

# KEY FINDINGS

## 2025 Michigan Healthcare Workforce Index

### Only Four Occupations Projected to Have a Surplus by 2034

Dentists, Occupational Therapists, Radiation Therapists, and Surgical Technologists are the only healthcare occupations projected to have a workforce surplus in Michigan over the next decade. Even among these, regional access remains a problem – Michigan has 242 dental health professional shortage areas **affecting over 1.5 million residents**.

### Home Health Aides Face a 149% Projected Shortage

By 2034, Home Health and Personal Care Aides are projected to face the **highest shortage** of any occupation in the Index. By 2026, that translates to a **32% shortage**, or about **32,500 open jobs**, exacerbated by a Michigan **turnover rate of 87%**, far above the national rate of 70%.

### Nursing Turnover and Burnout Are Alarming

According to a 2023 Michigan Nurses' Study, **35.5% of Registered Nurses (RNs) plan to leave** nursing within a year. Regional surveys show **burnout rates as high as 47.4%** in Northern Michigan, contributing to ongoing workforce instability despite modest projected shortages for RNs and LPNs.

### Pharmacist Workforce and Wage Decline

Pharmacists had only **21% wage growth** from 2013 to 2023, compared to 46.7% for Dentists and 45.8% for Physicians. Pharmacy **school applicants dropped 35%** from 2011 to 2022. Between 2013 and 2023, the number of pharmacy **employees fell by 2,400** despite an increase in the number of open pharmacies.

### Dental Assistants Rank Lowest Overall

Dental Assistants are the "unhealthiest" occupation in the Index, with a **129% shortage** and **67% turnover** rate. Michigan ranks lowest in the Great Lakes region for Dental Assistant wages, and 70% of dentists find recruitment "very" or "extremely challenging."

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### Behavioral Health Workforce in Crisis

Michigan has **233 mental health HPSAs**, with only nine counties unaffected. Psychologists face the **highest shortage** and **lowest wage** rank among behavioral health occupations. Over **21%** of psychologist roles at community mental health organizations remain vacant.

### OBGYN Residency Applicants Declining Sharply

Despite Michigan maintaining legal reproductive care access, OBGYN residency **applicants dropped 12.3%** between 2022–2024. The post-Dobbs legal uncertainty surrounding reproductive care may be deterring students from pursuing OBGYN careers even in supportive states.

### Midwives Have the Highest Shortage Among Nurses

Nurse Midwives have a **33% projected shortage**, significantly higher than RNs (3%) and LPNs (4%). The added education burden, combined with limited practice settings, particularly in rural and underserved areas, limits growth in this field.

### Patient Support Occupations Are Extremely Vulnerable

All patient support roles have **turnover rates over 50%** and **wages below Michigan's median** (\$22.57). Nursing Assistants have a **93% turnover rate**, while shortages for all patient support roles exceed **80%** over ten years.

### Growing Workforce Diversity in Lower-Wage Roles

Many of the most diverse healthcare occupations – such as LPNs, behavioral health professionals, and patient support roles – are also **among the lowest paid**. Without career pathways and retention strategies, Michigan risks losing workforce segments that best reflect and serve diverse communities.