
<u>Thompson–Okanagan Region</u>	17.00	21.00	24.00
<u>Vancouver Island and Coast Region</u>	17.24	21.70	25.00

Table from Job Bank Wage Report <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis/search-wages>

4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

There is a strong demand for health care assistants in BC. Employment opportunities are high throughout the province, especially in nursing homes, long-term care facilities and privately run institutions.

The demand for health care assistants is leading to higher salaries and increased opportunities to work in various environments. Job opportunities in acute care settings are also on the rise.

Employment Outlook

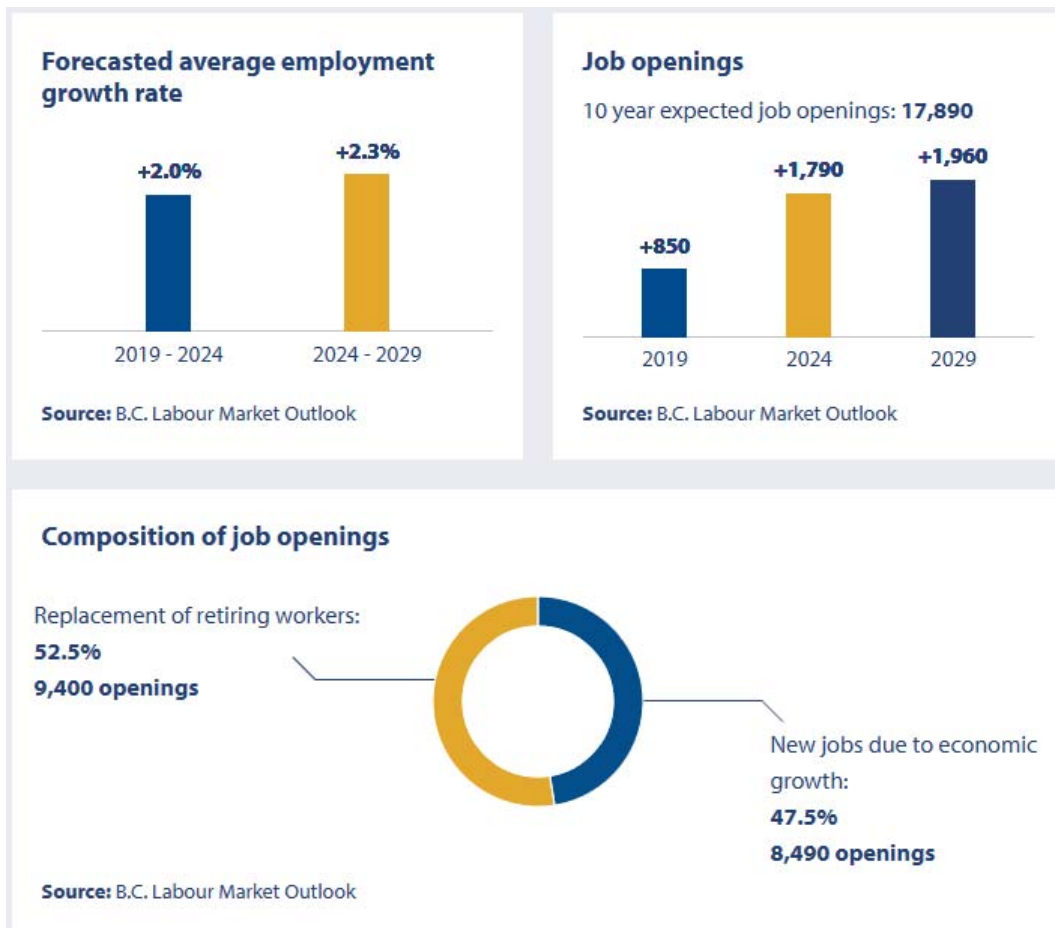


Chart from WorkBC

Source: WorkBC

5. How do I become a health care assistant?

To be eligible to work as a health care assistant in any *publicly funded health care setting in BC*, you must be registered with the **BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry**. In order to qualify to register, you must complete a six- to nine-month Health Care Assistant program offered by colleges in BC, or show proof of equivalent training and experience.

For more information see:

- **BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry**
<https://www.cachwr.bc.ca/Registrants.aspx>

Currently, *private health care providers* may hire health care assistants who are not registered, but this may change at any time. Although some private health care employers will accept applicants with less than Grade 12 education, most prefer candidates who have completed a high school diploma and who have completed a Health Care Assistant program.

Most employers also require a criminal record check, and tuberculosis screening.

If you are an *internationally trained health care professional* wishing to register with the BC Care Aide and Community Health Worker Registry you will also need to:

- have your training and education evaluated by the International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES) or equivalent agency
- provide evidence of English language proficiency to prove you can listen, speak, read and write in English
- complete a competency assessment by the Nursing Community Assessment Service

For more information:

- **Internationally Educated Health Care Professional**
<https://www.cachwr.bc.ca/Application/International.aspx>

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where would I work?

