

Partnership Priorities

The Partnership Priorities are based on feedback received at the June 26, 2014 Advisory Board Meeting. Each advisory board member spent their “healthcare bucks” on the issues they thought most important. The order of the issues below reflects the collective priorities of the board.

- 1. Workforce Diversity:** The healthcare workforce needs to better reflect the diverse communities in Hampden, Franklin and Hampshire counties. Some suggested strategies for creating a diverse workforce include:
 - Invite organizations that represent diverse groups to be included in the conversation for increasing diversity amongst the nursing workforce, e.g. Center for New Americans.
 - Schools and organization need to develop systems that identify, acknowledge and address the challenges that diverse communities are facing. An example is the need for support service that addresses homelessness and the lack of childcare and transportation.
 - Develop the mentoring capabilities of employees with diverse backgrounds for the benefit of new staff. Mentors for new RNs might be beneficial for success but qualified mentors do not have to be in the healthcare field.

- 2. Advance Practitioners:** With a shortage of primary care physicians, the demand for nurse practitioners and physician’s assistants continues to rise. It has been difficult to hire nurse practitioners locally and employers are recruiting from other states. The region needs to develop strategies locally that will increase the candidate pool.
 - Determine a reliable measure to assess future demand of NPs and PAs in the region
 - Document the lessons learned by employers as they support incumbent RNs becoming NPs and how they have successfully transitioned new NPs into primary practices
 - Develop OJT opportunities for new NP graduates since employers prefer to hire only seasoned NPs
 - Develop regional strategy to address clinical placements for NPs as employers do not have the capacity to offer additional clinical placements to students

- 3. Career Pathways:** The *Grades 9-14 Career Pathways Initiative* brings together high schools and community colleges to create industry-specific career pathways that better align education, training, and employment opportunities for young people. The career pathway model links and integrates high school and postsecondary curricula with industry-recognized skills, knowledge and certification. The Initiative is informed by work being conducted within the Pathways to Prosperity Network, an initiative of Jobs for the Future and the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Holyoke Community College (HCC) and Chicopee Comprehensive High School (CCHS) will pilot a 9-14 health sciences career pathway with 15 rising 10th graders beginning in the Fall 2014. The goals include providing students with career exploration, STEM academics, college credits, hands-on experience through simulation, and community college acceptance. The Allied Health Committee will oversee this work.

- 4. On-the-Job Training (OJT):** Supporting new graduates through the regional OJT program as they transition to practice has been successful job creation strategy for multiple employers. Over the last 4 years, more than 60 new staff have successfully been hired, trained and 94% remain on the job.
 - Secure additional flexible funding to support the healthcare OJT program
 - Consider using OJT funds to support nurse practitioners and assisting RNs to continue their education
 - Document the OJT program’s return on investment

- 5. Interprofessional Education (IPE):** Team-based care has been proven to have better outcomes for patients. In most instances, health professions are trained and educated in silos. IPE brings together students and staff representing different occupations to learn and work as a team. Members of Cooperating Colleges of Greater Springfield established the Healthcare Interprofessional Education of Pioneer Valley (HIPE-PV). Together with the Healthcare Workforce Partnership, HIPE-PV is establishing regional strategies.
 - HIPE-PV and the Healthcare Partnership should determine how they are going to work together since education and healthcare organizations have to work interdependently to improve interprofessional practice for students and staff.
 - Employers need to determine the best way to encourage and support individuals to work in teams.