

**Strong Workforce Program
Health & Life Sciences
Surgical Technologist and Radiologic Technologist Careers and
Clinical Placements
Regional Workforce Advisory Meeting Proceedings
October 4, 2024
Virtual**

Introduction

The Los Rios Community College District, in partnership with Valley Vision and in collaboration with Sierra College, Yuba Community College District, and Lake Tahoe Community College, invests in Strong Workforce funding to organize and convene Regional Advisories. The objectives of the Regional Advisories are to build strong relationships between employers, educators, and the workforce that:

- Provide timely information on skills gaps and workforce needs, informing partners on major industry trend information;
- Improve the efficiency of the advisory process for educators and employers;
- Reflect a regional view of workforce needs and assets;
- Provide opportunities for more systemic, ongoing engagement, including workforce partners in key industry sectors.

Regional Advisory meetings help inform decisions on needed investments and enhancements for Career Education (CE) programs to help fill the growing demand for middle-skill positions. This meeting proceedings report includes key findings, best practices, and minutes from the Fall 2024 Regional Advisory meeting focused specifically on careers in the Health & Life Sciences field (HLS), highlighting Surgical Technologist, Radiologic Technologist Careers, and related Clinical Placement.

Valley Vision supports a robust talent pipeline through our multiple 21st Century Workforce initiatives. We prepare our regional workforce for the future by addressing skills gaps, advancing research, aligning efforts, and strengthening systems. Valley Vision's workforce efforts are supported by the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA), Golden Sierra Workforce Development Board (WDB), North Central Counties Consortium, Yolo WDB, Los Rios Community College District, and others.

The Strong Workforce program provides Career Education opportunities to increase social mobility and fuel regional economies with skilled workers.

Key Findings

- Jobs in Surgical Technology and Radiologic Technology are expected to grow by 16% over the next five years, outpacing the average growth rate of 8% in the Greater Sacramento region. There will be approximately 61 annual job openings for surgical technologists and 131 annual openings for radiologic technicians and technologists. In 2023, starting pay for these roles ranged from \$35.83 to \$39.82 per hour.
- Employers typically prefer surgical technologists to have a non-degree credential from a postsecondary institution in addition to a high school diploma, suggesting a viable path through community college. Additionally, for radiologic technologists, the usual entry-level requirement is an associate's degree.
- Postings for surgical and radiologic technologists in the Greater Sacramento area come from a range of employers, including major employers like Sutter Health and UC Davis Health, as well as smaller and medium-sized operations. The larger healthcare systems had the highest number of job postings for these positions in the last 12 months, indicating their considerable demand for these roles.
- It is noted that there are several titles for radiological and surgical technologists, and clarifying the titles along with noting entry, middle, and higher-skilled positions could help better align training programs to employer needs. The [Talent Pipeline Management \(TPM\)](#) initiative has allowed healthcare employers to openly discuss staffing challenges. This collaboration has enabled employers to strategize, share best practices, and create a coordinated approach to meet their staffing needs. The results of this collaboration have provided clear demand information by the region's major hospital systems to inform community colleges CTE programs.
- The panel stressed the need for stronger partnerships between healthcare employers and community colleges to improve communication and address clinical placement challenges. Employers highlighted the importance of using quantitative data alongside direct feedback to tackle talent pipeline issues. By merging data with employer insights, colleges can better align educational programs with workforce needs, ensuring a well-prepared healthcare workforce.
- While hospitals are facing staffing challenges, many are receptive to innovative solutions that enable them to train students without overburdening their existing staff. There is great potential to enhance communication and coordination between colleges and hospitals to leverage these opportunities and address clinical placement needs.
- The panelists suggested that labor market data may underestimate the demand for surgical and radiologic technologists. They expressed concern that reported entry-level wages of around \$36 per hour are low, with actual starting wages expected to be in the mid-\$50 per hour range.

