

Allied Health: Facts

Seventeen hospitals in seven counties – Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Harrison, Lake, Lorain, Medina and Summit– participated in a survey by the Northeast Ohio Nursing Initiative (NEONI) on allied health staffing. Survey responses are based on 2004 data.



What is an allied health professional?

Allied health professionals are healthcare practitioners with formal education and clinical training who are credentialed through certification, registration or licensure. They collaborate with physicians and other members of the healthcare team to deliver high quality patient care services for the identification, prevention and treatment of diseases, disabilities and disorders. There are over 200 allied health careers, including occupational therapy and respiratory therapy. This survey explores a dozen of the most in-demand allied health careers in Northeast Ohio.

How large are our region's hospitals?

The size of hospitals can be described in a number of ways, including in terms of number of staffed beds, which is the number of beds available to inpatients, and the average daily census,

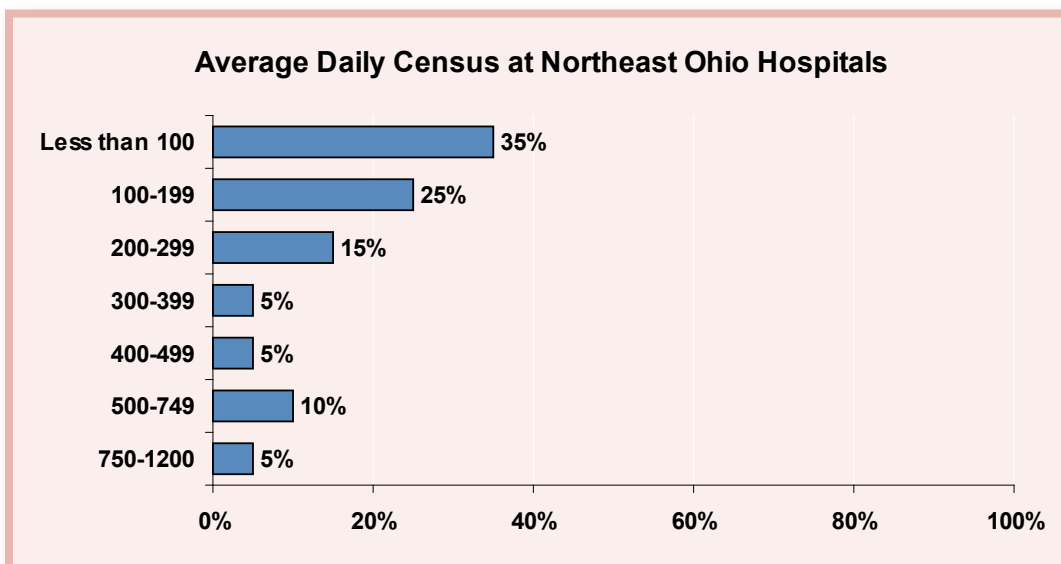
which is a measure of how many inpatients a hospital has on a given day. Both of these factors influence the number of allied health professionals a hospital needs on staff.

The number of staffed beds reported by Northeast Ohio hospitals ranged from 25 to 1,072, with more than half of hospitals having 199 or fewer staffed beds. The distribution of bed sizes in Northeast Ohio hospitals looks similar to statewide numbers with some exceptions; in Northeast Ohio there is a higher percentage of hospitals that have 500 or more beds, but fewer hospitals in the 300 to 499-bed range.

Bed Size Category	Northeast Ohio	Ohio*
<100	35%	34%
100-199	25%	28%
200-299	15%	14%
300-399	5%	10%
400-499	5%	6%
500+	15%	7%

*Source of Ohio Bed Size Category: AHA Hospital Statistics, 2006

Northeast Ohio hospitals' average daily census ranged from 13 to 807, with a median of 160. Thirty-five percent of hospitals reported an average daily census of less than 100, while 40 percent of hospitals reported a census of between 100 and 299. Twenty-five percent of hospitals reported a census of 300 or greater.



