

## SLO Healthcare Workforce Partnership November 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes

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**Attendees:** Michelle Shoresman (Public Health), Tony Girola (Workforce Development Board), Jordan Turetsky (CenCal Health), Dana Goba (Central Coast Medical Association), Dr. Penny Borenstein (Public Health), Barbara Morrow (Oral Health), Beth Johnson (Cuesta College), Bridgette Bateman (Tenet Health), Patrick Woolpert (Compass Health), Angel Lopez (Promotores Collaborative), Lisa Fraser (CFS), Claire Hermann (Public Health), Madisyn Masantani (CHC), Patty Herrera (Dignity Health), Heather Tucker (Cuesta College), Jennifer Clayton (Innovations of SLOCOE & SLO Partners), Dawn Boulanger (Workforce Development Board), Suzanne Russell (Tolosa Dental), Lady Freire (UPLIFT Central Coast), Aydin Nazmi (Cal Poly), Susan McGraw (Facilitator), Becca Carsel (Program Evaluator)

### Discussion Results:

- **State Potential Funding Opportunities:** Susan McGraw reviewed the presentation on potential state funding opportunities to support healthcare workforce development (see slides posted on SLOHealthcareWorkforce.org, “For Members” page). She also reminded the members that she has been contracted by the Public Health Department to support this project through December 2026. In addition to facilitating the operations of the Partnership, Susan can also research and communicate with members on potential grant / funding opportunities, assist in grant writing, and provide support to the Partnership in implementing components of the Strategic Plan.
- **Program Evaluation:** Becca Carsel was also contracted by the Public Health Department to serve as the Program Evaluator through December 2026. Becca will be available to support the partnership members in collecting and analyzing data that can support Partnership activities.
- **Local Funding:** Four Partnership members shared a brief overview of grant funding their organization has received to support healthcare workforce development or future potential local funding opportunities:
  - **Patrick Woolpert (Compass Health):** Compass Health received Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training funds, specifically allocated to skilled nursing facilities from HCAI (CA Dept. of Health Care Access & Information). An 8-to-10-week training program was conducted 1 to 3 times/year, hosted at 9 skilled nursing facilities, to train 90 people.
  - **Lisa Fraser (Promotores Collaborative of SLO):** Community Health Workers (CHWs) provide community support in partnership with the medical and clinical community. The local Promotores Collaborative (operated by CFS) is partnering with Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties to take a regional approach to support the training and certification of CHWs who work for organizations who are qualified to receive Medi-Cal reimbursement for the CHW work. This regional collaboration is supported by state funds. In addition, the local Promotores program has received grant funding from the SLO Public Health Department (via ARPA federal funds) to hire a Coordinator. Angel Lopez is now serving as the CHW/P Coordinator. With Angel’s support, they will be training community members who have a significant cultural connection in the neighborhoods that large institutions are unable to reach, particularly to the Mixteco community in north county. The goal is to build the local capacity to provide a network of trained CHW/Ps and support these individuals to move into a variety of expanded healthcare career pathways.
  - **Jordan Turetsky (CenCal Health):** After significant advocacy for over a decade, in July of 2022, CHW services became a Medi-Cal benefit that CenCal can fund and pay for. The CHW role provides preventive health services to prevent or mitigate the progression of disease and/or promote physical and mental health. There are 2 pathways for this benefit: 1) as part of an enhanced care management team (also a new benefit as of July 2022); or 2) CenCal Health can contract directly for health education, health navigation, individual support or advocacy with organizations that oversee the work of CHWs (i.e., CBOs, licensed health care providers, etc.). The organization contracts with CenCal Health, supervises the work of the CHWs, and then bills for services. CHWs are required to have lived experience, work experience, and professional certification through a state recognized training program. In addition, CenCal Health also invests in the communities for the 2 counties they serve. They will use this planning process to explore opportunities where they can support the work of this Partnership.
  - **Lady Freire (Uplift Central Coast):** The state has 13 designated regions that manage resiliency funds to support economic recovery after the pandemic. UPLIFT Central Coast is one of the 13 regions that extends from Monterey to Ventura Counties. There is a local Board that directs the work. They are in the planning phase now to develop a strategic plan for the economic development of the region. Once the planning phase is completed in 2024, they will solicit proposals from the community for potential projects to fund. Currently two identified goals are economic development and environmental sustainability. Previously, projects to create sustainable jobs in the technology and agriculture sectors were a focus. However, economic development can be viewed as a broader issue and the need for a strong healthcare workforce to support the economic vitality of the community could be a factor.

