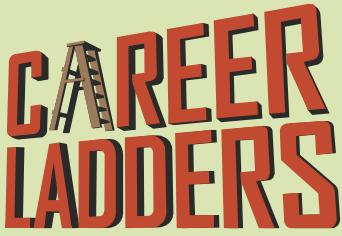


RESPIRATORY THERAPIST



Respiratory therapists, under the direction of physicians, work with those patients for whom breathing is a challenge. Their patients include heart attack, stroke, and near-drowning survivors; people with chronic lung conditions such as asthma and emphysema; and premature infants with underdeveloped lungs.

Employment opportunities in the health care field are currently at an exceptionally high level. No matter what the state of the economy, the demand for health care professionals will continue to grow. Individuals can start in entry-level occupations and advance their careers while enjoying the stability of employment. Also, individuals can start at the mid or advanced levels, depending on their education, training, and career goals. At each of the levels, there are many opportunities for more challenging and higher paying positions.

SAGINAW VALLEY

Each ladder depicts a series of work experiences that leads to more challenging and higher paying opportunities. While every level of the ladder can provide a satisfying job, some employees will choose to gain even more skills and responsibilities that will advance them in their careers. To do so, they will need more education, training, and work experiences. Some jobs will require a certificate, a license, or an advanced degree.

CLIMBING THE CAREER LADDER

ADVANCED LEVEL

Associate's, bachelor's, master's or doctorate degree required; must graduate from an accredited program; must obtain license or certification

Physical Therapist
\$23.31-\$33.68/hour

Dental Hygienist
\$21.96-\$32.48/hour

MID LEVEL

Associate's degree or graduation from an accredited program required; must obtain a license or certification

Physical Therapist Assistant
\$14.55-\$20.57/hour

Medical Records Technician
\$9.40-\$14.71/hour

Respiratory Therapist
\$16.55-\$22.18/hour

ENTRY LEVEL

Most occupations require a high school diploma or a graduate equivalency diploma (GED), three to six months training, and knowledge of medical terminology; certification is required in some of the occupations

Home Health Aide
\$6.65-\$9.06/hour

Medical Billers and Coders
\$7.65-\$24.46/hour

Dental Assistant
\$8.35-\$16.20/hour

Wages will vary within this occupation based on the employee's education, training, and years of experience.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Each occupation is described in terms of specific tasks and typical job duties.

A RESPIRATORY THERAPIST MUST BE ABLE TO:

- Provide direct patient care, observe, assess, and record symptoms, reactions, and progress made by patients
- Develop and manage respiratory treatment plans
- Administer medications
- Work collaboratively with other health care disciplines to achieve patient outcomes
- Assist physicians during treatments, procedures, and examinations
- Assist individuals and groups to take steps to improve or maintain their health with pulmonary rehabilitation
- Perform and interpret basic mathematical calculations
- Work efficiently after directions are given

WAGES

Wage information was obtained from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth and from local employers to give a general idea of the wages and salaries for this occupation.

WAGE RANGE

\$16.55-\$22.18/hour

WORKING CONDITIONS

Work environment is usually well-lit and pleasant. Work may be performed individually or as a member of a team. This job requires emotional stability to cope with human suffering, emergencies, and stress. Respiratory therapists working in hospitals may be required to work 12-hour shifts, nights, weekends, and holidays and be on-call (available to work on short notice). Respiratory therapists employed in home health care must travel frequently to the homes of patients.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Courses, programs, and certificates that are needed for employment are offered by local education and training providers.



HIGH SCHOOL

- Completion of high school's Health Science Career Pathway and/or appropriate career and technical education classes
- Algebra
- Chemistry
- Biology
- Career studies, such as the medical careers program at the Saginaw Career Complex and health technology/medical science and the nursing assistant/health careers program at the Bay-Arenac ISD Career Center
- Co-op experience
- Volunteer experience in a health care environment

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- Delta College: associate's degree in applied science – respiratory therapy program

UNIVERSITY

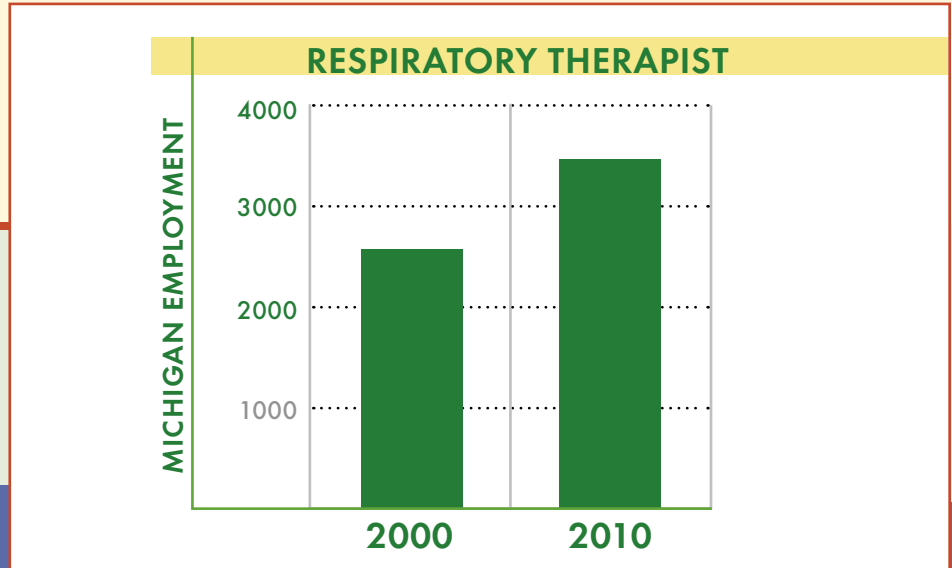
- Ferris State University: associate's degree in applied science – respiratory care

LOCAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS

- Local school districts
- Bay-Arenac ISD Career Center
- Saginaw Career Complex
- Delta College
- Ferris State University

JOB OUTLOOK

The rate of growth within this occupation is projected by data from local employers and the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth.



ADVANCEMENT

Experience and good performance can lead to promotion and to more responsible positions. Respiratory therapists can advance into respiratory care management, including manager and respiratory care director. Executive-level positions require a graduate degree in health services administration. These positions also require negotiation skills and good judgment.

WHAT THE EMPLOYER SAID



WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR IN A POTENTIAL EMPLOYEE FOR THIS POSITION?

"The profession of respiratory therapy is challenging, exciting, and ever-changing. The best registered respiratory therapists I know are intelligent, energetic, courteous, empathetic, and a liaison to the medical staff. They willingly assume changing roles and responsibilities to better their profession. They communicate well and are an important part of the overall health care team. These individuals are focused on the needs and concerns of patients and their families through education and support to ensure an improved quality of life. Respiratory therapists view their profession as both an opportunity to advance their practice in conjunction with the growth of medicine and continue to have a positive impact on those individuals in their care."

Barry Boike, respiratory therapy manager
Covenant HealthCare

STAR PROFILE

This interview is intended to show you what is needed to be a star employee.



EMPLOYEE:
JULIE KAUFMAN

OCCUPATION:
**REGISTERED
RESPIRATORY
THERAPIST**

COMPANY:
**COVENANT
HEALTHCARE**

TELL US HOW YOU ATTAINED YOUR CURRENT POSITION.

During high school, I became interested in math and science. I knew I wanted to do something in the medical field. I knew I didn't want to be a nurse, since my mother is a nurse and I knew what that entailed. I also knew that I wanted to specialize in a field of my choice. A friend of mine was attending the Respiratory Care Program at Ferris State University. She told me about the program. This interested me since it is a two-year program. I really enjoyed the hands-on training during clinicals. I graduated in 1990 and was hired full-time by St. Luke's Hospital which is now Covenant HealthCare.

DESCRIBE YOUR TYPICAL DAY.

I start at 6:00 a.m. and work a 12-hour day. I usually work with patients in the critical care unit and sometimes with children. Every day is a challenge. You never know what will happen next. I work with patients, their families, and staff. Oftentimes, patients are afraid of the machines that we use and what is happening to them. I help them overcome their fear so that we can give them the treatments that they need to feel better.

WHAT QUALITIES MAKE SOMEONE A "STAR" IN THIS OCCUPATION?

A star in this occupation has knowledge of the medical field, good organizational skills, flexibility, a desire to work one-on-one with patients, and good decision-making skills.

WHAT TRAINING AND EDUCATION DID YOU NEED TO ENTER THIS POSITION?

I graduated from Ferris State University's associate's degree program. After graduation, I took two exams through the National Board for Respiratory Care. The first exam was for certification and the second one was for registry. After I had worked a while, I took the neonatal/pediatric specialty exam.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST/LEAST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

I like working one-on-one with the patients and also having a chance to work with advancing technology. What I like least about my job is during the course of giving treatments to patients, there is a special bond that develops. If the outcome isn't what we worked for, it is sometimes hard to handle emotionally.

WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE SOMEONE SEEKING A JOB IN YOUR FIELD?

A person should have an interest in the medical field. Also, it would be a good idea to follow a therapist to see if this is the field they would like to pursue.

ARE THERE ANY LICENSES OR CERTIFICATIONS NEEDED FOR YOUR POSITION?

A person must be certified or registered in respiratory care.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Career Ladders project began as a Saginaw County Vision 2020 initiative. To date, more than 300 individuals have been involved in the project. It is impossible to list them all, but the Comprehensive Education and Workforce Development Committee appreciates each one and the incredible participation by our major employers and educational institutions, as well as the support from the Arnold and Gertrude Boutell Memorial Fund, The Dow Chemical Company, The Dow Corning Foundation, the Fordney Club, the Hospital Council of East Central Michigan, the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, the National Tooling and Machining Association – Saginaw Valley Chapter, the Saginaw Community Foundation, the Saginaw County Business and Education Partnership, the Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Saginaw County's local school districts, Saginaw County's Promise, the Saginaw County Vision 2020, the Saginaw Future Inc., the Saginaw/Midland/Bay Michigan Works!, the Saginaw Township Business Association, the Saginaw Valley Manufacturers' Association, and the Saginaw Valley Tech Prep Partnership. We also want to thank NOVA for their guidance.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER/PROGRAM. AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.