



# Healthcare

EconomicDevelopmentAsheville.org

## *Driven by Innovation and Excellence*

In the gorgeous mountains of Asheville, North Carolina, healthcare is a fast growing, thriving sector. Still a destination for rejuvenation and nationally recognized for delivering exceptional care, the industry is a driving force in the Asheville area's business landscape. It is the largest industry in terms of employment with a diverse range of healthcare organizations—from traditional to alternative to commercial—all of which add strength to the region's economy.

Recently referred to as a healthcare hub by Moody's, the diversity of healthcare companies in the area complements business opportunities, often leading to cost reduction and the ability to bring cutting edge ideas to fruition. The industry's business community embraces advanced technology and creates a remarkable environment for innovation, making it a natural leader in the delivery of quality healthcare services and products.



*In the Asheville Metropolitan Statistical Area, annual average employment has grown consistently each year since 1990 in the Education and Health Services industry.*

Focus Report from the



Asheville-Buncombe County

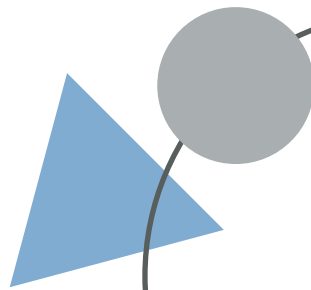


Photo courtesy Bent Creek Institute



## *Outstanding Healthcare Reputation*

Asheville offers a wonderful place to be part of something special in healthcare. The region's reputation is established. World-class medical care, innovative and integrative options, cutting edge research, and steady growth provide multiple avenues to partner.

**Mission Health, a not-for-profit, independent community hospital system, was recently named by Thomson Reuters as one of the top 15 best health systems in the United States.**

It is the only health system in North Carolina to receive this recognition. Mission Health is North Carolina's sixth-largest health system and the regional referral center. It is also the area's largest employer, providing more than 8,500 jobs that are a vital part of the economy. In 2010, Mission Health estimated an annual economic impact on Buncombe and Madison counties of nearly \$1 billion.

Mission's focus on quality is clear. Practicing physicians are among the best, attracted by state-of-the-art facilities and equipment. The hospital system is consistently recognized for centers of excellence in areas that include cancer, heart, neuroscience, pediatrics, and trauma. Because of modern approaches pioneered by Mission Health, Asheville is considered to be one of the top-ten centers of cost effectiveness for Medicare enrollees in the nation.

*“The healthcare sector has a strong foundation in western North Carolina, and the area is respected as a healthcare market known for its innovation, high quality, and cost effectiveness.”*

— Ronald A. Paulus, MD  
President and CEO, Mission Health

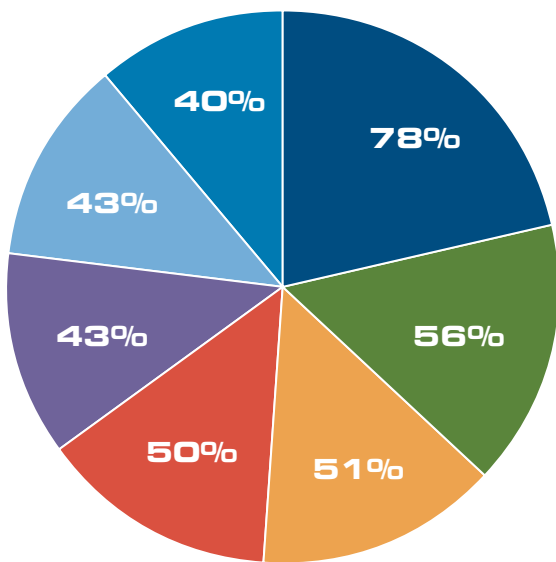




Photo courtesy Mission Health

## Fast-Growing Healthcare Occupations

Percentage Change 2002-2012



Source: EMSI Covered Employment

Occupation	% Change
Home Health Aides	78%
Physical Therapist Assistants	56%
Physical Therapists	51%
Audiologists	50%
Occupational Therapy Assistants	43%
Massage Therapists	43%
Occupational Therapists	40%

Other Fast-growing Related Occupations:

Veterinary Technicians	88%
Veterinarians	58%

*2002-2012 Education and Health Services industry employment increased approximately 29 percent in the Asheville Metropolitan Statistical Area.*



Photos courtesy Park Ridge Health (left) and Mission Health (right)

## *Regional Healthcare Excellence*

*“We have very high quality healthcare in the Asheville area, and we’re also known for keeping costs low. The combination of alternative and traditional healthcare in this area creates an overall wellness-oriented view that is part of our fabric, and both disciplines work well together.”*

— Tracy Buchanan, President and CEO, CarePartners

**CarePartners Health Services** offers post-acute care for more than 2,000 people daily in the community. With more than 1,000 employees and growing, CarePartners is one of the area’s largest employers. Their services include inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation, home health, hospice, palliative care, orthotics & prosthetics, adult day services, and private duty services. CarePartners ranks in the top percentile in the United States for lowest re-admission rates. A new Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) is planned to provide care for up to 150 people age 55+ who might otherwise be in nursing homes. CarePartners expects this program to help reduce costs and create an additional 50+ jobs.

