

Maine Health Workforce Forum

The **Maine Health Workforce Forum** was established in 2005 by the Maine Legislature to address Maine's current and projected workforce needs because:

- Many Maine communities face shortages of health care professionals such as dentists, mental health providers, nurses, pharmacists, primary care doctors and home care workers.
- Workforce planning is essential to ensure a sufficient supply of qualified professionals to meet health care, long-term care and public health needs.

The **Maine Health Workforce Forum** is an independent, public/private, employer led consortium of stakeholders, including health and long-term care employers, public health officials, health professional and trade associations, licensing boards, adult education programs, public and private universities, organized labor, private foundations, consumer groups, community colleges, Maine DHHS Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Maine Department of Labor, including the State Workforce Board, local workforce and economic development agencies, and others concerned with ensuring an adequate supply of healthcare workers to meet health, public health and long-term care needs in Maine.

The purpose of the Forum is to:

- ensure a high level of communication and information sharing
- coordinate, collaborate and work toward program alignment
- develop resources
- provide for data collection and analysis
- offer guidance and recommendations to policy makers
- serve as the state's Health Workforce Industry Advisory Council

The Health Care Sector and Workforce

- Maine's most significant job producing sector over the last 10 years.
- Highest growth in jobs and service demands projected for the next 10 years.
- Maine's largest and most varied provider of services and jobs.
- Includes multiple employers such as hospitals, ambulatory care, nursing and residential care services and social assistance industries with jobs in every county in the state (and nation).
- Employs over 60 occupational titles with job requirements ranging from a high school diploma to advanced degrees, some of which are among the highest paying jobs in the state (and nation) and includes an array of technical support and computer/health information technologist jobs that extend into biotechnology, research, regulatory and administrative functions, and higher education sectors.

Examples of Health Workforce Initiatives in Maine

- \$4.9 million, U.S. Department of Labor Health Care Sector grant to the Maine Department of Labor to increase the supply and employment of credentialed health care workers in high-demand occupations.
- \$150,000, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant to Maine Jobs Council to develop a health workforce strategic plan.
- \$2.2 million, U.S. of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant to Maine Department of Health and Human Services to develop a competency-based curriculum and a coordinated training and credentialing system for personal and home care assistance workers.
- \$200,000, Robert Wood Johnson Partners in Nursing Education & Practice Collaborative grant with matching funds from philanthropies Bingham Program and Jonas Foundation to the Organization of Maine Nurse Executives (OMNE) and partners to examine Maine's nursing education infrastructure and address gaps.
- \$500,000, U.S. of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant to Husson University and Penobscot Community Health Center to implement an advanced practice nursing residency program.
- \$295,000 U.S. of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant to University of New England, Area Health Education Center (AHEC).

Key Recommendations for Addressing Maine's Health Workforce Needs

- Coordinate leadership to implement effective strategies.
- Improve the collection, analysis, and reporting of data needed to inform health workforce planning and result in effective solutions, both short and long-range.
- Align resource development with projected demand.
- Coordinate resources from multiple sources including state agencies and private resources. Eliminate duplication of effort.
- Foster employment strategies that will help address immediate and future workforce needs.
- Review occupations and their scope of service to address changing workforce needs or priorities, such as health information technology (HIT).

For information and membership:

Sally Sutton, Senior Policy Analyst, USM Muskie School of Public Service

ssutton@usm.maine.edu, 207 228-8158

www.mainehealthworkforceforum.org