Health Care Assistants work in:

- *hospitals, long-term care facilities, group homes, home support and community care*

Finding Advertised Jobs

Jobs are advertised in a variety of sources including newspapers, magazines and online job sites.

Local Newspapers

You can look at the *Vancouver Sun & The Province* at Vancouver Public Library for free.

Online Job Postings

- **B.C. Health Authorities** [five geographic, independent regions]
 - Vancouver Coastal Health <https://careers.vch.ca/>
 - Fraser Health <http://careers.fraserhealth.ca/>
 - Vancouver Island Health <https://www.islandhealth.ca/careers>
 - Interior Health <https://www.interiorhealth.ca/careers/Pages/default.aspx>
 - Northern Health <https://careers.northernhealth.ca/>
- **B.C. Provincial Health Services Authority** Job Postings [specialty institutions such as BC Transplant, Womens Hospital, BC Childrens Hospital] <http://careers.phsa.ca/>
- **Providence Health Care** [Catholic health care agency operating over ten health care facilities including St. Paul's Hospital, Mount St. Joseph and Holy Family Hospitals] www.providencehealthcare.org/careers
- **BC Care Providers Association Job Board** <https://bccare.ca/jobs/>

- **Indeed.com**

https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search

Finding “Hidden Jobs”

Many job vacancies are not advertised. The resources below will help you *with finding jobs in this “hidden” job market.*

Using Directories to Create a List of Potential Employers

You can use company directories to produce lists of long term care facilities, hospitals and other employers. Contact them directly to find out if they’re hiring.

- **Long Term Care Facilities Quick Facts Directory**

<https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/quickfacts/>

- **Community Care Facilities, British Columbia**

<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/ccf/survey/index.php/displaycommunity/index>

- **Directory of Canadian Healthcare Personnel**

Available at the Central Library, Level 4, Reference Resources, 362.11025 C21a
See section covering hospitals and long term care facilities in BC.

- **Guide to Canadian Health Care Facilities**

Available at the Central Library, Level 4, Reference Resources, 362.105 C212ca
See section covering hospitals, long term care and health care facilities in BC.

- **Reference Canada**

<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/reference-canada>

Click on “Start Search” beside Canadian Businesses, then select the “Advanced Search” button. Select both “Keyword/SIC/NAICS” under Business Type and “City” under Geography. In the top search box enter “hospital” or “home care” and click SEARCH. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the “View Results” button.

Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

NOTE: *You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database. After clicking on the database name, you will be asked to enter your library card number and PIN (usually last four digits of your telephone number).*

Networking, Volunteering and Temporary Agencies

Many positions are filled by people who have been recommended by someone they know. Networking, working as a volunteer or registering with a temporary employment agency are good ways of helping you find jobs and meet people in your industry.

Networking and the Hidden Job Market:

When looking for work, be sure to talk to friends, relatives and neighbours. They may know someone who is hiring! Working as a volunteer, attending events, and joining clubs and associations are good ways to gain "Canadian experience." They are also good ways to meet people to learn about the local job market.

Volunteer opportunities

- **Volunteer BC**
<https://volunteerbc.bc.ca/>
- **GoVolunteer.ca**
<https://www.govolunteer.ca/> [search 'health' or 'medical']

Volunteering in Health Care Facilities

Volunteer positions in hospitals, residential care facilities, and other community settings.

- **Health Authorities:**
 - **Vancouver Coastal Health**
<http://www.vch.ca/get-involved/volunteer/>
 - **Fraser Health Authority**
<https://www.fraserhealth.ca/about-us/volunteer-opportunities>
 - **Providence Health Care**
<http://www.providencehealthcare.org/volunteers>
- *Other volunteer opportunities may be available from individual care facilities across BC*

For additional tips see:

- **Networking for Employment**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search Networking for Employment]

- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search Getting Canadian Work Experience]

7. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume and a cover letter that identifies the position you are applying for and summarizes your experience. Use the library catalogue, <https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/> to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

For more information see:

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search Writing Resumes and Cover Letters]

8. Where Can This Job Lead?

Some people may work as health care aides beginning education for a career in nursing.

Increasingly, new graduates are finding employment in community health and specialty areas where new graduates were not previously hired until they gained experience.

Source: WorkBC

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **BC Care Aide & Community Support Worker Registry**
<https://www.cachwr.bc.ca/Home.aspx>
- **BC Care Providers Association**
<https://bccare.ca>
- **Choose2Care, Health Match BC**
<https://www.choose2care.ca/>
- **BC Senior Living Association**
<https://www.bcsla.ca/senior-housing-career-opportunities/>
- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**
Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>
[Search Learn More About Working in BC and Canada]

Questions? Please ask the Information Staff at the Central Library or telephone 604-331-3603.

Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/>.