

State Workforce Planning Grant

ABSTRACT

Over the last seven years, the Select Committee on Health Care Workforce Development, under the leadership of Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development (DWD), has worked to develop a common understanding of the state's healthcare workforce planning and development challenges. Collectively, and through their own organizations, members have made substantial progress in several key areas. The Select Committee's achievement was the basis for the work of the Health Care Sector subcommittee of the Council on Workforce Investment (CWI-HC), and set the stage for this State Health Care Workforce Development Planning Grant.

We are reviewing the work that has been done by the subcommittee and its member organizations over the last several years to (1) identify current areas of need in order to inform the enrollment planning of public and private technical and academic health professions training programs in Wisconsin; (2) facilitate career pathways and articulate the standards for skills that must be developed in high school for entry in postsecondary education and success in pursuing a healthcare career, and for licensure and credentialing; (3) enhance the information tools available through the web, at the career centers and academic programs for students and displaced workers to learn about careers in health care, as well as for incumbent workers to identify opportunities for advancement in skill development; and (4) identify the elements of successful recruitment and retention in health professions programs at all levels: in secondary schools, technical training programs, college and professional programs and in the workplace.

The purpose of this review is to identify and promote effective programs, and to identify barriers, challenges and opportunities for investment to advance the goal of addressing health workforce shortages and, in particular, expanding the primary care workforce at all levels in order to provide full access to appropriate healthcare for all Wisconsin's residents. This review will also identify federal and state policy initiatives necessary for a coherent and comprehensive health care workforce development strategy.

Working toward consistent health workforce data collection, analysis and labor market forecasting is an essential element of Wisconsin's planning grant, including a focus on distribution of providers in rural and vulnerable urban communities. The Wisconsin Health Workforce Data Collaborative is continuing its work to collect data needed to inform planning for expansion of the size or effective capacity of its primary care workforce and to evaluate program effectiveness in reaching that goal. Initial work in this area will use the dataset from the recently completed RN relicensure questionnaire, which included elements of the draft uniform data set as proposed by the Centers for Nursing. A shorter LPN relicensure questionnaire was completed in March 2011. This data will be used to refine the models used for forecasting workforce needs. The supply and demand models developed will enable planners to test alternate scenarios and better understand the impact of changes in utilization rates, technology and the organization of health care delivery on workforce projections. Additional relicensure questionnaires will be developed for physicians, physician assistants, and other health professions.

With the assistance of this planning grant, the Health Care Sector subcommittee will be able to prepare an informed action plan to assure a successful implementation phase, and make substantial progress toward creation of a collaborative center for health workforce analysis: a partnership between state agencies, academic research centers, and healthcare provider organizations to assure consistent, high-quality data collection, research and analysis for the state.