

The Growing Demand for Healthcare Workers in Illinois

Illinois has faced healthcare worker shortages for years, and the coronavirus pandemic has only exacerbated those shortages.¹ In 2018, there were more than 20 open jobs for every unemployed healthcare practitioner² (specialized fields including physicians, surgeons, and nurses) in the state. Despite barriers for internationally trained healthcare workers, immigrants and refugees punch above their weight in the field, making up nearly 17 percent of the state’s healthcare workers³ — including nearly 31 percent of all physicians and surgeons and more than 17 percent of the state’s nurses⁴ — while making up just under 14 percent of the population.⁵

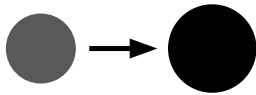
For Illinois to remain competitive and address critical physician and healthcare worker shortages, it will be crucial to implement policies that not only attract and retain immigrant talent that is complementary to the U.S.-born workforce, but that also build career pathways for the immigrants who already 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 internationally trained healthcare workers.

HEALTHCARE JOB POSTING BY RURAL-URBAN CLASSIFICATION*

Increase in number of job postings between 2017 and 2021 by Illinois County Classification:⁶

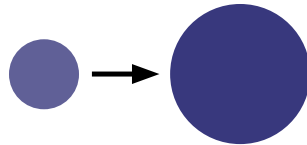
From 2017 to 2021, online job postings in **large metro counties**** increased by

+59.4%



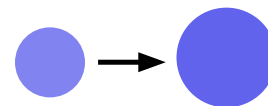
For **small/medium metro counties,***** job postings increased by

+245.2%



For **rural counties,****** job postings increased by

+105.1%



* Using the 2013 NCHS Urban-Rural Classification Scheme for Counties, Illinois counties were grouped into three different population groups: large urban, medium & small metropolitan, and rural counties. Large counties were identified with NCHS classifications of large central and fringe metro 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.

** Large Metro: Bond, Calhoun, Clinton, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Jersey, Kane, Kendall, Lake, Macoupin, Madison, McHenry, Monroe, St. Clair, Will.

*** Small/Med Metro: Alexander, Boone, Champaign, De Witt, Ford, Henry, Jackson, Kankakee, Macon, Marshall, McLean, Menard, Mercer, Peoria, Piatt, Rock Island, Sangamon, Stark, Tazewell, Vermilion, Williamson, Winnebago, Woodford County.

**** Rural: Adams, Brown, Bureau, Carroll, Cass, Christian, Clark, Clay, Coles, Crawford, Cumberland, Douglas, Edgar, Edwards, Effingham, Fayette, Franklin, Fulton, Gallatin, Greene, Hamilton, Hancock, Hardin, Henderson, Iroquois, Jasper, Jefferson, Jo Daviess, Johnson, Knox, LaSalle, Lawrence, Lee, Livingston, Logan, Marion, Mason, Massac, McDonough, Montgomery, Morgan, Moultrie, Ogle, Perry, Pike, Pope, Pulaski, Putnam, Randolph, Richland, Saline, Schuyler, Scott, Shelby, Stephenson, Union, Wabash, Warren, Washington, Wayne, White, Whiteside.

NURSING

Addressing the barriers that prevent qualified healthcare professionals from practicing will be crucial as the state's population ages. From 2009 to 2019, the proportion of the Illinois population over 65 increased by 28.3 percent.⁷ Illinois is also one of 33 states nationally—and one of seven states in the Midwest—that will face a shortage of Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) by 2030, with a projected deficit of 2,700 nurses.⁸ While immigrant nurses have helped fill many of these roles already, this gap will only widen in the coming years, especially as experienced nurses continue to retire, Illinois continues to face outmigration, and the need for culturally and linguistically competent care increases.

From 2017 to 2021, online job postings for registered nurses increased by:⁹

+113.0% ● → ●

During that period, job postings for LPNs substantially increased by:¹⁰

+164.5% ● → ●

The share of immigrants in 2019 working as:¹¹



Job postings for nurse practitioners also increased by:¹²

+43.3% ● → ●

PHYSICIANS

The physician shortage is particularly pronounced in rural counties, with just under 46 physicians per 100,000 residents, or 47 percent fewer than in urban areas.¹³

36.7% of Physicians in Illinois are foreign-born.¹⁴

From 2017 to 2021, online job postings increased for the following positions:¹⁵

Internists

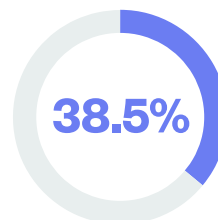
+148.1% ● → ●

Other Physicians and Surgeons

+137.1% ● → ●

Obstetricians and Gynecologists

+455.1% ● → ●



The average share of surgeons in 2019 who were immigrants:¹⁶

Pediatricians

+136.4% ● → ●

ORAL HEALTH

Beyond physicians and nurses, the demand for oral healthcare workers in the state also grew between 2017 and 2021.¹⁷

From 2017 to 2021, online job postings for orthodontists increased by 10x and position announcements for dentists more than tripled.

During the same period, job postings for dental hygienists increased from

112 to 259

The share of immigrants in 2019 working as:¹⁸

19.0% Dentists and Orthodontists

11.7% Dental Hygienists

ENDNOTES

- 1 Unless stated otherwise, all data in this report is reflective of Illinois.
- 2 “Immigrant Healthcare Workers Are Critical in the Fight against Covid-19.” New American Economy, April 8, 2020. <https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/report/covid-19-immigrant-healthcare-workers/>.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 “Map the Impact,” New American Economy, February 3, 2022. <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/locations/illinois/>.
- 6 American Immigration Council analysis of Burning Glass Technologies Labor Insight™ 2022.
- 7 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, Administration on Aging. 2020 Profile of Older Americans, May 2021. https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/Profile%20of%20OA/2020ProfileOlderAmericans_RevisedFinal.pdf.
- 8 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, National Center for Health Workforce Analysis. National and Regional Supply and Demand Projections of the Nursing Workforce: 2014-2030, July 21, 2017. <https://bhwh.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bureau-health-workforce/data-research/nchwa-hrsa-nursing-report.pdf>.
- 9 American Immigration Council analysis of Burning Glass Technologies Labor Insight™ 2022.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 American Immigration Council analysis of the IPUMS microdata from the 2019 American Community Survey, 1-Year Sample.
- 12 American Immigration Council analysis of Burning Glass Technologies Labor Insight™ 2022.
- 13 SIU School of Medicine Department of Population Science and Policy. Rep. COVID-19 and the Rural Health Workforce: Recommendations to Improve Health in Illinois, October 2021. https://www.siumed.edu/sites/default/files/2021-10/RHS_Rural_Health_Workforce.pdf.
- 14 American Immigration Council analysis of the IPUMS microdata from the 2019 ACS, 1-Year Sample.
- 15 American Immigration Council analysis of Burning Glass Technologies Labor Insight™ 2022.
- 16 American Immigration Council analysis of the IPUMS microdata from the 2019 ACS, 1-Year Sample.
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- 18 American Immigration Council analysis of the IPUMS microdata from the 2019 ACS, 1-Year Sample.