



Health Workforce Collaborative
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315-755-2020

Workforce Development Budget Hearing

The Health Workforce Collaborative is requesting \$1,600,000 as a legislative add-on to complete technology development, deployment of the State and regional Digital Platform, conduct extensive outreach, and manage the project.

Researchers have long stated that employment in health care was recession proof. And historically it has been. While there were economic downturns in the 2001 and in 2009/10 with a loss of many jobs outside of health care, employment in health care continued to rise nationally and in New York State. Health care has been one of the fastest growing employment sectors in New York State and is projected to continue to do so in the coming decade.

The health care workforce is at a crossroads, however. While health care employment may be recession proof, COVID-19 demonstrated it is not pandemic proof. Jobs in health care fell between 2019 and 2020 both nationally and in New York State due to the pandemic. We saw many health sector employees move to jobs in other employment sectors due the stresses of treating patients and due to increased salaries in other fields. Additionally, the health care system experienced a startling number of retirements of physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals. For those who remained in health care, burnout and resilience became common topics. Hospitals and nursing homes are needing to limit admissions to account for reduced availability of staffing, and home health care agencies are forced to limit the number of patients they can accept due to shortages of home care nurses and home health care aides.



Simultaneously, the population continues to get older, and as patients are getting sicker and their conditions are becoming more acute. Higher levels of care are needed for these patients throughout the health care system. Finally, the health care workforce does not represent the diversity of New York State's population. Individuals who are Black and/or who are Hispanic/Latinx are woefully underrepresented in the health care workforce, especially in higher paying professions. We cannot talk about cultural competence and access to care for vulnerable populations without understanding that the health care workforce does not represent the population it serves. Addressing health workforce issues in New York State is four-fold. Health workforce solutions need to address:

- Pipeline: Entry into health professional education must be increased through expanded pipeline programs, especially targeting Black and indigenous people of color.
- Service Obligated Programs: Service obligation programs must be supported and expanded to help ensure both the distribution and diversity of the health care workforce by providing existing students with scholarships or new graduates with loan repayment in exchange for service obligation opportunities in underserved areas.
- Retraining: Career ladders and lattices must be created to address chronic health care workforce shortages through funding targeting entry level workers.
- Burnout and resilience: Programs must be created and funded that addresses the physical and mental effects of burnout of the current health care workforce, including programs that focus on building resilience.

Finally, a recent survey by the New York Department of Labor and The Business Council of New York State found shortages of workers in many employment sectors, including the health care sector. More importantly, employers indicated that there was a disconnect between the organizations needing training and organizations providing training. Further, the disconnect between training institutions/programs, employers, students, career-seekers, and the community at large is worsening.



The existing workforce development programs struggle with funding and are commonly not well coordinated with other such programs. The fact is, there is no infrastructure for health workforce development in New York State. The result is a worsening health workforce crisis, declining access to healthcare services, continued un/underemployment, unfilled seats in healthcare training programs, negative impact on the social determinants of health, and deteriorating local economies.¹

The solution can only be found using a multi-agency, multi-year project convening the necessary stakeholders to engage in planning, leveraging resources, coordinating activities, and conducting meaningful evaluation. This collaboration must be statewide, address local needs, and include two specific components:

- Development and deployment of a novel digital platform to serve as the vehicle in and by which stakeholder engagement and work may be conducted and advanced; and
- Extensive outreach to essential health workforce development stakeholders.

This innovative digital platform² has been conceived, developed, tested, and launched in its most rudimentary form by a cadre of health workforce stakeholders representing every region of New York State. Initiation of the project has been funded by the founding Board members and a half dozen awards from community foundations from across New York State.

Collaborators include:

- Healthcare Employers (broadly defined)
- Healthcare Workers

¹ <https://abcnews.go.com/US/pandemic-made-shortage-health-care-workers-worse-experts/story?id=77811713>
<https://www.statnews.com/2021/07/02/the-health-care-workforce-is-understaffed-for-life-after-covid-19/>
<https://wskg.org/news/facing-health-care-workforce-shortage-new-york-governor-preps-emergency-plan/>

² <https://hwcollab.org/>



- Career/Advancement-Seekers
- Educational/Training Institutions and Programs
- Students
- Economic and Community Development Agencies

The value proposition for the project includes:

- This project model can be replicated in other industry sectors.
- The digital platform technology is cutting-edge, unique, flexible, and able to be modified for use in other industry sectors.
- This project model and technology can be tailored to drive initiatives focused on specific populations or target regions.
- This project model is designed specifically to support, promote, and optimize the missions and work of all participating workforce development agencies and programs, as well as each of the participating collaborators and stakeholders. Funding for this project will serve to significantly leverage funding provided to any individual agency, project, and/or program.
- The project's digital platform is free to use for all participating partners.
- This project model is unique and does not replicate any existing such project or program in New York State.
- This project model represents an opportunity to establish a local and statewide infrastructure for health workforce development.

The project's steward, the Health Workforce Collaborative, has developed a sustainable growth plan that will allow for continuance of the services outlined herein to grow in perpetuity. An immediate infusion of funds is required to position the project for sustainable growth and will be used specifically to complete technology development, deployment of the State and regional Digital Platform, conduct extensive outreach, and manage the project. The amount requested is \$1,600,000.