

# A PARTNERSHIP FOR HEALTHCARE TRANSFORMATION

Labor and Management Research and Policy Priorities for the Healthcare Workforce

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## INTRODUCTION

Healthcare in the U.S. is undergoing dramatic transformation. Payment and delivery system reform, technological advances, and the aging of the population are redefining the industry's care model and services, and its workforce. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment in the healthcare sector grew by 22 percent from 2002-2012 and is projected to grow by another 27 percent from 2012-2022. In 2012, healthcare accounted for more than 15 million jobs, roughly 10 percent of the nation's total employment. Over the next ten years, healthcare employment will grow at a rate nearly three times faster than the rest of the economy, according to federal projections.<sup>1</sup> These changes are also reshaping healthcare jobs. According to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS):

*"A transformed healthcare system will **require a transformed workforce** and new infrastructure. The people who will support health system transformation for communities and populations will require different knowledge and skills. It is important to provide support for a healthcare **workforce of the future, one that will be trained in prevention, care coordination, care process re-engineering, dissemination of best practices, team-based care, continuous quality improvement, and the use of data to support a transformed system.** Training and educational experiences will be needed to help develop this knowledge and these skills."*<sup>2</sup>

Both unions and employers are committed to providing quality care for the community and to developing the engaged and skilled workforce that quality care requires. Recognizing this common interest, healthcare industry leaders – employers and unions from across the country – are building collaborative approaches to training, education, upskilling, and career pathways that are extending opportunities for workers. In these partnerships, the healthcare workforce of today is building the skills to become the healthcare workforce of the future.



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HIGH ROAD

<sup>1</sup> <http://chws.albany.edu/archive/uploads/2014/08/blsproj2014.pdf> <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.nro.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Emphasis added. <http://innovation.cms.gov/Files/x/Health-Care-Innovation-Challenge-Funding-Opportunity-Announcement.pdf>

## H-CAP

The Healthcare Career Advancement Program (H-CAP) brings this work into focus. H-CAP is the nation's most expansive network of labor/management organizations in healthcare, bringing together SEIU Locals, healthcare employers, and their jointly managed training partnerships (the District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund, an AFSCME/employer partnership in Philadelphia, is also part of this network). It is an intermediary of intermediaries, convening a network for dissemination of best practices and mutual learning, a space where leaders from across the country can come together to identify and develop solutions to shared problems. Providing infrastructure to connect and support the work of these training partnerships and industry leaders, H-CAP promotes innovation and quality in healthcare career education.

H-CAP and its affiliated organization, the H-CAP Education Association, connect 15 labor/management workforce partnerships and their affiliated training fund infrastructure. **These partnerships extend to 13 states plus the District of Columbia and engage more than 900 employers, who are investing in their workforce. The training opportunities are accessible by more than 500,000 workers.**

With annual negotiated resources in excess of \$75 million each year, these healthcare training funds are a major, though often unrecognized or not well publicized, component of national efforts to promote upskilling and create career pathways in healthcare. These funds are at the leading edge of industry engagement, workforce development, and training for adult workers. By the nature of industry embedded systems, they are at the forefront of linking work and learning. In addition, as a result of their careful management of joint investments, their programs employ workforce practices known for successful outcomes such as cohort classes, blended basic skill and job related instruction, career and educational counseling, and wraparound support services. These programs provide a model, which in the H-CAP network has significant scale, of sustainable industry engagement with meaningful results – stronger opportunity for healthcare workers and a pipeline for skills and diversity that employers need.

**To be sure, every partnership in this network is unique.** But the perspective provided by a focus on joint labor and management priorities creates significant commonality: quality training, quality jobs, and quality care. These partnership priorities align directly with patient and public health interests, providing real time problem solving by leaders who are directly based in the industry.

H-CAP works with its partners to identify key policy, research, and resource needs. H-CAP connects the network and its needs to policy makers, researchers, advocates, and other leaders in order to pursue solutions to commonly recognized problems. **Reaching out to federal and state agencies in the name of both labor and employers, H-CAP is helping to bring a new industry voice to healthcare policy and research.** One of H-CAP's goals is to bring the collective power and reach of these critical stakeholders into conversation with government to ensure that investments in healthcare workforce development, both public and private, are effective and efficient.