Meeting Proceedings

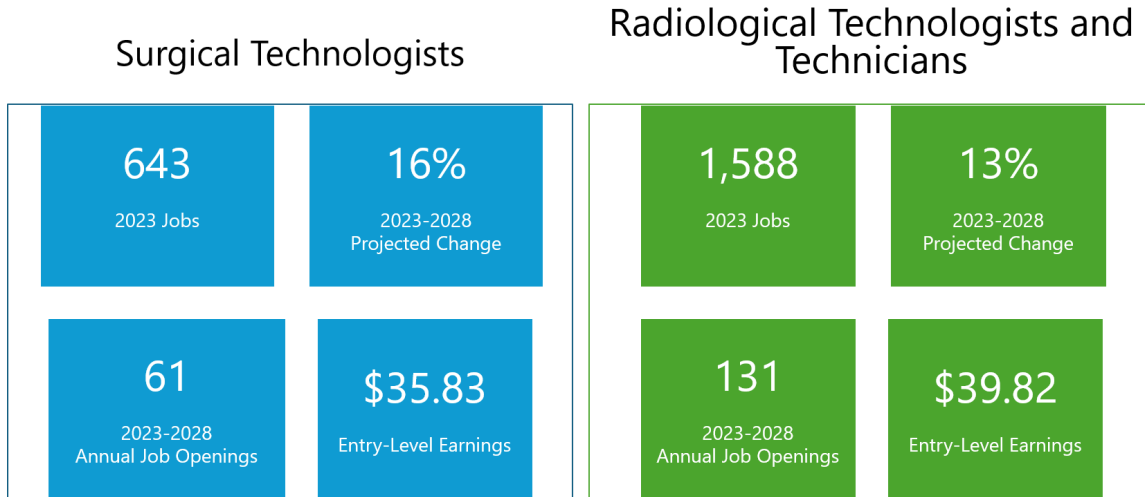
Welcome and Introduction

Caitlin Blockus, Project Manager at Valley Vision, welcomed everyone to the Health and Life Sciences Regional Industry Advisory meeting. The meeting focused on surgical and radiologic technologist positions and clinical placements. Blockus introduced Valley Vision Project Associate DiAngelo Andrews, who aided in planning the advisory and managed the meeting's technology, as well as key members of the planning team: Karen Hubbard, Director of Employer Partnerships for Health and Public Safety, and Chris Hubbard, Dean of Health and Human Services at Cosumnes River College. The planning team members emphasized the importance of collaboration between industry and education, highlighting that these meetings promote open dialogue and ensure that education and training continue to align with the needs of the Health and Life Sciences sector.

Labor Market Information and Job Posting Insights

Following the introductory portion of the meeting, Ebony Joy Benzing, Director of the North/Far North Center of Excellence (COE) for Labor Market Research, provided a presentation. Benzing explained that the presentation would highlight the COE and the collaborative work within the local Healthcare Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) rather than a standard labor market presentation. Benzing provided an overview of the Centers of Excellence and their mission to support the development of career education programs within California Community Colleges. She emphasized the importance of coordinating educational programs with industry needs through collaborative efforts and shared how the COE aims to achieve this mission.

Benzing presented detailed labor market data for surgical and radiologic technologists in the Greater Sacramento region, as shown in Figure 1.1. She noted that the employment data typically lags by one year. According to Benzing, jobs in these fields are projected to grow at a rate of 16%, significantly higher than the average growth rate of 8% for all occupations over the next five years. She reported that there are expected to be 61 annual job openings for surgical technologists and 131 annual job openings for radiologic technicians and technologists during this period. She provided data for 2023, which shows that typical starting pay for these positions ranges from \$35.83 to \$39.82 per hour.



Sources: Lightcast 2024.3 – QCEW Employers, Non-QCEW Employers, and Self-Employed.  CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR LABOR MARKET RESEARCH

Figure 1.1 Employment Outlook in Greater Sacramento

In her presentation analyzing job postings for surgical and radiologic technologist positions in the Greater Sacramento region, Benzing showcased Figure 1.2, shown below, which highlights top employers in the area that had online job postings for these roles over the past 12 months. This included major healthcare providers like Sutter Health and UC Davis Health, as well as other smaller and medium-sized employers. Benzing emphasized that these larger healthcare systems had the highest number of job postings for these positions in the last 12 months, reflecting their significant demand for these roles.