Asheville is also home to the **Charles George Veterans Affairs Medical Center**, an acute care hospital with a community living center, residential rehab treatment program, home based primary care, and several outpatient clinics. The Center employs 1,500 people locally, and sources local suppliers and services whenever possible.

Other superb hospitals serve the region’s healthcare needs and provide a wide range of services including **Park Ridge Health** and **Margaret R. Pardee Memorial Hospital**, both located in the Asheville Metropolitan Statistical Area. Park Ridge Health has served the region for 102-years and currently provides jobs to over 1,200 health care professionals. In 2011 they served in over 350,000 patient visits in many physician offices and at the main hospital campus in Fletcher, NC. 2012 patient satisfaction scores place their care in the top 5% of hospitals in the country. Park Ridge Health has added over 200 new jobs to the region in the past few years.

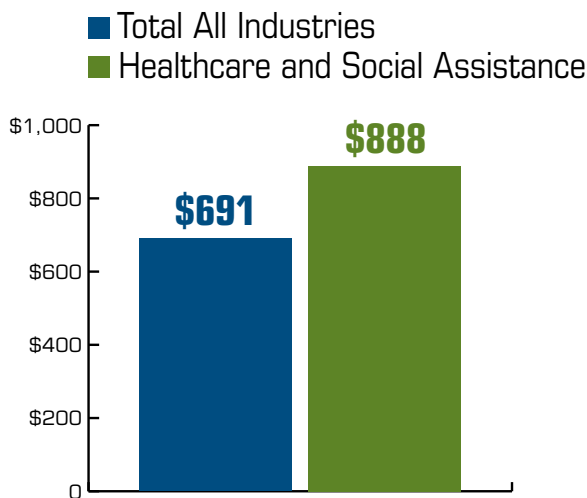
All of our area hospitals contribute to a thriving healthcare industry through excellent service, innovative practices, and advanced technology.

*“By leveraging our entrepreneurs, we are bringing new medical innovation to patients here first. This creates more jobs and brings in more revenues. It’s a circle, innovation brings more companies which brings more investment... and brings more companies.”*