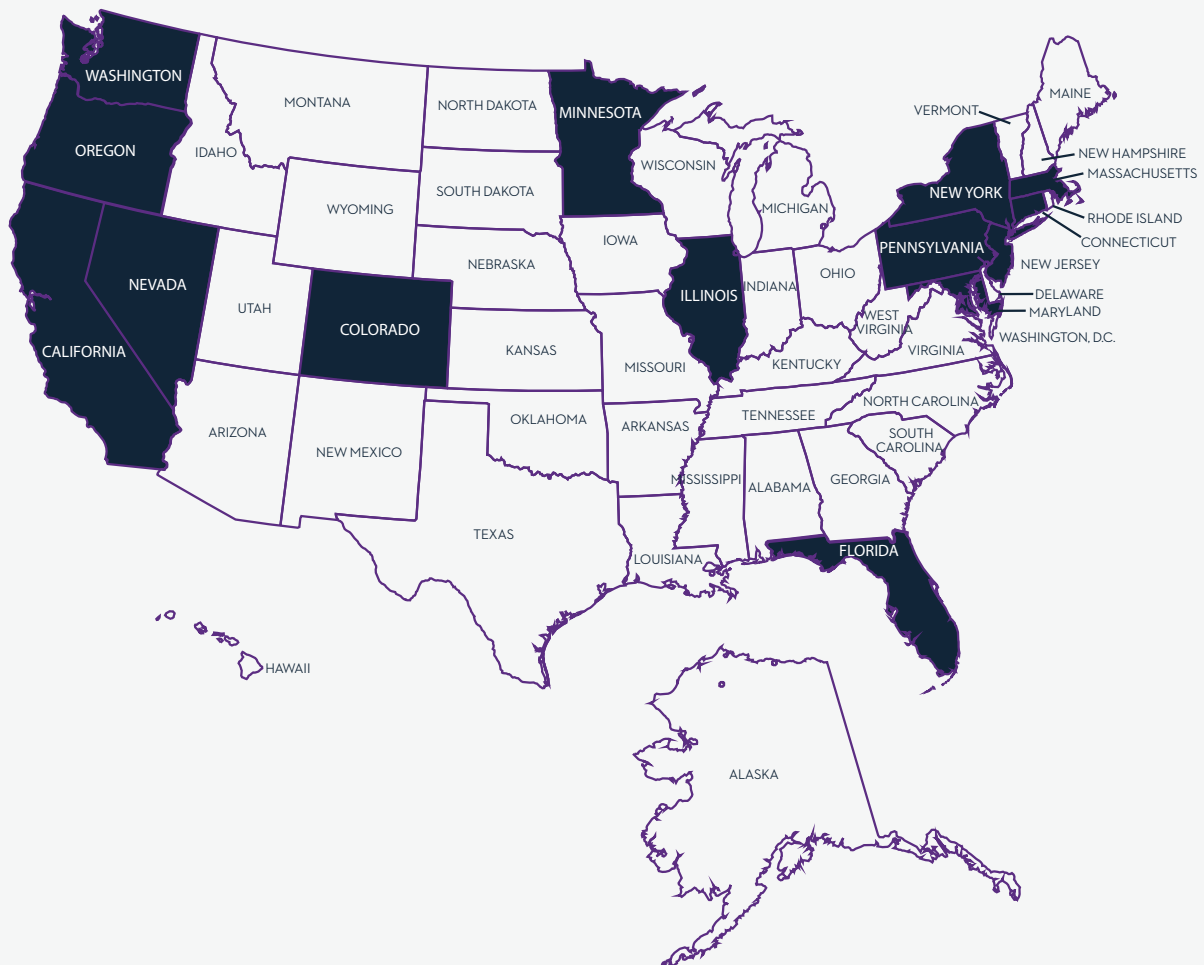
## LABOR MANAGEMENT TRAINING PARTNERSHIPS: THE BASICS

Labor/Management Training Partnerships in healthcare are often unfamiliar to many workforce professionals. A few key elements of their structure are important to understand. First, the majority of these partnerships start with negotiated resources, bargained and administered at the local and regional level by engaged industry leadership. The total bargained resources of any training fund are determined in contract negotiations between labor and management. But once that agreement is made, the resources are part of an infrastructure that is administered by labor and management trustees. That jointly administered fund (regulated by Taft Hartley and ERISA rules) is a healthcare workforce intermediary that provides a worker benefit.

Both employers and workers are investors in this model. Employers fund this benefit, but workers are investing too, since they decide to seek this training investment at bargaining. Responding to the needs of both employers and workers, the leadership at the Funds implement innovative programs and services that lead to success. Funds regularly interface with public training institutions, creating synergies and transformation in the higher education system that serve a public good.

Some of the partnerships in this network, particularly those working in the public sector of healthcare, are organized differently. Their dominant model is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit structure with stakeholders in the healthcare industry on the governance boards. While structured and funded differently, their work provides similar benefits to both employers and workers.

