Sub-sector: Medical

The medical sub-sector is separated primarily into two markets: hygiene and medical. **Hygiene applications** include wipes, baby diapers, sanitary and incontinence products. These applications are generally commodity-based and compete on low cost. Additionally, this market is relatively mature and currently emphasizes the development of products that add value. These products are not considered environmentally friendly and companies competing in this sector experience intensified pressure to develop products that are biodegradable and environmentally neutral. Nonwovens dominate these applications.

**Medical applications** are highly innovative and specialized. These products include dressings, sterilization packs, sutures, and orthopedic products. Extremely sophisticated applications include artificial ligaments, veins, arteries, skin replacements, and hollow fibers. Surgical gowns and bedding also comprise this sub-sector, but often compete in low-cost arenas and are influenced by institutional regulations and budget constraints.

**North Carolina Companies Competing in the Medical Sub-sector**

**PERFORMANCE TEXTILE SECTORS**

Number of companies: 92  
Number of counties: 30  
Cluster configuration: Wake, Mecklenburg, Guilford, and Catawba  
Sales $ (estimated): $1,513,621,608  
Employees: 6,117  
Products (sample): Clean room products, Antibacterial/antimicrobial finishes, wipes, diapers, incontinence products, medical hosiery

The medical sub-sector in North Carolina ranks second in the number of companies competing and fifth in sales dollar estimates when compared to the eleven other North Carolina performance industry sub-sectors. Although, opportunities in the sub-sector exist, these opportunities are often dependent upon the development of highly specialized medical products.