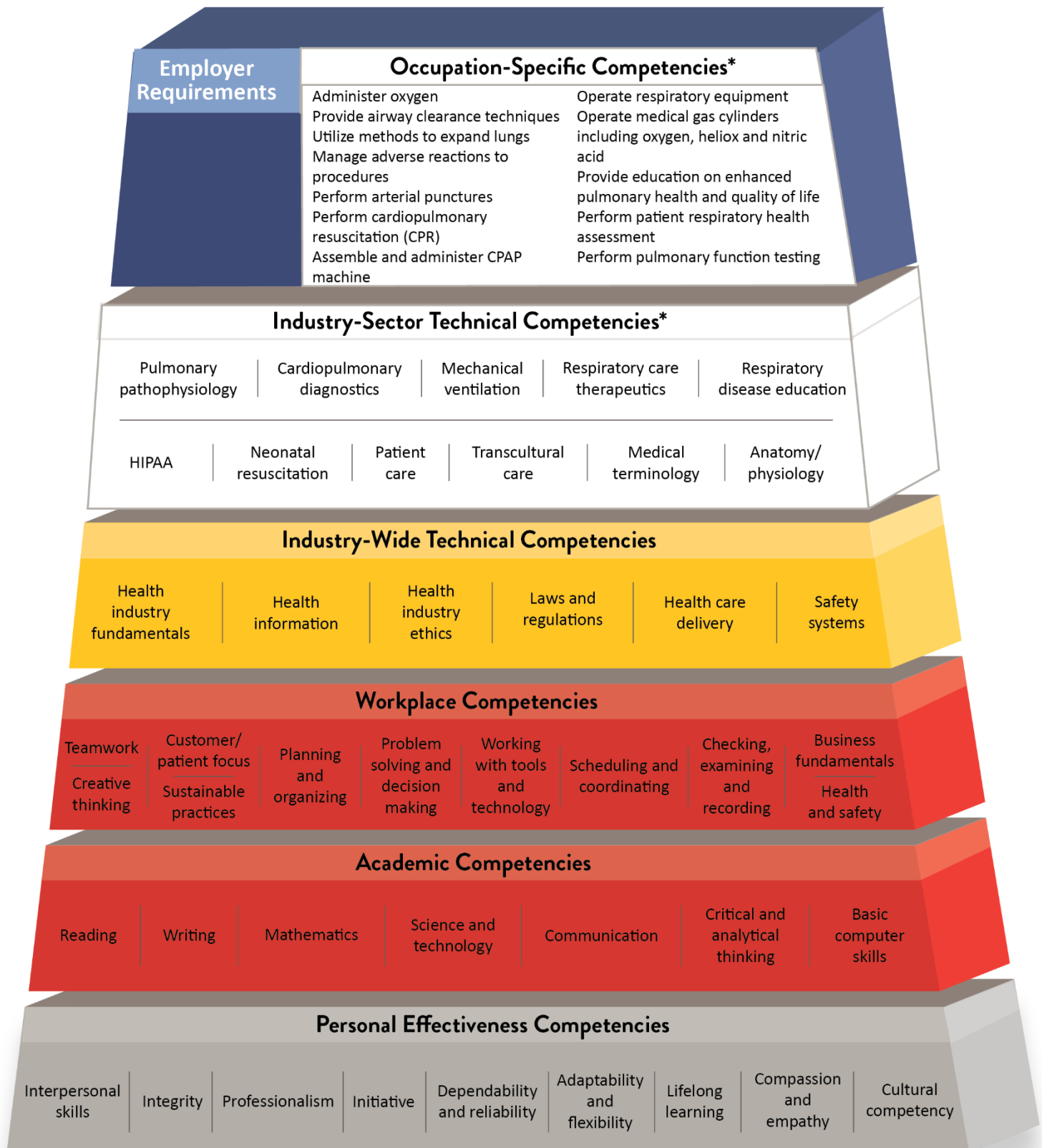


Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline

Competency Model for Health Care Services

Occupation: Respiratory Therapist



Based on: Fundamentals of Health Care Competency Model, Employment and Training Administration, United States Department of Labor, February 2025. For more detailed information about competency model creation and sources, visit dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/health-care-services.