### STATES COVERED BY FUNDS AND PARTNERSHIPS



## BUILDING A NETWORK INTO A FORCE FOR REFORM

In July, 2015, with the support of the Joyce Foundation, H-CAP convened key labor and management leaders from all sectors of healthcare – acute and ambulatory, home care, and nursing homes – at Using our Voice to Build Better Systems, a two day meeting focused on building a skilled workforce for quality healthcare. This national convening brought together more than 150 healthcare employers and unions, government, and other healthcare workforce stakeholders to discuss workforce challenges, build a stronger public/private partnership between industry and government, and develop a platform for workforce policy and research to address industry workforce needs.

Over the course of two days, representatives from industry, government, foundations, academic institutions, and advocacy organizations identified promising policy and practice to support the healthcare workforce and the development of skills in response to industry change. The meeting strengthened labor/management partnership connections to government, workforce development organizations, funders, and healthcare workforce researchers. Sessions identified and promoted replicable models for healthcare workforce and education innovations. The meeting confirmed a growing recognition that quality jobs, strong training systems, and an engaged and committed workforce provide an essential foundation for pursuing the goal of quality care for an expanding consumer base.

Through a collective and inclusive process, the conference engaged leaders in a conversation to build a shared healthcare policy and research agenda. The Triple Aim in healthcare – better care, better health, and lower costs—and the recognition that a well-trained and skilled workforce is essential to achieving the Triple Aim provided a clear and broadly shared framework for considering these questions.

## PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED

### GROWING AND STRENGTHENING OUR NETWORK

Over the next year, H-CAP will continue to disseminate the story of the collective impact of our work and the many model practices found in this network.

### EVIDENCE OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Data on the scope and scale of the work throughout the network will be updated, compiled, and disseminated. This data will serve to help individual and regional funds to see their work in the context of a broader field of practice and demonstrate the network's critical position in healthcare workforce issues to external partners and stakeholders.

### TOWARD A NATIONAL CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

As we develop and collect a more comprehensive library in support of healthcare workforce innovation, we will better define successful models for healthcare

workforce development. We will bring together resources to support the dissemination of these models throughout our network and well beyond it. Areas of significant network innovation include:

- Industry partnerships with education partners
- Effective models for increasing the diversity and cultural competence of the professional workforce in healthcare
- Education and career counseling models
- Effective pre-college prep
- Wraparound support services
- Train the trainer models
- Competency mapping for educational advancement

These positive models will support our work to build increasingly viable education and workforce systems.

## RESEARCH TO SUPPORT NETWORK HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE PRIORITIES

The development of a strong national model requires more systematic research and evaluation of workforce models, evolving job structure in healthcare, and, most critically, the essential contributions of workers to national healthcare outcomes. H-CAP will work to develop partnerships with researchers and funders of research to communicate these priorities and to connect programs in our network with resources to support rigorous research and evaluation.

H-CAP research action priorities identified by network partners at the convening:

### DOCUMENT AND EVALUATE HEALTHCARE WORKERS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO VALUE, QUALITY CARE, AND COST SAVINGS IN THE SYSTEM

Leaders from our network, both labor and management, are interested in securing stronger documentation and evidence on the contributions of skilled workers to key priorities of quality care, cost savings, and population health. Greater evaluation and understanding of these connections is essential to strong program design in healthcare workforce development.

### INVESTIGATE THE WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Leaders agreed on the need to document change within systems, to identify trends across the nation, and to be at the forefront of research on new jobs and skills in healthcare. For example, multi-state comparative studies that examine changes in jobs, emergence of new positions and skills, and the training systems' response to these changes are of interest to these labor/management partnerships. Leaders are also interested in the transferability of skills in healthcare as well as policies that support educational credit for documented skills of current healthcare workers.

### EVALUATE IMPACT OF PROGRAMS, NEW INITIATIVES, AND PROJECTS

Leaders agreed on the need for more effective evaluation of what is working in healthcare training partnerships. We will seek to develop strong connections between leading researchers and the projects in our network so that, whenever possible, our model programs are documented thoroughly and evaluated rigorously, with results disseminated throughout our network and beyond. These partnership programs can be used as a laboratory by researchers looking to understand workforce models that support employers and their workers.

### OUR SHARED POLICY PRIORITIES

Over the last two years, this network of labor and management workforce partners has made notable advances in its connection to national policy issues as evidenced by the dynamic meeting in July which built on our evolving relationships with the Department of Labor (DOL), the Department of Education (ED), the Department of Health and Human Services [especially its Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)], and the White House. From adult basic education, to UpSkilling, to the development of new healthcare apprenticeships, to building a more diverse and culturally competent workforce, this work continues to connect to national policy opportunities.