- **Summary of Discussions Related to Funding Opportunities:**
  - It is important to explore opportunities in the dental world to use Community Health Workers (CHWs), including funding opportunities. Other counties used oral health funding to obtain CHWs to help with case management and dental care education. CHWs in this context are not embedded in dental practices, but are a community-facing service that channels people into dental practices and makes sure they get the care they need.
  - It would be good to explore funding opportunities to support Tenet in using externships to support students as they are learning and moving up the education pathway and getting training on the job.
  - Health Careers Exploration mini-grants could be very helpful. In the last meeting, the Salinas Valley Memorial Summer program could be a good model.
  - The Workforce Development Board has funding for specific types of training and there are opportunities to go for additional training grants. Dawn Boulanger will provide a list of current training available.
  - The Santa Cruz Health Improvement Partnership model is very successful. Jordan & Dawn both have past experience with this Partnership, which could serve as a model program for SLO. They have 6 workgroups. Each of the 6 workgroups identified and obtained specific targeted funding to achieve the goals of the workgroup.
  - The overall take away from the discussion is that this Partnership could target local training funds where needed and then focus on the bigger ideas for grant opportunities in the longer term.
  - It is important that the County be seen as a partner in these training/career pathway programs, particularly where there are community support components (CHWs) that could lead to professional tracks.
  - The biggest reflection is that we knew there were funding opportunities out there, but seeing it put together in one place reinforces the idea that there needs to be someone to organize the information, make sure people know about it, and support grant writing and grant administration for smaller organizations. (Note: Susan McGraw reiterated that she will serve in this role until December 2026. She will also attempt to identify opportunities to fund the ongoing support of the Partnership beyond 2026.)
- **Key Insights from the Research Presented in the 4 Planning Sessions, which were:**
  - Session 1: Access to Care Data & Key Stakeholder Interview Results
  - Session 2: 10-year Employment Forecasts
  - Session 3: National, State, and Regional Best Practices
  - Session 4: Potential Funding Options

**Question:** What are **YOUR** top 2 or 3 key insights that should be considered in the planning process?

- **Model Programs:** Utilize best practices, with demonstrated successes, as a guide for training, education, capturing of workforce early on, and apply potential funding options to those, to ensure sustainability.
- **Systemic Issues:** Consider how to integrate the broader community-level concerns (e.g. housing costs, Medicare reimbursements, etc.), while addressing more specific healthcare workforce concerns (i.e., training/graduating students and opening clinical/preceptorships in the community).
- **Targeted vs. Specific Occupational Focus:** Decide if we're going to attempt to address all domains/levels of the health care workforce or hone in on a smaller/particular group of professions.
- **Career Pathways:** Build pipelines from K-career for healthcare pathways with guaranteed employment options, with livable wages, to create a sustainable approach to retain community members locally.
- **Local Training Programs:**
  - Implement strategies focused on retention of existing staff at all levels.
  - Identify funding and educational/training/professional development opportunities to build the capacity of support staff, including community support (CHW/P) and Enhanced Care Management roles.
  - Gather current data from businesses regarding their staffing challenges, set realistic goals that can be met locally, and provide local training programs for support staff roles.
- **Build Partner Relationships:**
  - Establish community partner relationships to support students with education and basic needs.
  - Continued support of educational institutions will be key in sustainable growth and support of the local healthcare workforce.
  - Explore innovative training partnerships in neighborhoods, such as libraries and schools after hours.
- **Data Enhancements:** For dental providers, break out those that accept Medi-Cal providers or private insurance.

- **Strategic Action Plan Components:**
  - **Potential Partnership Vision (Words/Phrases Consolidated):** By supporting students to realize their dreams for a career in healthcare, San Luis Obispo County maintains a self-sustaining, strong healthcare workforce that provides all residents with access and choices for high quality care in our community.
  - **Potential Partnership Mission (Words/Phrases Consolidated):**  
**(Current Description:** The Partnership's goal is to strengthen and diversify San Luis Obispo County's healthcare workforce for physical, behavioral, and oral health. It will use data-driven, evidence-based approaches to create an enhanced workforce that responds to the emerging health care needs of our community.)
    - Draft **Mission** using words and phrases provided by the participants:
      - **The Mission of the SLO Healthcare Workforce Partnership** is to ensure universal, equitable access to high quality healthcare in San Luis Obispo County by investing in long-term solutions to strengthen and diversify the County's physical, behavioral, and oral health workforce and implement a sustainable healthcare workforce model that responds to existing and emerging health care needs.
    - Additional words and phrases:
      - Progressive, dynamic, diverse, inclusive, equitable (in geography, cultural competency, culturally relevant approaches for all populations, etc.).
      - Improve availability and accessibility of care, choices.
      - High performing, collaborative partnership with committed leadership
  - **2 to 3 Key Priorities that the Partnership Should Focus on in the next 1 to 3 years:**
    - **Build Partnerships:**
      - Embed strong, lasting partnerships between community/education/clinical partners.
      - Form local partnerships (that are sustainable) to create career pathways.
      - Cultivate widespread stakeholder buy-in for this work, including with elected leaders.
      - Create ongoing Workforce Partnership committees to keep up the momentum.
    - **Develop Program Framework:**
      - Co-create a healthcare workforce development framework.
    - **Create/Enhance Educational Programs:**
      - Build and implement collaborative, sustainable education to career pathways (K-career pipelines) for healthcare careers, including increased community awareness about careers in healthcare, higher education and vocational programs, local clinical/public health internship/rotation options, and employment opportunities.
      - Incorporate a focus on professional development for community support roles and support staff roles in the plan.
      - Create summer bridge programs to enhance skill development.
      - Address the shortage of nursing and physician training slots.
    - **Recruit and Retain Staff:**
      - Implement strategies to support the recruitment and retention of staff, which allow the flexibility to expand to match the growing and ever-changing needs in the field.
    - **Identify Funding/Investment Opportunities:**
      - Identify key investment opportunities to support workforce development and expansion.
      - Develop specific, targeted funding goals and obtain grant funding to support long-term financial investments.
    - **Advocate for Legislative Changes:**
      - Advocate with state and federal governments, as applicable, to provide accurate data on the needs and costs for providing care in the County.
      - Push for increases in local wages to be competitive with Statewide earnings.
    - **Promote Access to Care:**
      - Provide care when and where it's needed.