MANAGEMENT AND LABOR CONVENING ON BUILDING A SKILLED WORKFORCE FOR QUALITY HEALTH CARE

Driven by healthcare reform, new payment methodologies, and other delivery system changes, the healthcare industry is undergoing a dramatic transformation in the composition, deployment, and skills requirements of its workforce. Unions and employers share an interest in ensuring that systems and funding are in place to support training and education for the workforce of today and tomorrow. A national convening in October, sponsored by H-CAP, the H-CAP Education Association, and the Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS) and partially funded by the Joyce Foundation brings employers, unions, and workforce stakeholders together to share perspectives and build a common approach to workforce development and education practice, policy and research to meet the evolving needs of the healthcare industry.

The convening will consider sector-specific policy initiatives and address the connection between workforce development and healthcare’s Triple Aim (Better Care, Better Health, and Lower Cost). Smaller roundtables will focus on topics including: integration of care, technology, foundation skills, apprenticeships, working with higher education, competency based workforce initiatives, health disparities, along with other issues that are affecting healthcare workforce and education systems.

Speakers from labor, healthcare employers, government, and academia will present their perspectives on the connection between quality training, quality jobs, and quality care. This first convening will help to frame a platform on policy and research that speaks to the needs of both labor and management in their joint efforts to provide quality care. A follow-up convening will be held in Washington, D.C.

H-CAP LAUNCHES EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

The Healthcare Career Advancement Program Education Association (EA) is a growing, nationwide network of industry-driven, labor-management training and upgrading partnerships affiliated with major healthcare employers in regions around the country and with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and its local unions. Combined, these partnerships provide access to more than 400,000 workers employed by more than 700 employers in 13 states. The EA, newly incorporated as a 501(c)(3) organization, shares best practices that support education, skills enhancement and career mobility for healthcare workers and works with affiliates and partners to help meet personnel needs of healthcare employers. Since its founding, it has hosted webinars and teleconferences for the staff and leaderships of its engaged training partnerships. It will also apply for grants to support initiatives and programs that help its participating training organizations and labor/management training partnerships.

Funded through collectively bargained employer contributions and/or public and private grants, this network has implemented a range of innovative projects, including:

- Health Careers College Core Curriculum: a cohort program of 1199SEIU Training and Upgrading Fund and the City University of NY for college pre-requisites in healthcare that articulate to healthcare career programs throughout the University
- An apprenticeship for advanced home care workers developed through the SEIU Healthcare Northwest Partnership
- First national green workforce training in healthcare for entry level jobs leading to new skills, worker engagement, and promotions
- Multi-employer partnerships with union and colleges for distance learning in associate’s degree nursing program in Washington State

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Director’s Corner
By Laura Chenven

We are living in interesting times, and exciting ones too. As we move toward a system that supports population health, we are challenged to think differently about our work, our goals, and the ways that we work together. The connection between quality training and education, quality jobs, and quality care has never been stronger. Both labor and management have this connection as a common interest. They also have the ability to leverage their resources and their spheres of influence to bring about change that will support healthcare institutions, the communities they serve, and the workforce that serves both.

In the last year, H-CAP has been working to build new and collaborative relationships with government, advocacy and policy organizations, academia, and foundations that will serve and support healthcare’s labor/management training partnerships. We are seeking to grow and build our collective voice for change and innovation in the workforce and education systems in ways that support healthcare’s Triple Aim and our common interest in building a healthier America.
NEW RELATIONSHIPS OPEN DOORS TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Over the past year, the collaborative efforts of H-CAP’s union and employer partners and the fund affiliates have enabled H-CAP to make great strides into the national arena of healthcare workforce development policy, research and practice. Our combined efforts are establishing new space for discussion of labor management training partnerships as a vital component of a national healthcare workforce agenda. H-CAP’s focus on network development between unions, employers, training providers, and policy-makers in the healthcare sector and our relationship-building with federal agencies have opened new doors which will further the efforts of our members and partners to develop healthcare career ladder programs and policy that meet healthcare’s triple aim. Recent examples of our work follow:

- The Healthcare Career Advancement Program (H-CAP) and the Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS) were recently awarded a grant by the Joyce Foundation to strengthen the growing network of union and employer partnership programs on career pathways and workforce development in the healthcare industry. This network, comprising employers on the H-CAP board and those who participate in the H-CAP Education Association’s network of training funds and programs, encompasses over seven hundred employers including hospitals, ambulatory healthcare systems, nursing homes, and home care agencies. It also includes 15 training partnerships with a potential touch to close to a half million healthcare workers. Our goal is to work with union and employer partners to build an approach to both program and policy that utilizes our strength and market share to overcome barriers to career pathways and quality education for the healthcare workforce.

- Last January, H-CAP was invited to a Department of Education roundtable conversation with labor union leaders to help inform the creation of a national action plan to improve the foundation skills of U.S. adults. This roundtable discussion has led to ongoing work with the Department to build stronger and deeper collaborative work and structures with labor/management training organizations.