To continue the dialogue with federal leaders that started at the national convening and to strengthen national policy for the healthcare workforce of the future, the H-CAP board has developed a list of key federal workforce issues for labor and management in healthcare:

#### **1. Alignment of federal funding streams to support healthcare workforce training and upskilling across all jobs to:**

- Better understand the evolving role of the healthcare workforce in the achievement of the Triple Aim and the ways that strategically aligned federal workforce funding could have more systemic impact.
- Support distinct efforts that build on public/private partnerships including: (1) apprenticeships in healthcare; (2) diversity in the nursing workforce and technical professions; and (3) standardization and dissemination of best practices on training for care coordination and transitions of care.
- Create incentives for private investment in workforce training, including government match for documented investment.
- Incent educational reform that includes credit for competencies and for prior learning.

## **2. Development of and investment in industry-engaged research programs that focus on employers, workers, and patients to identify workforce models that support high quality care and improve patient outcomes**

- Document and evaluate successful workforce models, innovative job structures, and education reforms that support effective and efficient healthcare career pathways and that include examples of labor/management, industry based workforce training partnerships.
- Identify and pursue opportunities (potential and existing) to move and fund evaluations and pilot programs for successful workforce models via CMMI, WIOA, HRSA, etc.

## **3. Investigate the impact of reimbursement structures on workforce issues including training, job quality, and wages in order to build the case for attention to and incentives for worker skills**

- Explore the potential impact of integrating workforce metrics into value based payment structures.
- Develop and test payment models with evaluation that measures the connection between worker skills, job quality, and outcomes for patients in all sectors including home and community based services.
- Create a space for ongoing industry conversations with CMS on workforce innovation and collaboration.

H-CAP's joint Board also proposes that relevant federal departments take immediate action on developing cross-departmental policies to ensure strong, consistent, and specific language in grant solicitations to allow and encourage Employer/Union healthcare training partnerships as direct applicants in workforce grants. Examples:

- Specific language that identifies labor/management training partnerships as eligible applicants.
- Language that incents partnerships with labor and labor/management training partnerships when working with a unionized employer and values such partnerships with additional points in labor, education, and health department grants.
- Review panels which include expertise in the work of industry partnerships, labor/management funds, organized labor, and the specific needs of the healthcare industry in training and workforce development.
- Prioritization and rewards for programs that include a worker/student centered orientation to workforce development and training.



## CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

H-CAP's successful national convening in July and this follow-up white paper mark the continued progress of this network to reach a higher level of practice, research, and policy for the healthcare workforce. H-CAP is working to strengthen this national collaborative as a learning and activist network for systemic reform and workforce success that engages healthcare employers and their union partners. As part of our practice, we are continuing to document and disseminate the impact of collaboration and the incredible and diverse practices throughout this network. To build increasing understanding and awareness of these models and their potential, we are conducting research, connecting to other researchers, and continuing to identify and evaluate the impact of this body of work. We are bringing labor and management leaders together to identify and pursue federal policy priorities and are excited to seize the momentum provided by our July 2015 convening. We continue to support leaders from labor and management and training partnerships who have built successful workforce models as they expand their engagement in national policy discussions on workforce issues.

The healthcare industry faces a time of tremendous change and reconfiguration. The success of this collaborative requires engagement, creativity, and thought across all healthcare sectors and occupations along with a compassionate and engaged public and government. We see our work in this context.

## ABOUT THIS PAPER

In a series of discussions and meetings over the course of 2015, management and labor leaders in healthcare found strong agreement on a set of key research questions and policy issues confronting the healthcare workforce. These leaders, organized and supported by H-CAP continue to work together to strengthen the healthcare workforce and make it a foundation for the ongoing transformation of healthcare in the US. This paper provides a summary of discussions and priorities at this point in their work.

We thank the Joyce Foundation for support of H-CAP/COWS joint work on healthcare workforce development and training.

## ABOUT H-CAP

H-CAP is a national organization of SEIU unions and healthcare employers who are partnering on workforce education and training. Its related organization, H-CAP Education Association, comprises 15 labor/management and labor-based training organizations (that include over 900 employers and more than 500,000 workers). Both organizations are strongly committed to providing workplace skills and career pathways to their members/employees and bringing greater diversity into the healthcare professions. H-CAP works with its partners to disseminate best practices across the network, develop solutions to emerging issues, and create a more cohesive approach to policy issues. The organization also provides curriculum development, program development, research, and evaluation services to collaborating partners.

## ABOUT COWS

Based at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, COWS is a national think-and-do tank that promotes "high road" solutions to social problems. These treat shared growth and opportunity, environmental sustainability, and resilient democratic institutions as necessary and achievable complements in human development. COWS is nonpartisan but values-based. We seek a world of equal opportunity and security for all.

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