



Meeting Report: Addressing Healthcare Workforce Shortages and Preparing for Future Labor Market Needs

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Participants: [List key participants and organizations]

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Introduction

Thank you all for your valuable contributions during our recent meeting, "*Aligning Education and Industry: Addressing Healthcare Workforce Shortages and Preparing for Future Labor Market Needs.*" Your expertise and insights were instrumental in fostering a robust and meaningful discussion around the critical challenges we face in bridging the gap between education and the healthcare sector, particularly in rural and underserved communities. The purpose of our gathering was to explore and identify actionable strategies that will allow us to more effectively align educational pathways with industry needs, ensuring that we can address the current and projected healthcare workforce shortages.

By focusing on targeted initiatives such as expanding work-based learning opportunities, increasing access to certifications and training, and enhancing collaboration between K-12, higher education, and healthcare employers, we aimed to develop concrete solutions to prepare a skilled and adaptable workforce. Our conversation was structured around key driving questions, which helped guide our exploration of these issues and fostered a deeper understanding of both the barriers and opportunities in front of us.

This report aims to summarize the key takeaways, insights, and next steps that emerged from our dialogue, highlighting the practical approaches we can take to address these pressing needs. It serves as a roadmap for moving forward, building upon the collective wisdom shared during the meeting to create sustainable, impactful changes that will better position both education and industry to meet the future demands of the healthcare labor market.

Driving Question 1: What skills and competencies are most in demand in the healthcare sector, and how can educational institutions better align their programs?

Key Findings:

1. In-Demand Skills and Roles:

- There is a strong demand for roles such as **nursing, physician assistants, medical and health services managers**, and **health IT specialists**.
- Emerging competencies include **data analytics, telemedicine, and health informatics**, particularly as telehealth becomes more prevalent.

2. Soft and Technical Skills:

- Healthcare providers increasingly require **communication, teamwork, and empathy** to manage patient relationships effectively.
- **Technical competencies** are critical, with a focus on managing **electronic health records**, working with **robotic-assisted surgery**, and leveraging **AI-based diagnostics**.
- Schools need to be more intentional with developing and implementing **Professional Skills, Academic Knowledge, and Technical Competencies** using industry verbiage

Actionable Strategies:

- Develop **cross-disciplinary training programs** that blend healthcare and IT (e.g., certifications in **Health Information Technology** or **Data Analytics in Healthcare**).
- Establish **clinical simulation labs** in partnership with healthcare providers to offer real-world learning environments where students can practice key competencies.

Context and Data:

- According to the **Bureau of Labor Statistics**, healthcare is projected to add more jobs than any other sector by 2030, with high demand in roles like nursing and health management.
 - Telemedicine has seen a 50% increase in usage, which has driven demand for skills related to digital health and remote patient care.
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Driving Question 2: How can stronger partnerships be built to provide work-based learning opportunities that address workforce shortages?

Key Findings:

1. **Structured Work-Based Learning (WBL) Frameworks:**
 - Stronger frameworks are needed to make WBL more accessible and digestible for both educational institutions and healthcare industry partners.
 - The need for **WBL coordinators** to support students and bridge challenges between students and healthcare employers was identified as critical.
2. **Successful Partnership Models:**
 - Programs such as **Kaiser Permanente's Educational Theater Programs** and **healthcare apprenticeships** in the UK's **National Health Service (NHS)** were highlighted as effective examples of industry-education collaboration.

Actionable Strategies:

- Form **Industry Advisory Boards** consisting of healthcare employers, educators, and workforce development boards to advise on curriculum design and ensure alignment with healthcare industry standards.
- Utilize **sector-specific partnerships** to share resources and create standardized **WBL insurance coverage** and liability policies across healthcare providers.

Context and Data:

- A study by **New America** found that over 50% of healthcare employers are involved in WBL programs but face barriers such as insurance and funding.
 - States like **Tennessee** and **Colorado** have implemented **Career Pathways Systems** that foster continuous collaboration between schools, community colleges, and industries through internships, co-ops, and apprenticeships.
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Driving Question 3: What innovative strategies can be implemented to attract and retain healthcare workers, especially in rural and underserved areas?

Key Findings:

1. **Financial Incentives:**
 - Loan forgiveness and repayment programs, like those offered by the **National Health Service Corps (NHSC)**, are highly effective in attracting healthcare workers to rural and underserved areas.
2. **Telemedicine and Technology:**
 - Expanding **telemedicine** is a key strategy, allowing healthcare workers to serve rural areas remotely, which also helps alleviate worker shortages.
3. **Support Structures:**
 - **Flexible work schedules, peer support networks, and mental health resources** are critical to improving retention and reducing burnout, particularly in rural healthcare settings.

Actionable Strategies:

- Implement **telemedicine training programs** to equip healthcare workers with the skills needed to provide remote care. This increases flexibility and reduces the geographic barriers of working in rural areas.
- Offer **housing and relocation incentives** for healthcare professionals who commit to working in rural regions, alongside **hybrid work models** that incorporate both remote and on-site care.

Context and Data:

- Loan forgiveness programs can offer up to \$50,000 in repayment for healthcare professionals working in underserved areas, according to the **NHSC**.
 - During the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth platforms like **Teladoc Health** saw significant growth, underscoring the importance of digital health in addressing rural healthcare challenges.
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Next Steps

Based on these findings, here are the recommended next steps for participants and stakeholders:

1. **Align Curriculum Development:** Work with healthcare providers and educational institutions to develop or enhance curricula that include both soft and technical skills needed in the healthcare sector.

2. **Expand Work-Based Learning:** Establish structured WBL frameworks and ensure coordinators are in place to facilitate partnerships between healthcare providers and educational institutions.
3. **Focus on Rural Retention:** Implement telemedicine training and provide financial incentives such as loan repayment and housing assistance to attract and retain healthcare workers in rural areas.

We look forward to continuing this collaboration and working together to address the workforce needs in the healthcare sector. Should you have any questions or need further information, feel free to reach out to [Your Contact Information].

Thank you for your dedication to this important initiative!