

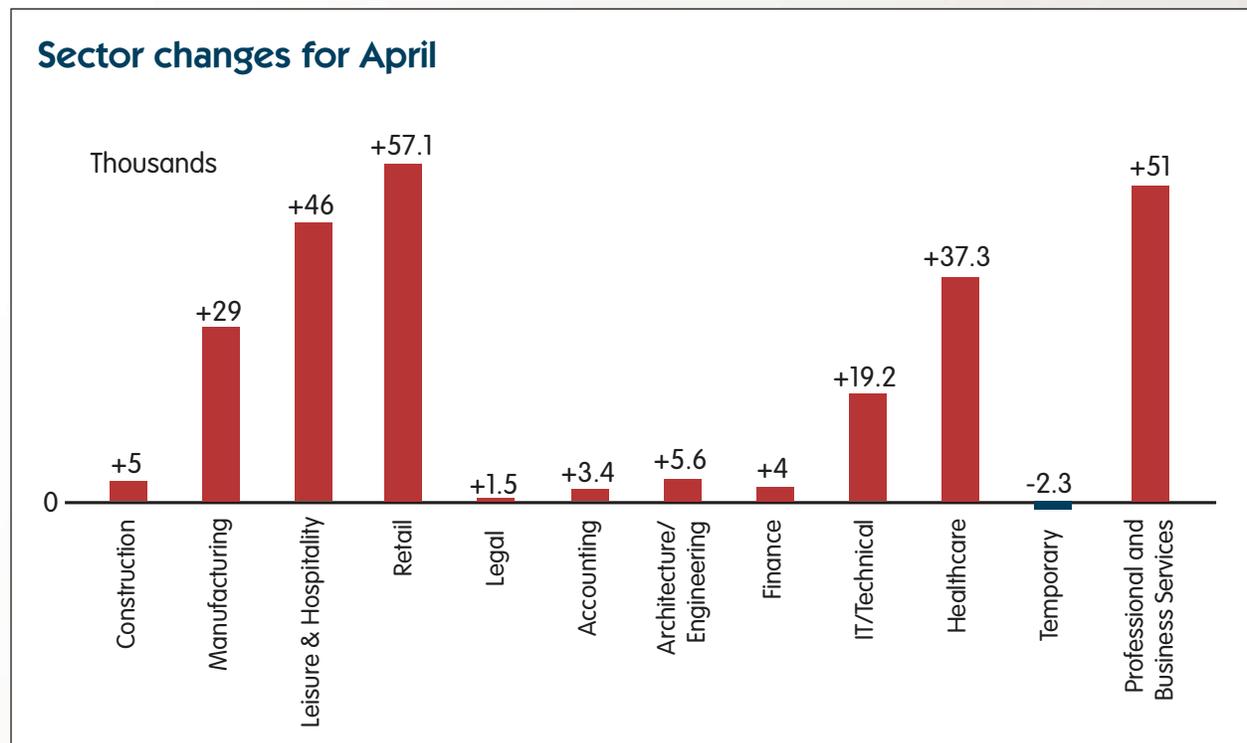
## Healthcare Workplace Economy May 2011

### Jobs Report Summary for the Healthcare Industry Based on the BLS Report with April 2011 data

The April jobs report should really come as no surprise. Even while the economy added 244,000 jobs, the unemployment rate rose to 9%. An increasing unemployment rate is a natural progression of a recovery. This increase is a direct relation to the data collection methods of the Bureau of Labor Statistics -- if workers abandon their active job search efforts or if they do not find work after a prolonged period of unemployment, they are considered “discouraged” thereby removing them from the count of Americans who are unemployed. Discouraged workers re-entering the job search are then recounted, thus raising the total unemployment rate. In April an estimated

113,000 formerly discouraged workers re-entered the jobs search process.

The good news is, since the start of 2011 there are more jobs for these seekers. These job seekers are now willing to dedicate their time and effort to the job search process. A total of 768,000 jobs have been added since January. Additionally, revisions from February and March added 46,000 more jobs than were previously reported. The private sector has picked up in a big way adding 268,000 total jobs in April where the public sector shed 24,000. The gains were spread across a host of diverse industries, drawing a stark comparison to the lone healthcare gains in 2010. The average length of the work week remained unchanged at 34.3 hours but the average hourly wage increased by 3 cents, a shift in the right direction for workers.



