

SLO Healthcare Workforce Partnership
October 12, 2023
Meeting Minutes

ATTENDEES: Dr. Penny Borenstein, Michelle Shoresman, Tony Girolo, Heather Tucker, Marcia Scott, Aydin Nazmi, Jennifer Clayton, Paul Piette, Angel Lopez, Lady Freire, Suzanne Russell, Barb Morrow, Jordan Turetsky, Patrick Woolpert, Bridgette Bateman, Frank Warren, Clara Ramirez, Tina Hadaway-Mellis, Fernanda Lucas, Maria Garcia, Sarah Reinhart-Montes, Susan McGraw

Discussion Results:

- **Comments related to the Healthcare Workforce 10-year Forecasts:**
 - The data that implies that there is not a primary care shortage area in SLO County may not be accurately reflecting access to care issues related to the State and US trends toward boutique/concierge medicine (unaffordable to many residents), physicians no longer accepting Medicare/Medi-Cal insurance, the concentration of physicians working in institutional settings (Atascadero State Hospital, CA Men's Colony, VA Hospital), etc.
 - Data suggesting there are enough physicians for the population doesn't mean there is patient choice or timeliness of services (i.e., waiting too long for appointments, only certain providers available, etc.).
 - This data could suggest that SLO County may have challenges competing with other communities for state and federal funding programs.
 - The data on primary care providers relative to the population, which identifies "primary care shortage areas" may be skewed since it includes the number of Physician Assistants (PAs) and Nurse Practitioners (NPs), but you still need MDs to supervise the work of the PAs/NPs.
- **Small Group Discussion #1:** What insights did you gain that should be taken into consideration during this planning process and how might this data influence the type of strategies that the Partnership may want to consider?
 - **Building career pathways for support roles:** We need to focus on the support roles that are needed for provider practices, including Office Manager and front office staff positions (*can we get this data?*). Building guaranteed career pathways (entry level training to job to career progression) and providing incentives (wages, tuition support, requirements to stay in the community for a period of time in exchange for paid training/tuition) to retain workers in the County.
 - **K-12 Career Pathways:** There could be opportunities to look at expanding CTE and other healthcare pathway programs in the County schools.
 - **Cuesta Dual Enrollment Programs with local High Schools:** Cuesta is offering a new dual enrollment program that provides a basic introduction and exploration of healthcare careers.
 - **Cuesta/CSU, Monterey Bay BSN Program:** The Bachelor of Nursing program could be offered as a professional development opportunity for nurses working in the community who have an RN and want to add the BSN.

- **Telehealth:** How is telehealth reflected in the data? For example, many local mental health providers live in the County, but provide telehealth services out of state.
 - **Licensing challenges when recruiting from out of state:** There are significant delays for dental providers to get licensed in CA and certified to accept Medi-Cal reimbursements (2 months or more instead of 2 days in other states), which may be true for other occupations as well. Is there a way to advocate to make the process faster and more efficient?
 - **“Growing your own:”** Many organizations are trying to “grow their own” workforce by hiring workers that are more reflective of the population and then providing on-the-job training.
 - **How to focus / prioritize goals based on the data:** Do we use the data that shows % of need or number of positions needed for a particular position, which might reflect smaller numbers of workers needed? The physician level data doesn’t match clinician experience on the front lines, so should we be diving deeper to look at the impact of insurance categories (Medi-Cal/Medicare)? Should we access the collective experience of experts at the front line?
 - **SLO County employees who live out of County:** What % of the number of workers commute from Santa Maria, where it is less expensive to live?
 - **Mixteco Survey:** Survey results from a recent survey of Mixteco families living in the north county are being presented on October 15, 2023.
 - **Cal Poly Health Services:** The on-campus health services provide direct healthcare to 21,000 students. Internally they are trying to create/expand a student assistance program to grow the pipeline for students interested in hands-on medicine/nursing roles. Providers (MDs/nurses) provide outreach programs to talk to diverse student groups about healthcare programs.
- **Quick Small Group Discussion #2:** What insights did you gain about the healthcare educational opportunities in the community that should be taken into consideration during this planning process?
 - **Communication:** This collaborative opportunity to share information is really valuable, as it highlights educational opportunities that people are not aware of.
 - **Professional Development:** There are **not** many professional development organizations within the county, local chapters of national groups, or local conferences, so there is not good infrastructure to support advancement.
 - **Link between educational programs and local employers:** Currently, there is not a direct link between the educational programs and local employers for many occupational areas.
 - **Physician Assistants/Medical Assistants:** CHC has a pathway for these two occupational ways to provide on-the-job training.
 - **Physicians from Other Countries:** Some CA counties have programs to attract physicians from Mexico to work for 3 years to work in US.
 - **Cal Poly Programs:** Cal Poly offers an undergraduate Public Health degree, a Master’s in Public Policy, and a MS Nutrition with public health focus.