— Cindy Clark, President, ibiliti

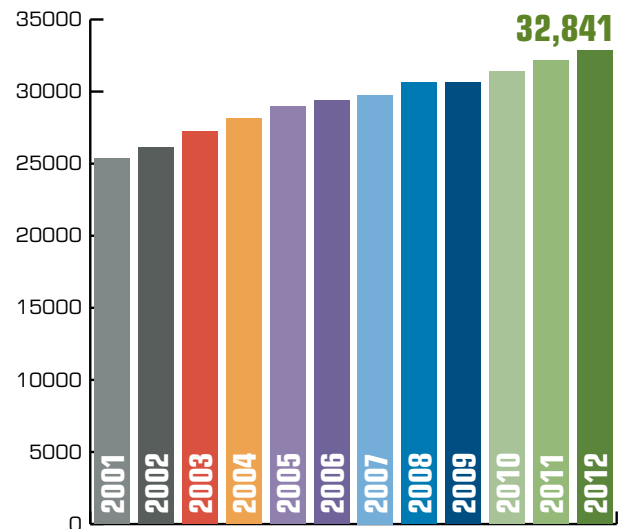
### Average Weekly Wages

Asheville MSA 2012



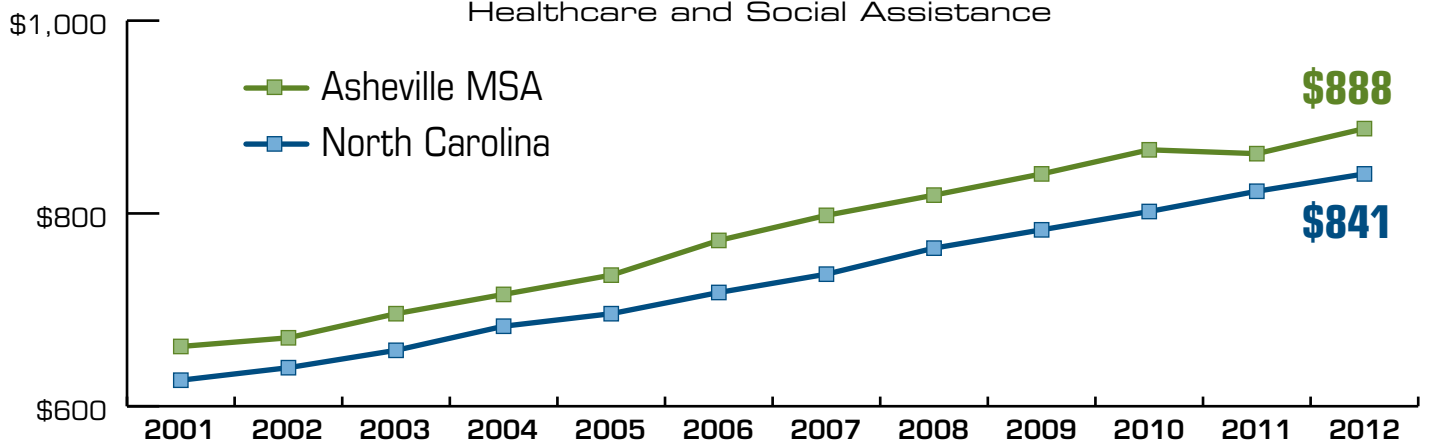
### Average Employment

Asheville MSA 2001-2012  
Healthcare and Social Assistance



### Average Weekly Wage Comparison

Healthcare and Social Assistance







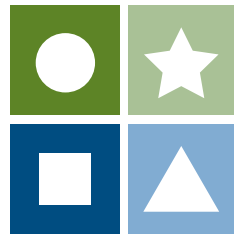
## Genova Diagnostics

Genova Diagnostics is a global specialty clinical laboratory located in Asheville that pioneered a sophisticated approach to lab testing. Their testing procedures help physicians better understand the underlying causes of health issues. They are one of the top labs in the United States for diagnostic testing related to gastrointestinal function. More than 8,000 customers globally use Genova Diagnostics testing, and the company employs approximately 225 workers to manage the process.

## Veterans Health Administration

Asheville is the location of one of seven regional Consolidated Patient Account Centers for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). The Mid-Atlantic Center began as a pilot project in 2005 to increase collections, lower operating costs, and establish best practices throughout VHA. It was the first consolidated patient account center in the VHA system and currently employs more than 500 workers.

Asheville was selected based on a thorough market analysis of prospective areas within the region. It was rated and ranked on a variety of factors including: existing areas of revenue, cost of living, labor market conditions, and ability to recruit professional and technical staff.



## Support Services

Hundreds of organizations in the region support the healthcare industry by providing a broad spectrum of services and products. These companies often create jobs with above average wages and attract a highly educated population.

*“This region offers Genova an employee base with the skills our lab requires to provide accurate processing for patients. Because the area is recognized as a healthcare hub, we have a great supply of high quality laboratory talent. Additionally, the quality of life in Asheville is a great recruiting tool.”*

— Ted Hull, President and CEO  
Genova Diagnostics



Two healthcare segments—support services and commercialization—are expanding in the area.



Photo courtesy Thermo Fisher Scientific



## Commercialization

Commercialization involves creating quality functional products and the Asheville area has a long history of strength in medical manufacturing. A diverse range of companies create products that improve healthcare for patients on an international scale.

- **Thermo Fisher Scientific** manufactures ultra-low temperature freezers among other products supplied to pharmaceutical, biotech, and research institutions.
- **Nypro Asheville** makes precision plastic products. In 2010 the company announced expansion with an \$83 million investment and 156 new positions. In 2011 Nypro announced a \$7.2 million expansion investment in new machinery and equipment.
- **PolyLINKS** manufactures plastic tools and materials for pharmaceutical, medical and biotech plastics.
- **G3 Medical** produces sterilizers and packaging equipment, and offers engineering and production services for medical device manufacturers and healthcare providers.

## ibiliti

Creative ideas help to fuel the healthcare industry but getting ideas to market can sometimes be challenging. The objective behind ibiliti, a grant-funded North Carolina non-profit organization, is to help medical technology companies get to market faster and more effectively. ibiliti helps medtech entrepreneurs find funding, talent, and resources needed for rapid product deployment. Working with the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, Mission Health, and local businesses, ibiliti is now helping local professionals.

One of ibiliti's pilot programs is called MICA (Medical Innovation and Commercialization Alliance). In cooperation with Mission Health and Western Carolina University, this public/private partnership is taking promising ideas suggested by medical professionals and converting them from concept to prototype quickly. One standout project involves developing a genetic database that will help practicing geneticists identify rare disorders.





Photo courtesy Mission Health

## *Western North Carolina—a place where traditional and alternative healthcare coexist.*

Asheville is teeming with exceptional healthcare practitioners using progressive technologies and methods to provide quality products and care. A healthy approach to living is often unmistakable in Asheville and can enhance business success and overall quality of life.

The Institute for Emerging Issues has dedicated western North Carolina as a hub for integrative health for good reason. Alternative and complementary healthcare are almost as prevalent as traditional healthcare in the area.

[EconomicDevelopmentAsheville.org](http://EconomicDevelopmentAsheville.org)

### **Bent Creek Institute**

Bent Creek Institute is a national treasure operating in our area. The Institute also supports integrated therapies that are rooted in botanicals, whether it's naturopathic, aromatherapy, or oriental medicine combining acupuncture and natural supplements.

Bent Creek Institute includes the Germplasm Repository, the first comprehensive North American gene bank for medicinal flora. Their primary functions include building a national reference library, helping advance the Integrative Healthcare program at Mission Health and serving as a nonprofit botanical safety plant testing lab. The Institute consults with area companies that manufacture botanical healthcare products.



*“One of the primary reasons people come to live here is an emphasis on lifestyle and sustainability. Integrative healthcare is bringing substantive economic development and scientific focus on the kind of lifestyles people prefer here. We’re here to validate and verify these properties, separating the folklore from the scientifically verifiable.”*

— Greg Cumberford,  
President, Bent Creek Institute