Surgical Technologists		Radiologic Techs	
Company	Number of Postings	Company	Number of Postings
Sutter Health	49	Sutter Health	37
UC Davis Health	36	CommonSpirit Health	35
United Surgical Partners International	15	UC Davis Health	35
Kaiser Permanente	14	United Surgical Partners International	12
Adventist Health	12	Adventist Health	9
CommonSpirit Health	9	US Department of Veterans Affairs	7
Tahoe Forest Health	6	Tahoe Forest Health	7
Mercy San Juan	4	TridentCare	7
Mercy General	3	Kaiser Permanente	6
Barton Health	2	RadNet	6
182 postings for surg techs in last 12 months		305 postings for rad techs in last 12 months	

Sources: Lightcast Job Postings Analyst.  CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR LABOR MARKET RESEARCH

Figure 1.2 Employers with the Most Postings

Benzing noted that the most common job titles for surgical technologists in the top 10 job postings included "Surgical Technologist," "Certified Surgical Technologist," "Surgical Tech," "Surgical Technician," and "Surgical Assistant" (Figure 1.3). For radiologic technicians, the job titles listed were "Radiologic Technologist," "Radiology Technologist," "X-ray Technologist," "Radiographer," and "CT Technologist." Additionally, she noted the high need for travel surgical and radiologic technologists. Benzing's analysis also highlighted the potential need to separate the roles into entry-level, mid-level, and senior-level positions based on the job titles, which can further inform program development and alignment with industry needs.

Surgical Technologists		Radiologic Techs	
Job Title	Number of Postings	Job Title	Number of Postings
Surgical Technicians	54	Mammography Technologists	51
Operating Room Surgical Technicians	29	Radiologic Technologists Radiology Technologists	49
Surgical Scrub Technicians	28	Technologists	35
Operating Room Technicians	14	Travel Interventional Radiology Technologists	25
Surgical Technologists	14	X-Ray Technicians	20
Medical Surgical Registered Nurses	7	CT Radiology Technologists	18
Ambulatory Surgery Registered Nurses	3	Diagnostic Radiologic Technologists	10
Certified Surgical Technicians	3	Travel Radiology Technicians	9
Travel Surgical Technicians	2	Radiology Technicians	9
Travel Surgical Technologists	2	Travel X-Ray Techs	8
182 postings for surg techs in last 12 months		305 postings for rad techs in last 12 months	

Sources: Lightcast Job Postings Analyst.



Figure 1.3 Job Titles with the Most Postings

Benzing also discussed the education requirements for surgical technologists and radiologic technologists, as shown in Figure 1.4 below. For surgical technologists, the employer-preferred education level seemed to be high school or GED, which often translates to a non-degree award from a postsecondary institution rather than just a high school diploma. This suggests that surgical technologist roles may be a viable pathway within community colleges. While the job posting data did not always specify the preferred education level for radiologic technologists, Benzing highlighted that the typical entry-level education is an associate's degree. She emphasized the importance of understanding the specific education and credential requirements for these roles to help community colleges align their program offerings with the needs of local employers.