Q2 begins with job additions in array of industries:

- **Healthcare:** Holding steady, this sector added another 37,000 jobs in April. Within the sector, just under 22,000 jobs were added in ambulatory healthcare (outpatient services) and 10,000 jobs in hospitals. According to data from The Conference Board, there are three open jobs available for every highly skilled healthcare professional looking for work today. The most sought after healthcare professionals are practitioners and technical professionals as well as workers for support positions such as physical therapist assistants, home nurses and nursing aides as well as medical assistants. In the last year, healthcare has added 283,000 jobs, or an average of 24,000 jobs per month.
- **Manufacturing:** The sector added another 29,000 jobs in April. Since reaching an industry low in December 2009, manufacturing has added 250,000 jobs, 141,000 of which were added in 2011. In April, job gains were seen in machinery, primary metals and computer and electronic products manufacturing. According to the Institute for Supply Management's Index, manufacturing has been slowed relating to production growth and backlogged orders which may signify the effects on the supply chain in Japan following the earthquake. Despite the dip, April marked the 21st consecutive month of expansion for the manufacturing sector.
- **Retail:** Retail jobs led the April additions with 57,000 jobs. Job growth in retail not only signals good news for job seekers within the industry, but good news surrounding consumer confidence as well. If retailers are adding jobs, they are indicating business is steady and expected to grow as consumers spend more. The retail industry has not experienced such a surge of jobs in the market since 2000 and economists will continue to watch the job numbers within the sector in the upcoming months along with consumer confidence and spending trends.
- **Leisure and hospitality:** Another sign that consumer confidence is growing is leisure and

hospitality job gains. In time for spring and summer, employment within the sector continued to increase by 46,000 jobs. Since February, the industry has added 151,000 jobs, with nearly two-thirds of the growth in food services and drinking places. Despite continued gas / food price increases, consumers continued to spend in April as spending increased by 0.6%.

- **Professional and business services:** The strength of the private sector can be seen throughout this month's jobs report, but especially within professional and business services as well as within financial services. Employment in professional and business services added 51,000 jobs in April. 11,000 jobs were added in management and technical consulting services and 8,000 jobs were added in computer systems design and related services. This growth signals good news for highly skilled seekers as the improvement in the job market spans all levels matching the skill and education level of seekers.
- **Temporary:** While temporary jobs decreased by 2,300 in April, the BLS data reports the difference to be statistically of little significance marking little change from March. While it's too early to say definitively, the small numbers of temporary job gains could be replaced by a larger number of permanent job gains which is good news for seekers. Additional good news for temporary workers is that as demand for temporary and permanent workers grows, wage increases could help to ensure temporary workers stay on longer to meet employers' needs.

### **Soliant insights:**

#### **Good news from the jobs report even as the unemployment rate rises**

While uncertainty around the economy and job market still exists, BLS data from April and all of 2011 points to growth -- the kind we have been waiting for. Economists have noted that the increase in unemployment was expected because in order to truly decline, unemployment has to rise again to accommodate discouraged workers

re-entering the market. Job gains in a host of industries means that while the pace might still be slow, growth is expected beyond the two to three industries we saw grow in 2010.

Over the next few months, it will be important to examine the temporary to permanent job conversion rates to see how steady job growth is. As economists have been predicting, the economy has added considerable full-time private sector jobs to the market. The first real indicator of a move in this direction could be the decline of 2,300 in temporary jobs following only modest gains in March. The data from the next few months will indicate if this trend is here to stay. GDP data from Q1 indicates the economy grew in 2011 by 1.8% which is a slower pace than the 3.1% rate seen in Q4 2010, yet many forecasters believe the Q2 GDP data will rise faster as the weather in Q1 affected economic growth.

A major factor contributing to the employment picture in the near future will be gas and oil prices. The average cost of gas is currently \$4 a gallon and economists are unsure if it will continue to rise. Rising oil prices could affect many facets of the economy including job seekers who narrow their searches based on transportation costs as well as employers' hiring plans. Data indicates Americans now spend double on gas compared to their average expenditures in 2009. Consumer confidence could wane if oil prices continue to rise and employers' confidence might decline if product sales decline. Economists will continue to watch oil price effects on the greater business environment before predicting the future pace of the recovery.

## Of interest

### **iPad 2 looks even better for doctors**

**Source: [www.healthcareitnews.com](http://www.healthcareitnews.com)**

The new iPad 2 was introduced recently at a special event in which John Halamka, MD, chief information officer of Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, focused on the new features and

technology in the medical field. "The iPad...will change the way doctors practice medicine," stated Halamka. He went on to explain that doctors are able to spend more time with patients and in fact engage patients through the use of the iPad. It features a new design that is thinner and lighter than the original version while maintaining the same battery life. Recent research has found that the use of the iPad 2 will become an ever growing part of an HCP's daily life with 79% of U.S. healthcare professionals saying they would choose Apple's iPad for professional use. There are still a few concerns on its durability but with time that too will be up to medical grade making the iPad a "very marketable and desirable [tool] in the healthcare field," predicts Kathryn L. Owen, a nurse and clinical informatics documentation consultant at The Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago.

### **If you doze during a meeting, Microsoft's got your back**

**Source: [www.fastcompany.com](http://www.fastcompany.com)**

Technology can do amazing things and this seems to be one! Microsoft Research has developed the Accelerated Instant Replay (AIR) Conferencing system for videoconferencing that allows users to catch up on missed content while the meeting is still in process. A study evaluating the system was also released.

"Catch-up" studies are an active field of research. One such study, "A Useful Application of Time Travel in Meetings," described something called "audio-gisting." In this situation, short review periods are used where a meeting participant is provided with an accelerated audio feed to get them up to speed with those who had attended the entire meeting.

Because people feel more confident using multiple media, the latest iteration adds video and voice-to-text to the mix.

