
The Impact of the Coronavirus on Licensed Healthcare Workforce Unemployment in Virginia: Trends

Healthcare Workforce Data Center

May 2021

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Members of twenty-four healthcare profession groups voluntarily participated in the surveys used in this report. Without their efforts the work of the center would not be possible. The Department of Health Professions, the Healthcare Workforce Data Center, and the different licensing boards express our sincerest appreciation for their ongoing cooperation.

Thank You!

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The coronavirus pandemic has impacted the healthcare industry in many ways. One impact was that hospitals and patients postponed elective procedures and practitioner visits in the earlier part of 2020. Unfortunately, this had an adverse impact on employment rates in the healthcare industry. Using each profession's survey data, this report examines three indicators: past year underemployment, past year involuntary unemployment, and current involuntary unemployment. For each indicator, the average of previous surveys was compared to the statistics obtained from surveys conducted between April 2020 and March 2021 for 24 licensed healthcare workforce professions. Physician assistants, radiologic technologists, and respiratory therapists complete surveys in odd numbered years so they were not surveyed in 2020 and were excluded from the analysis below. Two indicators are also not collected for certified nursing assistants.

Unemployment and Underemployment by Profession

Professions	Past Year Involuntary Unemployment		Past Year Underemployment		Current Involuntary Unemployment	
	Average	2020-21	Average	2020-21	Average	2020-21
Assisted Living Facility	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Audiologists	1%	7%	1%	3%	0%	1%
Certified Nurse Aides	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5%	5%
Dental Hygienists	2%	37%	9%	5%	1%	2%
Dentists	1%	20%	2%	3%	0%	1%
Funeral Service Providers	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Licensed Clinical Psychologists	1%	2%	2%	2%	0%	0%
Licensed Clinical Social Workers	1%	2%	2%	2%	0%	0%
Licensed Practical Nurses	2%	3%	5%	4%	1%	1%
Licensed Professional	1%	2%	2%	3%	0%	0%
Nurse Practitioners	1%	4%	2%	3%	0%	1%
Nursing Home Administrators	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	1%
Occupational Therapists	1%	9%	3%	6%	0%	1%
Occupational Therapy	2%	12%	7%	12%	0%	3%
Optometrists	1%	14%	3%	3%	0%	0%
Pharmacists	2%	3%	3%	4%	1%	2%
Pharmacy Technicians	1%	2%	4%	3%	1%	1%
Physical Therapists	1%	13%	2%	7%	0%	1%
Physical Therapy Assistants	2%	17%	6%	9%	0%	3%
Physicians	0%	1%	1%	2%	0%	0%
Registered Nurses	1%	2%	3%	2%	0%	1%
Speech-Language Pathologists	1%	6%	3%	4%	0%	1%
Veterinarian	1%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%
Veterinary Technicians	1%	2%	2%	2%	0%	1%

Source: Va. Healthcare Workforce Data Center

Past Year Underemployment

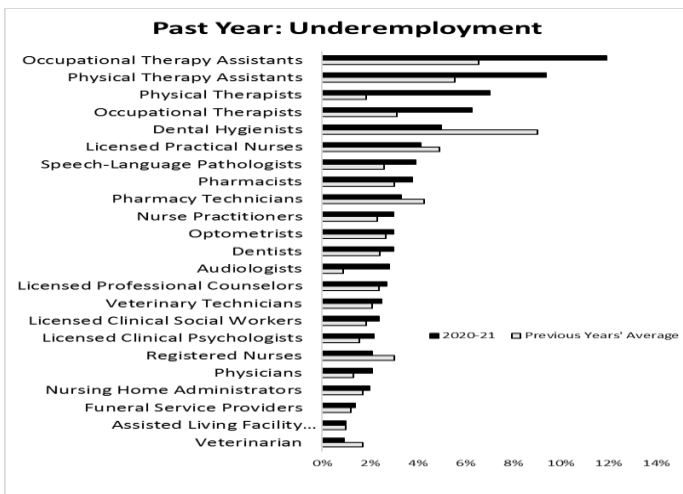
Past year underemployment captures whether survey respondents had a part-time or temporary position but would have preferred a full-time/permanent position in the one-year period before they completed their survey. Compared to previous years' average, underemployment increased for 12 of 23 professions during the pandemic. Other significant findings include:

- Five of the 12 professions saw increases of between two and five percentage points.
- Past year underemployment rates did not change for six of the professions.
- Past year underemployment rates declined slightly for five professions.

Past Year Involuntary Unemployment

Past year involuntary unemployment captures whether survey respondents have been involuntarily unemployed at any time in the one-year period before they completed their survey. This indicator previously ranged from 0% to 3% for all professions but rose to a high of 37% for dental hygienists between March 2020 and March 2021; this is considerably higher than the highest unemployment rate for all individuals in the state in the same period which was 11% in April 2020. Other significant findings about this measure include:

- Past year involuntary unemployment did not change for three professions
- Six professions saw two digits increase in percentage points, with dental hygienists and dentist seeing the greatest impact.
- The remaining 14 professions saw between one and eight percentage point increase.



Source: Va. Healthcare Workforce Data Center

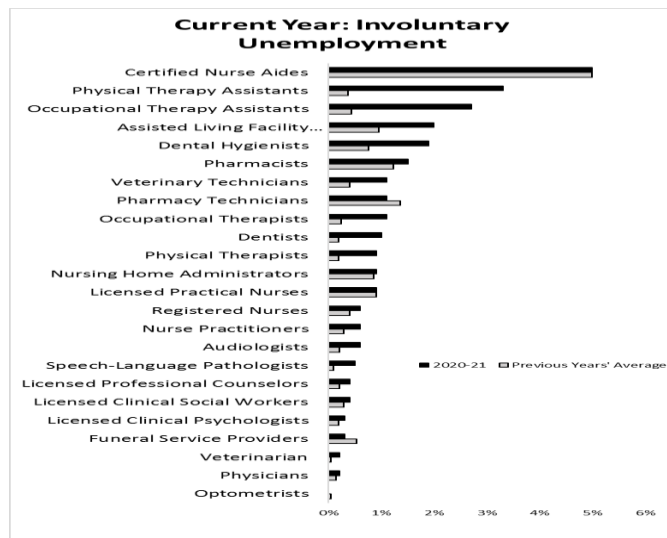


Source: Va. Healthcare Workforce Data Center

Current Year Unemployment

Finally, **current involuntary unemployment** captures the percent of survey respondents who were involuntarily unemployed while completing their survey. The data showed that some of the effects of the pandemic may be easing. Significant findings about current involuntary unemployment include:

- Current involuntary unemployment did not change for 16 professions.
- It increased between one and three percentage points for eight professions.
- The highest rate of 5% was reported by certified nurse aides who had the same rate on average in the past.



Source: Va. Healthcare Workforce Data Center

Conclusion

The coronavirus pandemic has had tremendous impact on healthcare professions. The impact appears to vary by the level of electiveness of the services provided. Dental hygienists, dentists, physical and occupational therapists, and physical and occupational therapist assistants were most affected. Providers who were integral in providing services related to the pandemic, like physicians and funeral service providers, were least affected. However, overall, the impact of the pandemic on employment appears to be easing. Current involuntary unemployment was considerably lower than past year involuntary unemployment. Hopefully this trend persists so that healthcare professions can continue providing the important services they offer to Virginians.