- The Institute of Medicine (IOM) recently sought H-CAP’s expertise in health care career ladders for a national webinar. In August, Danielle Copeland, Director of the H-CAP Education Association, was invited to present on integrating home care workers into the care team in order to develop new career pathways for these frontline workers.

- A recent statement released by the White House referred to our efforts, along with those of our colleagues Charissa Raynor, Executive Director, SEIU Healthcare NW Training Partnership, and Cheryl Feldman, Executive Director, 1199C Training and Upgrading Fund, to build collaboration between labor/management training programs with the Department of Education, OCTAE (Office of Career Technical and Adult Education). H-CAP staff helped obtain signatures from representatives of I/m training programs and unions. The White House letter specifically references these organizations, remarking: “These organizations are well-positioned to expand opportunities for women to improve their foundation skills to access higher-wage occupations in the fields of healthcare, construction, transportation, and manufacturing.”

- H-CAP has become part of a national research agenda-setting effort for low-wage workers after being invited to participate in NIOSH’s Low Wage Worker Committee in support of their National Occupational Research Agenda.

H-CAP and the H-CAP Education Association are a network of labor and management training partnerships and programs across all healthcare sectors, located in 13 states and the District of Columbia, encompassing more than 700 employers and some 430,000 healthcare workers. These partnering unions and employers are committed to providing workplace skills and career pathways to their members/employees and bringing greater diversity into the healthcare professions.
Important Changes to Workforce Innovations and Opportunities Act (WIOA)

On July 22, 2014, Congress passed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the first legislative reform of the public workforce system in more than 15 years. WIOA supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and, in general, the Act takes effect on July 1, 2015.

WIOA introduces some key activities into the workforce system that open new opportunities for Labor-Management training funds to access money and program support. These include increasing alignment between adult education, postsecondary education, and employers; strengthening the connection to programs such as Registered Apprenticeship (RA) including automatic eligibility for Individual Training Accounts for RA programs; and new requirements for workforce representation in the composition of state and local workforce boards. The act also promotes well-defined metrics and a strengthened evidence base. It also maintains the 15 percent governor’s reserve at the state level which can be supportive of innovative and incumbent worker programs along with other workforce initiatives. Importantly, an increased ability to “braid” funding in ways that support access to training and utilize multiple sources in concert, such as WIOA, Adult Education, and Registered Apprenticeship, is encouraging. Closer examinations of funding provided through WIOA, apprenticeship, and other streams along with their continued focus on “demand-driven” training will continue to be explored by H-CAP.

Hospital Employee Education and Training (HEET)

In 2008, The Washington State Hospital Association and SEIU Healthcare 1199NW secured legislation providing funding designated to help build a strong, diverse, and skilled health care workforce. The program they designed – the Hospital Employee Education and Training Program (HEET) – provides grants which fund labor, management, and college partnerships to develop, expand, and evaluate programs so health care workers can move up in the industry. Since the implementation of HEET, Washington State has invested over $11 million dollars in projects to advance health care workers’ careers, with some 22 projects developed at 16 different colleges. More than 800 students have enrolled in 1200 classes, such as pathway courses for nursing and other health care related fields, since the initial HEET grant. These students have been substantially more diverse than the population of Washington State.

In addition to enabling workers to advance their careers and filling industry workforce needs, HEET has developed workforce education innovations that have had cascading impacts throughout the education and workforce development systems. Essential elements of HEET program design include: Labor and management engagement and leadership; partnership with community and technical colleges; and a focus on building the skills of current health care workers and meeting the specific educational needs of these workers. In combination, these elements generate innovative and replicable program designs which enable more workers to advance and complete programs. Working with the Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS), H-CAP recently completed a white paper on this important workforce model. It is available on request.
Apprenticeship in Healthcare

For many years, apprenticeships have provided employers in many industries with qualified workers and workers with opportunities to learn and work simultaneously. Healthcare has been slow to take up this model, using instead other forms of training and credentialing.

Today there is a new challenge for employers and a new opportunity to develop apprenticeships in healthcare. New jobs are emerging in community-based care – from home care to community health worker to care coordinators of many types. Experienced medical coders prepared for the proliferation of codes in ICD-10 are also greatly in need. For these jobs and many others, apprenticeship may offer a way to develop a new talent pool that can build skills through a combination of classroom study and on the job learning.

The U.S. Department of Labor is promoting the development of apprenticeships and is offering grant opportunities to labor/management organizations and networks who are interested in developing these programs. H-CAP and the H-CAP Education Association are working with our board, affiliates, and SEIU to explore options for developing a national apprenticeship program and standards that will support our network’s workforce needs in new and emerging occupations.

Upcoming Meetings

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H-CAP Board Members working on TeamSTEPPS (Team Strategies & Tools to Enhance Performance & Patient Safety)

EVS Worker comments on hospital infection control in a Green Training program co-sponsored by H-CAP.

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