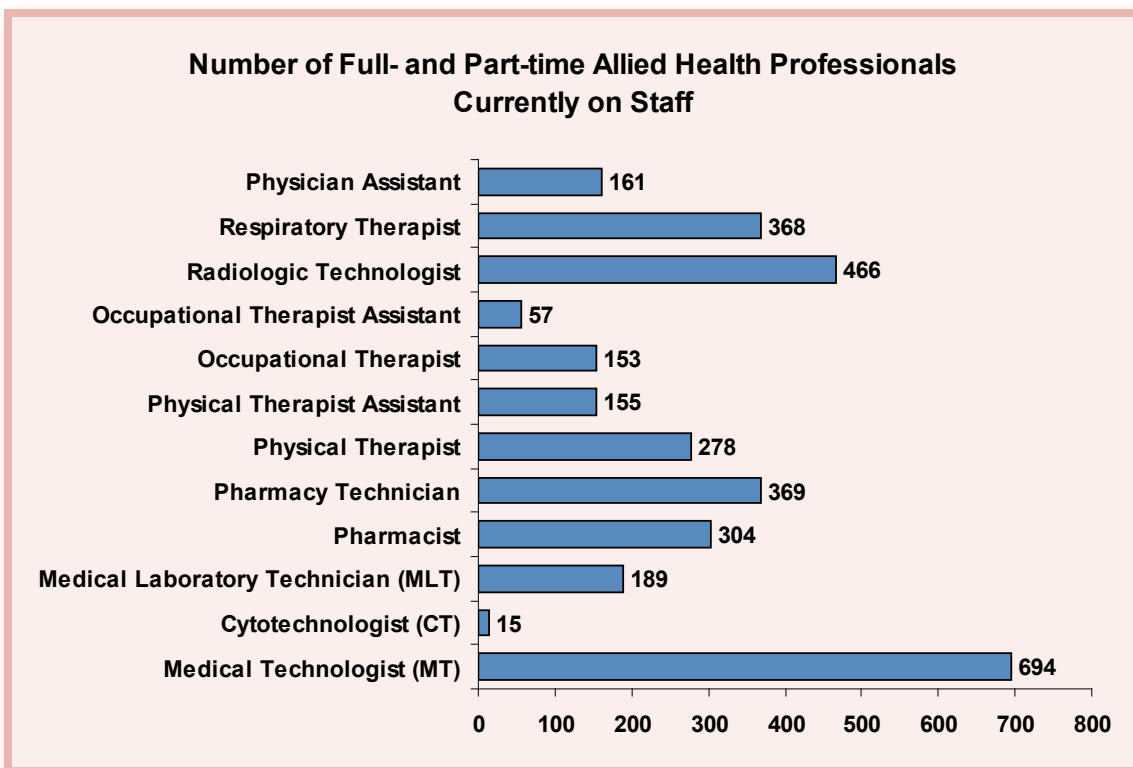
Comparing the average daily census to the number of staffed beds provides a means for analyzing how close hospitals are to their capacity on an average day. One in four of the hospitals surveyed maintained a ratio of the average daily census to the number of staffed beds of at least 80 percent, meaning that at least 80 percent of staffed beds were filled.

Nearly one-third of hospitals, 30 percent, reported a ratio between 40 and 60 percent, and 45 percent had ratios between 60 and 79 percent. It is important to remember that hospitals maintain more beds than they use on a typical day in order to ensure they can accommodate surges in admissions resulting from factors such as seasonal illnesses or emergency events.



How many allied health professionals are on staff at hospitals?

There are roughly 3 million people employed as allied health professionals across all healthcare settings in the United States. In Northeast Ohio, survey respondents reported that 3,209 people work in allied health positions in their hospitals. The total number of allied health professionals working in all 32 hospitals in the region is projected to be 6,200. The most common allied health professions at area hospitals include medical technologists, radiologic technologists, respiratory therapists and pharmacy technicians.





How much do allied health professionals earn?

Hourly wages paid to allied health professionals vary widely across occupations, with higher wages earned in professions with longer training requirements. The occupations with the highest average hourly wage include pharmacists, at \$41.73; physician assistants, at \$32.05; and physical therapists, at \$29.23. Pharmacy technicians earn the lowest average hourly wage, at \$13.23. Within specific allied health occupations the highest and lowest wage paid doesn't vary greatly.

