



Allied Health Collaborative Meeting 2020

Wednesday, July 15, 2020

2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Zoom Meeting

Attendees:

Gilberto Amador	Compassionate Healthcare	emntraining@outlook.com
Marc Beaulieu	First Choice Academy	cnsacademy@yahoo.com
Beverly Burns	Genesis Healthcare	beverly.burns@genesishcc.com
Rick Cabral	Holyoke Healthcare Center	richard.cabral@nhccare.com
Jennifer Chen	Mass Senior Care Association	jchen@maseniorcare.org
Patricia Crosby	MassHire Franklin Hampshire County Workforce Board	patriciacrosby@masshirefhw.org
David Cruise	MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board	dcruise@masshirehchw.com
Lucinda Egan	Genesis Healthcare	lucinda.egan@genesishcc.com
Heather Haesaert	Excel Nursing Services	hhaesaert@excelnursingservices.com
Elizabeth Hayward-Jansen	Holyoke Community College	ehayward@hcc.edu
Toni Hendrix	Loomis Communities	thendrix@loomiscommunities.org
Lisa Fugiel	Springfield Technical Community College	lfugiel@stcc.edu
Sharon Grundel	Training & Workforce Options	sgrundel@twoworks.org
Jeff Hayden	Holyoke Community College	jhayden@hcc.edu
Dawn Josefski	Greenfield Community College	josefski@gcc.mass.edu
Maureen O'Toole	Loomis Communities	motoole@loomiscommunities.org
Jason Pacheco	Baystate Health	jason.pacheco@baystatehealth.org
Donald Prisby	Westover Job Corps	prisby.donald@jobcorps.org
Peta-Gaye Porter	MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board	pporter@masshirehchw.com
Cindy Ray	MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Center	cynthiaray@masshirefhcareers.org
Karen Shack	Commonwealth Corporation	kshack@commcorp.org

SUMMARY OF EMPLOYER WORKFORCE CONCERNS:

- COVID-19 outbreaks in many LTC organizations restricted new resident admissions. This created low census in some LTC facilities and affected the need to hire of new staff.

- Homecare and long-term care service organizations used many methods to reassure residents and families that the facilities are safeguarding the health of everyone in their care. Organizations provided information to their clients on the ways they are educating staff on universal precautions, utilizing personal protective equipment and other progressive measures that are in place to protect staff members and prevent exposure to the residents.
- Administrators observed increasing caretaker fatigue. Caretaker fatigue is due to not only COVID virus, but also the issue of low staffing. Healthcare workers expressed fear of exposure to coronavirus while providing care to the residents. LTC was unprepared for the pandemic, since it has been suffering a workforce and funding shortage for many years. There has always been low staffing with high turnover. Acknowledging and addressing worker moral is a significant factor in dealing with the crisis. Suggested solutions to these concerns include:
 - Administrators instituting an open door policy and providing quality reliable information to staff
 - Administrators coaching and helping staff to appropriate the information that is disseminated through media outlets to the facility that they work in. Eg. Staff are more likely to bring the virus into the facility and a resident contacting the virus from the staff; staff are more likely to contract the virus while in the community or from other workers.
 - Help direct care workers to understand that gowns they wear protects the residents from contaminants on their clothing.
 - Self-care training
 - Virtual support groups (*the Organization of Nurse Leaders (ONL) and Massachusetts/Rhode Island League for Nursing (MARILN) offers support groups to new RN graduates on a weekly basis. Many sees this a valuable solution*)
- Compassionate Home Healthcare Services delivers an accelerated HHA training in English and Spanish and provides home care services in Central and Western Massachusetts. They employ HHAs and new RNs. Employment in this setting give the new nurse an opportunity to build his/her skill and resume.
- For some organizations, the mass.gov staffing portal was not a viable source to recruit LTC staff. Many could not find eligible candidates. For some organizations, hiring from the [mass.gov web portal](https://www.mass.gov/web-portal) inadvertently created some salary inequities. These organizations offered high hourly rates to compete with other employers in the region. As a result, one organization is now conducting some salary reviews to renegotiate salaries, because the salaries are not sustainable long-term, especially for workers who would like to remain with the organization on a permanent basis.
- The use of staffing agencies increased, and some employers used federal and state funding to provide bonuses to staff members who worked extra shifts.
- Massachusetts Senior Care Foundation advocated that LTFs continue to receive supplemental funding until a vaccine is deployed. Additional funding for workforce, PPE and prevention control are key factors for strengthening and maintaining a long-term care workforce.

TRAINING PROGRAMS

- A listing of CNA/HHA training programs can be found at westernmasshealthcareers.org. View the list by clicking on the following link: https://westernmasshealthcareers.org/wp-content/uploads/DCW-Training-Programs-West_MA.pdf
- MassHire Franklin Hampshire County Workforce Board received grant funding to run four cycles of CNA/HHA training programs over the next 2 years in partnership in local employers.
- First Choice Academy (CNA training program) ran remote classes without interruption during the state's stay at home advisory. They also provided tailored programs for some employers. CareOne facilities hired students as feeders, nursing assistants so that they can complete their clinical placements while employed. This circumvented the restriction of allowing students into clinical placements. Other employers hired candidates, then paid for their education.
- Springfield Technical Community College postponed the CNA program because of the closing of the campus.
- COVID-19 created a number of challenges for CNA/HHA training programs. The skills training transitioned online but students were not allowed into LTCFs and were unable to complete their clinical placements and sit for the certification exams.
- Training Workforce Options can customize trainings to include behavioral health and self-care resilience competencies for direct care workers.
- Training programs are willing to circulate emails to graduated students on job opportunities in the field.
- Students in other health science programs successfully graduated over the summer.
 - Greenfield Community College ran classes on campus with the EMS students. They are working on the logistics of simulation and social distancing. Medical assisting students were able to graduate on time. A new cohort of students will start in the fall.
- The NLCEX testing for nurse graduates is opening gradually.
- It has been easier to find instructors during the pandemic.