



Center For Programs in

# Allied Health

Vanderbilt

2021-2022

ANNUAL REPORT

# Introduction

Allied Health can be defined as credentialed professionals who perform supportive, diagnostic, and therapeutic health care services to promote health and prevent disease in a variety of settings. These professionals provide a broad range of professional and technical services that are needed, and not provided by physicians, nurses, dentists, or pharmacists. Their functions are essential in filling unmet healthcare needs of the public.

Today, there are more than two hundred different allied health occupations. When combined, they represent an estimated 60% of the healthcare workforce. These professionals are educated at universities, community colleges, and in medical centers. As cost-effective and well-educated professionals in their fields, they support clinical practice by performing important roles, critical for diagnosis, evaluation, treatment, and prevention of diseases and disorders.

This annual report provides the state of allied health at VUMC (Vanderbilt University Medical Center), from September 1, 2021 through August 31, 2022.



# AH Program Highlights & Outcomes

At Vanderbilt, allied health programs have a long and distinguished history, with some programs dating back as far as 1929. More programs were added decades later. For the past five years, the Center Programs in Allied Health (CPiAH) has served as the hub of five certificate programs.

Core program outcomes have historically been excellent in terms of student performance. The data in the table below shows outcomes for 2021-22.

Title of Program	Start Date	Program Length	Number Enrolled	Student Retention	Certification Pass Rate	Job Placement Rate
Dietetic Internship	1929	10 months	16	100%	81%	78%
Medical Laboratory Science	1954 (VA) 1968 (VUMC)	13 months	12	100%	100%	83%
Nuclear Medicine Technology	1979	12 months	8	100%	100%	100%
Cardiovascular Perfusion	1979	22 months	17	80%	100%	100%
Diagnostic Medical Sonography	2002	18 months	10	100%	100%	90%
Total			63			

Success can also be measured in terms of meeting accreditation standards.



CPiAH received approval for 6 years of accreditation from the Accreditation Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES)



Annual approval from the Tennessee Higher Education Commisison



Met all standards from the Veterans Administration Site Visit

# Problems



## The Shortage of Allied Health Professionals

Allied Health is among the fastest growing occupations in healthcare today and shortages of these positions abound nationally, state-wide and at VUMC. It is projected that the demand for allied health services will continue to grow by 10 percent or higher over the next ten years. Currently, VUMC employs an estimated 4,000 allied health professionals, and 19% of these positions are vacant. We are addressing the areas with the highest vacancies by offering pipeline programs at VUMC where feasible and through partnerships with other institutions as needed.

# Taking Action

In deciding the best approach to address allied health needs at VUMC, we completed a white paper that focused on national, regional, and local trends. Conversations were held with colleagues at Mayo and Cleveland Clinics who shared their approaches in preparing an allied health workforce. All CPiAH program staff participated in a retreat to identify our top priorities and to ensure alignment with VUMC pillar goals. These included workforce retention, employee engagement, and diversity.



### Our Priorities included:

- Assessing our infrastructure
- Determining needed resources
- Expanding partnerships
- Tracking visiting students
- Building collaborative relationships

# Outcome



We built collaborative relationships with the thirty-five schools of allied health in Tennessee by participating in the quarterly dean's meeting where the needs of the state were discussed. Each school was also surveyed to determine the number of visiting students who complete clinical rotations at VUMC. We expanded our partnership with Nashville State Community College to offer collaborative educational programs to meet the medical center's needs. A 12-week Medical Assistant pipeline program was established in collaboration with them in April 2022. This inaugural and diverse cohort of 11 trainees was recruited from VUMC employees desiring to advance their careers in healthcare. The story made local and national news as a creative way of addressing health professional shortages. Read the story here [Allied Health debuts the new medical assistant program | VUMC Reporter | Vanderbilt University](#).



Given the high level of interest in launching more allied health programs and bringing structure to the process, an internal committee has been established to review and recommend additional allied health programs. The proposal to expand the medical laboratory science program is under consideration.



A second collaborative program in Central Sterile Processing is being launched. This 10-week program will enroll twenty trainees of internal employees and external applicants in collaboration with Nashville State Community College. A second medical assistant cohort is being offered as well.



The Pharmacy Technician Program was transferred from the clinical department on July 1st. This program will be reconfigured to offer a 12-week training program and enroll thirty or more trainees in 2023 to address the high vacancy rate of these professionals.

Title of New AH Program added in 2022	Start Date	Length of Program	Trainees Enrolled
Medical Assistant Cohort 1	22-Apr	12 weeks	11
Pharmacy Technician	22-Jul	20 weeks	2
Medical Assistant Cohort 2	22-Sep	12 weeks	15
Central Sterile Processing Technician	22-Sep	10 weeks	17



# Visiting Students

CPiAH has created a standardized process to onboard an estimated 1,000 visiting allied health students to the medical center annually. This tracking effort may potentially maximize our efforts in recruiting future allied health employees for VUMC. For further information, please visit our website at [www.vumc.org/allied-health/visiting-allied-health-students](http://www.vumc.org/allied-health/visiting-allied-health-students)



Our greatest challenge this year was maintaining a permanent staff for the Perfusion Program. This challenge was met “head on” by a highly committed perfusion team from the clinical department. Numerous perfusionists and the chief transplant surgeon provided necessary lecture support and program leadership. A search is currently underway for permanent leadership and the prospects appear promising.

## Summary

The 2021-22 year was transformative in promoting allied health at VUMC. The needs were documented, and pipeline programs were established to address some of the vacancy needs. For the next year, we plan to provide more structure for allied health education by:

- Expanding partnerships and visibility within VUMC, at regional hospitals and external settings to address VUMC needs for allied health professionals

- Implementing and refining the work of the internal committee for recommending which allied health programs to offer and identifying resources needed for ongoing support of allied health education

- Tracking visiting allied health students and maximizing external relationships in support of VUMC needs