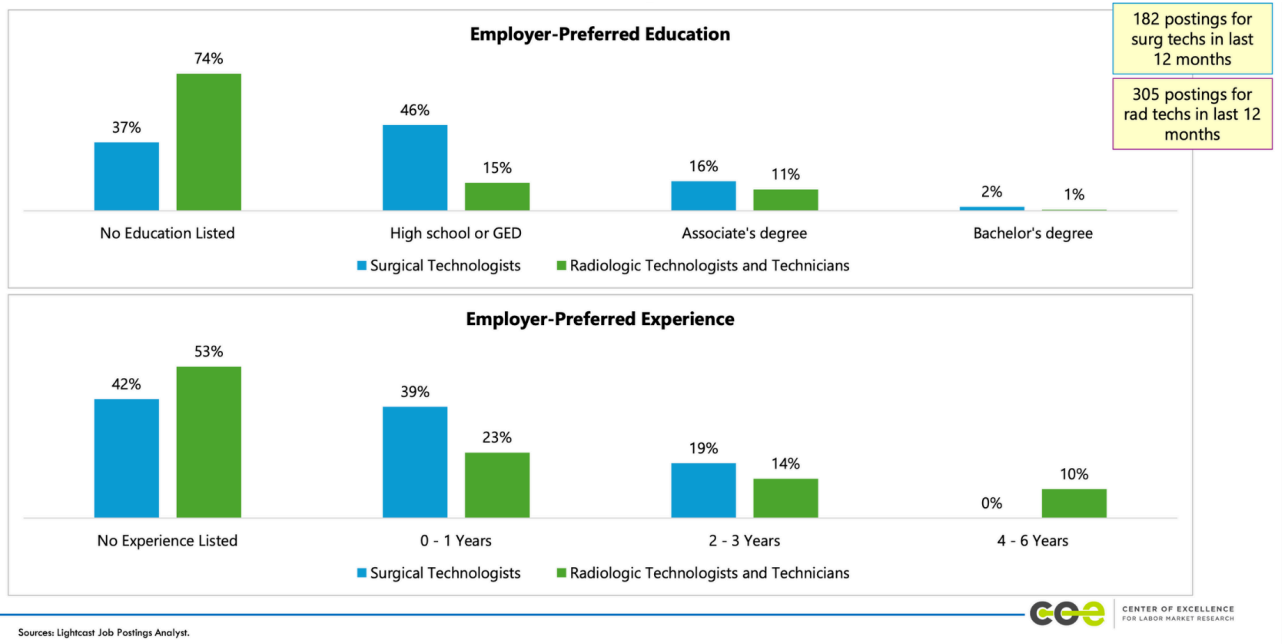


Figure 1.4 Education and Work Experience Preferences

Benzing underscored the importance of aligning educational programs with the evolving needs of the healthcare industry. Through her detailed labor market data, job posting analysis, and discussions on education requirements, the meeting highlighted the significant role of community colleges in preparing students for these in-demand healthcare occupations.

Regional Connections

Healthcare Talent Pipeline Management

Rana Ghadban, Chief Executive Officer of the Roseville Chamber of Commerce, discussed the [Talent Pipeline Management \(TPM\) framework](#) and the healthcare collaboration initiated by her organization in March 2023. The collaboration includes major healthcare providers Sutter Health, UC Davis Health, Kaiser Permanente, and Dignity Health. These organizations are committed to addressing the critical workforce needs in the region. By coming together, these organizations are strategizing and implementing solutions to fill high-demand positions, including surgical technicians and radiologic technologists. This united effort not only enhances the efficiency of healthcare delivery but also ensures that the workforce is equipped to meet the growing demands of patient care. By focusing on key roles, the collaboration aims to improve healthcare outcomes and ensure that the necessary expertise is available to support the community effectively.

Ghadban emphasized the importance of aligning community college programs with workforce needs and addressed the challenges related to clinical placements. One of the main objectives

of the collaboration is to create a seamless pathway for students entering these high-demand healthcare roles. The need for effective clinical placements was identified as a significant challenge requiring strategic planning and coordination. Ghadban provided an overview of the TPM initiative, and shared that the next step is to reconvene the healthcare collaborators and community colleges to continue discussing clinical placement capacity and potential solutions.

Clinical Placements

During her presentation, Ashpreet Singh, the Clinical Placement Coordinator for the Los Rios Community College District, shared the opportunities for securing clinical placements for students in the Sacramento area, particularly in lab specialties such as surgical and radiologic technologists. She reinforced the importance of addressing clinical placements and the key to successfully placing students and effectively managing college programs: strong partnerships with hospitals.

Singh noted that while hospitals face staffing challenges, many are open to innovative solutions that allow them to train students without overburdening existing staff. She reaffirmed the potential of enhancing communication and coordination between colleges and hospitals to capitalize on these opportunities and address clinical placement needs.

Furthermore, Singh underlined the potential to improve healthcare students' hands-on training and experience and expressed enthusiasm about building a stronger pipeline and better collaboration between institutions. Singh looks forward to partnering with the Roseville Chamber TPM to create a structured process to increase the clinical placement capacity of community college programs.

Panel Discussion

During the panel discussion, regional employers shared their perspectives on the current and evolving landscape of surgical and radiologic technologist careers and clinical placements.

The panel included:

- Daniel Weaver, Director of Diagnostic Imaging at Marshall Medical
- Rob Marchuk, Vice President of Operations at Dignity Health Medical Foundation and CommonSpirit Health
- Adamanda Phillips, Nursing Director of the Clinical Decision Area and Inpatient Operations at Sutter Roseville Medical Center
- Lyndon Huling, Executive Director of Talent Acquisition and Compensation Services at UC Davis Health
- Delane Mason, Executive Director of Radiology at UC Davis Health

The panel was moderated by Hilary Tellesen, Workforce Development Director at Valley Vision.

