

# Health Career Observer



The Official Newsletter of the WNY R-AHEC

September 2022

## Respiratory Therapist



*"It is very rewarding to see someone get there quality of life back!"*

Respiratory therapists care for patients who have trouble breathing by examining them, performing diagnostic tests, developing treatment plans with doctors and then educating patients on their plans. They may work in emergency rooms, intensive care units, outpatient clinics, nursing homes, or sleep centers. Some specialize in working with infants and babies, or with seniors.

**Average Annual Pay: \$61,830**

## How Do I Become A Respiratory Therapist?

**Projected Job  
Market Growth:  
14% by 2031**

Complete an Associate Degree in respiratory therapy. Some employers may prefer a bachelor's degree. Following, complete a credentialing exam from the National Board for Respiratory Care and then earn state licensure. Certification must be maintained. Respiratory therapists are required to be licensed in all states except Alaska.

## What Does A Respiratory Therapist Do?

- Examine patients with breathing or cardiopulmonary disorders
- Consult with physicians about a patients' condition and develop a treatment plan
- Perform diagnostic tests such as assessing lung capacity and analyzing oxygen and carbon dioxide level

- Treat patients using a variety of methods
- Monitor and record patients' progress
- Clear airways for improved breathing
- Connect patients to ventilators
- Set up and monitor equipment
- Teach patients how to take medications and use equipment



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## A Professional Account

*Michelle Waldo, Senior Respiratory Therapist at Wyoming County Community Health System in Warsaw, NY shares her personal insight on respiratory therapy.*

### What is the most rewarding part of your job?

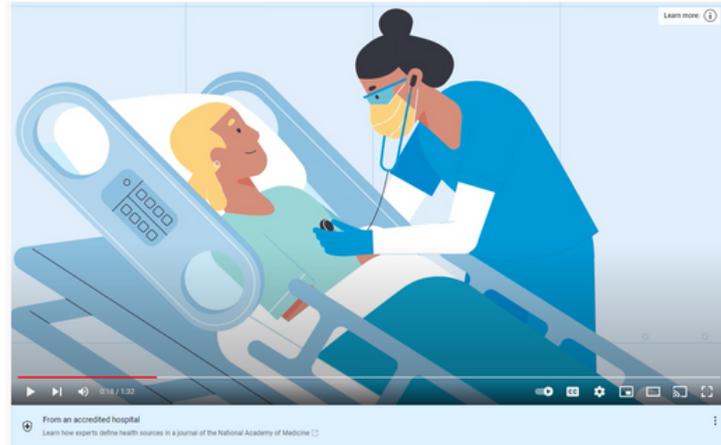
*"It is rewarding to make people feel better, have successful discharges, and see someone get their quality of life back."*

### What is the most challenging?

*"Seeing someone struggle can be so challenging, or not being able to understand what a patient is going through or having a patient not understand."*

### What do you wish you knew back in school that you know now?

*"School doesn't prepare you for grief management and how to deal with stress. It doesn't teach you how to be regimented and to remind yourself to hydrate and know what its like to where an n95 mask all day."*



Click on the image to learn more about Respiratory Therapy from the Mayo Clinic



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOcQCy9Pq-s>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqxAu17Jdoc>

Click on the image for first hand accounts of Respiratory Therapy at John Hopkins Bayview Medical Center

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Contact Erin Brauen  
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<http://nysahec.org/our-programs/new-nys-ahcec-scholars-program/>

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