Competency Model for Respiratory Therapist

Respiratory Therapist – A respiratory therapist evaluates, treats, and educates patients with cardiopulmonary disorders. They perform assessments to prevent, detect, and manage complications, deliver therapeutic interventions, and support interdisciplinary care plans. They also educate patients on prevention, self-management, and improving cardiopulmonary health and quality of life. Responsibilities include monitoring therapy and equipment, analyzing blood gases and lung function, and providing diagnostic insights and treatment recommendations.

*Pipeline recommends the Industry-Sector Technical Competencies as formal training opportunities (provided through related instruction) and the Occupation-Specific Competencies as on-the-job (OJT) training opportunities.

Industry-Sector Technical Competencies

Related Instruction for dual training means the organized and systematic form of education resulting in the enhancement of skills and competencies related to the dual trainee's current or intended occupation.

- **Pulmonary pathophysiology** – Understand the subspecialty of surgical pathology which deals with the diagnosis and characterization of neoplastic and non-neoplastic diseases of the lungs and thoracic pleura.
- **Cardiopulmonary diagnostics** – Understand a range of conditions that affect the heart and lungs.
- **Mechanical ventilation** – Understand a form of life support when a machine takes over the work of breathing for a patient who is unable to breathe on their own.
- **Respiratory care therapeutics** – Understand the exercises and treatments that are concerned with the maintenance or improvement of respiratory functioning (as in patients with pulmonary disease).
- **Respiratory disease education** – Understand multiple diseases that affect the lungs and other parts of the respiratory system.
- **HIPAA** – Understand the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 for standards for electronic health record transactions, privacy and security.

- **Neonatal resuscitation** – Understand a set of interventions that are performed at the time of birth to support the establishment of breathing and circulation.
- **Patient care** – Know how to treat patients not only from a clinical perspective, but also from an emotional, mental, spiritual, social and financial perspective.
- **Transcultural care** – Understand the strong awareness of different cultures and cultural sensitivity with both verbal and non-verbal communications.
- **Medical terminology** – Knowledge of medical terms.
- **Anatomy/physiology** – Understand the study of the structure and relationship between body parts and the study of the function of body parts and the body as a whole.

Occupation-Specific Competencies

On-the-Job Training is hands-on instruction completed at work to learn the core competencies necessary to succeed in an occupation. Common types of OJT include job shadowing, mentorship, cohort-based training, assignment-based project evaluation and discussion-based training.

- **Administer oxygen** – Understand the process by which supplemented oxygen is administered to prevent hypoxemia and knowledge of the risks of hypercapnia.
- **Provide airway clearance techniques** – Understand various airway clearance techniques and bronchial hygiene methods.
- **Utilize methods to expand lungs** – Understand the slow, deep inspiration, inspiratory pause and fast unobstructed expiration.
- **Manage adverse reactions to procedures** – Know the reactions to both the upper airway and lower respiratory tract.
- **Perform arterial punctures** – Understand the placement of a needle or catheter into an artery to sample blood gases or blood pressure or positioning of a catheter in the aorta or the heart.
- **Perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)** – Understand how to do cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and how it can help save a life during a cardiac or breathing emergency.
- **Assemble and administer CPAP machine** – Know the continuous Positive Airway Pressure therapy to introduce air flow to stent the airways open, in people who are breathing spontaneously.
- **Operate respiratory equipment** – Know how to safely operate equipment and be trained in infection control. Understand preventive strategies to avoid patient contamination.

- **Operate medical gas cylinders, including oxygen, heliox, nitric oxide** – Understand the recommendations to stay in compliance with mandated standards and how to operate medical gas equipment in a manner that is safe and beneficial for the patient.
- **Provide education on enhanced pulmonary health and quality of life** – Understand how to educate patients and families to increase coping strategies to improve quality of life.
- **Perform patient respiratory health assessment** – Understand and be able to implement invasive and non-invasive ventilation on adult/peds/neonatal patients.
- **Perform pulmonary function testing** – Know how to do a complete evaluation of the respiratory system including patient history, physical exams and tests of pulmonary function.

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