Talent Pipeline Management Process

The panelists emphasized the critical role of the collaborative approach spearheaded by the Roseville Chamber of Commerce, specifically through the Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) framework. They highlighted how the TPM process successfully united major healthcare organizations in the region, providing a platform for them to focus on shared challenges and community needs despite the competitive environment in which they typically operate. This unprecedented collaboration ignited new "lightbulb moments" among the panelists, encouraging them to broaden their perspectives beyond the immediate needs of their own organizations and consider the wider regional talent market and its potential sources.

The TPM framework played a pivotal role in shifting the organizations' focus from solely internal solutions to proactive engagement with community colleges and other local talent pipelines. By adopting the structured TPM model, the panelists were able to break down complex workforce challenges into manageable components, allowing them to measure the effectiveness of their collaborative efforts quantitatively.

Furthermore, the TPM initiative created a space for healthcare employers to be transparent about their staffing difficulties. This openness fostered a collaborative atmosphere where the panelists could strategize together, share best practices, and develop a more coordinated regional approach to addressing their collective staffing needs. By aligning their goals and resources, they aimed to ensure the ongoing development of a thoroughly prepared healthcare workforce capable of meeting the dynamic demands of the region. This collaborative effort is essential in building a sustainable pipeline of skilled professionals who can adapt to the evolving healthcare landscape.

Panelists on Labor Market Data

The panelists expressed concerns that the labor market data presented by Benzing may underestimate the true demand for surgical and radiologic technologists. Marchuk noted that the data likely fails to capture the increasing need, particularly as healthcare systems continue to expand outpatient and ambulatory care services in the region. This growth is expected to drive greater demand for these technician roles.

Phillips agreed, stating that the data only reflects the current situation and does not account for the significant growth and expansion occurring in healthcare organizations in the area. Mason pointed out that the entry-level wage data for radiologic technologists seems low at approximately \$36 per hour when she believed the actual starting wages should be in the mid-\$50 per hour range.

While labor market data is useful, it may not fully capture the scale of anticipated workforce needs, especially as healthcare delivery models evolve and expand, according to the panelists. They stressed the importance of using this data as a starting point but also relying on direct

input from employers to understand the true extent of the talent pipeline challenge. By combining quantitative data with qualitative insights from employers, education and training providers, they hope to create a more accurate and comprehensive picture of workforce needs in the healthcare sector. They hope this approach will help ensure that educational programs are effectively aligned with industry demands, ultimately supporting the development of a well-prepared healthcare workforce.

Strengthening Partnerships

During the panel discussion, several panelists shared about their organizations' clinical placement numbers and sources. Weaver highlighted that Marshall Medical hosts about 6 to 8 clinical placements per year, welcoming a diverse mix of radiology, ultrasound, computed tomography (CT) scan, and mammography students from private colleges. Mason expressed pride in UC Davis Health hosting 32 radiology technician students annually, evenly split between community colleges and private colleges, along with four ultrasound students from private programs and one nuclear medicine/PET student from an out-of-state university. Phillips noted that while the majority of their clinical placements come from private colleges, Sutter Roseville Medical Center is excited about the potential for growth in this area.

The panelists discussed opportunities for community colleges to expand their clinical placement capacity. They acknowledged that while coordinating with hospitals can be challenging, there is immense potential for collaboration. Hospitals face productivity pressures and staffing shortages, yet many are eager to find ways to support student training, recognizing the importance of nurturing the next generation of healthcare professionals. The panel stressed the vital need for stronger partnerships and shared a positive vision for the future, advocating for a well-structured process, enhanced communication, and coordination.

Conclusion

At the conclusion of the advisory, faculty, and employers were encouraged to continue fostering collaboration to strengthen the pipeline into careers within the region's Health and Life Sciences industry and ensure graduates are well-prepared to enter the workforce.

[Please click here](#) to view the detailed event materials and access a video recording. You can also access comprehensive labor market data on the Health Sector compiled by the Center of Excellence for the Greater Sacramento region [here](#). Additionally, if you're interested in staying updated on the latest news, insights, and opportunities in workforce development, you can [sign up for Valley Vision's newsletter here](#). For more information about the report and labor market data provided, please contact:

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