



Healthcare Employer Round Table

Workforce Snohomish, in collaboration with Snohomish County and Economic Alliance Snohomish County, has been convening monthly industry-focused employer roundtables to gauge and assess our region's workforce challenges. These roundtable events have identified issues that are industry-specific, as well as those seen across all types and sizes of employers. Each quarter, Workforce Snohomish shares the results with all interested community partners to help align and focus community resources.

Healthcare Employers met on 10/26/16 and identified multiple issues that they are facing within their workforce. The workforce community partners will continue to realign the community resources to address the deeper and more systemic issues facing the pipeline, retention, and development of the retail workforce. While solutions are being developed and implemented, the community of partners would like to make sure that current solutions for many of the issues raised currently exist and can help the engaged businesses.

Following are the takeaways from the Healthcare Employer Conversation on 10/26/2016.

How to Read: underlined are the Different Sections, the red text are the **Gaps / Needs Improvements**, the green text are the **Possible Solutions / Recommendations** and the black text are the general comments that apply to the section.

1. What are the pressing issues you are experiencing related to hiring?
 - Healthcare is experiencing “pandemonium” because there is such a shortage of talent.
 - Hospitals are predominately short on talent.
 - Especially for nurses.
 - All the sub groups within that field and specialties.
 - Lack of nurses and only about 65% of final providers.
 - There is huge demand for registered nurses (RN) and the supply is low.
 - A high percentage of the nurse workforce is female.
 - Challenges include the need for flexible schedules.
 - Critical care staff.
 - This is not just in this county, but all along I-5.



- Cross-trained staff and those willing to be cross-trained in multiple areas.
 - No clear way to address the situation and issues faced.
- All this creates fierce competition among employers to keep and pull (steal) talent.
- Struggle with different pipelines.
 - Not just nurse and doctor.
 - Hard to hire multiple skills.
 - Certain degree and certificates.
 - Required by law and non-negotiable.
 - Others are hard to come by (IT, HIPA, etc...)
 - Sterile processing technician.
 - Not provided in the local region.
 - Anesthesia technician.
 - Not provided in the local region.
 - Surgical technician.
 - Community Health Workers is another important position.
 - Mid-level experience is hard to have in the right area and skills.
 - Entry level is having issues to fill. But is the numerous specific skill within each occupation that is far harder to recruit and keep staffed.
 - Add to this many of these key positions are under the radar and unknown to even to those within the field.
 - Many sub positions of an occupation are required by law. It is not until a person leaves will it become clear that the person also is a key position within the system.
 - Ongoing needs for Health Unit Coordinators that don't require a degree.
 - Need to be IT savvy, and take medical terminology courses.
 - Nonprofit health providers also have a lot of demand.
 - 1-on -1 in-home health care aides.
 - State laws are barriers to hiring people.
 - Social Worker.



- Lack of supply on social workers, especially for high-level education personnel.
- Social workers are important to mental and behavioral health patients.
- There is significant need for social workers:
 - discharge planners.
 - care coordinators.
 - transition planners.
 - behavioral health workers.
- Community health workers are needed and helpful.
 - But almost no one chooses it as their first path into health care.
 - They are likely finding the position after already being in the field.
 - This limits the pathway into the position.
- Seeing increased needs in acute care (more acute care patients).
- Child Care Specialists are hard to find.
- High need for Dental Assistants.
 - The Dental Assistants pipeline is very small.
 - Generally, cannot pay as high as other healthcare positions
 - But can guarantee hours.
- Family Medicine Associates - people to help navigate people round the systems.
 - Hard to find people willing to learn the job.
 - Many positions available.
- Telemedicine and virtual healthcare is the future (including telesocial work).
 - Growing telehealth and are challenged to attract healthcare providers that want to use technology differently.
 - They need to manage complex cases utilizing technology.
- Consumers want medical apps that connect directly to providers which is complicated.
 - Tech Talents.
 - Healthcare industry is looking for software engineers and product managers who can think outside of the box.
 - Healthcare sector is always hiring tech positions, but have trouble filling those jobs.



- Overall there is a higher level of care needed in the hospital which demands more staff.
 - There are plenty of applications for entry level positions in food service, janitorial, etc.
 - But many applicants are lacking a H.S. diploma or GED, which is required.
- One of the businesses has 500 employees in the Bothell office and have approximately 45-50 positions open daily and they continue to grow.
 - They need employees at every skill level.
 - High turnover leads to always having open positions.
- There is a lack of diversity in talent pipeline.
 - There is still a struggle to hire Medical Assistants and RN's; especially those that speak Spanish.
 - Increasing the number of minorities who become health workers could bolster the supply and have the additional benefit of improving delivery of culturally sensitive care.
 - One hospital couldn't find a Spanish speaking nurse for several months.
 - Need more cultural diversity that reflects the low income patient population and more sensitivity to a variety of cultures.
- People generally don't understand the number of jobs available in healthcare.
- People don't understand the career paths into healthcare positions.
 - When we think of careers in health, many of us only think of doctors and nurses.
 - However, there are many other jobs in healthcare field.
 - Many of them are in high demand with good job outlook.
- Snohomish County employers have to compete with the Seattle/King County market that typically offers higher wages.
 - It can be difficult to attract Sea/King workers to Snohomish County.
 - Most people go to Seattle market, and it's difficult to bring them back.
 - Large portion of people commute and this area could start to pull from those tired of the traffic commutes.
- Recruits at two levels:
 - High available talent and Low available talent.



- These two talent pools are recruited differently.
 - Low availability is “high touch” recruiting throughout the entire process.
 - High availability recruiting has lower minimum requirements and just need “to keep them warm.”
 - They have received too many applications for entry level, and too few applicants for high level position.
 - Recruiting providers in rural areas is difficult.
 - Many organizations are using “Skill Survey” to obtain professional references that includes about 30 survey questions.
 - Hiring managers are using it as a 360 interview tool with peers and managers.
 - There’s a need for tele-interpretive services.
 - Students need more help with resumes.
 - The resume should actually reflect the person.
 - Hiring needs to be more direct.
 - Clearer requirements and what is wanted for the position.
 - Shorten application process.
 - Hard because of the long process required by federal law.
 - Have human contact through the process.
 - High touch to keep them engaged.
2. What are the retention issues you are facing?
- Fierce competition for experienced nurses.
 - Nurses are able to pursue better options for themselves and their families (i.e. going to King County).
 - Employers struggles to retain staff.
 - They often hire entry level.
 - Once the worker has gained experience they leave for increased wages at competing healthcare providers.
 - Hospitals used to have training funds.
 - but not anymore.
 - Especially helpful in training lower level nurses in acute care.
 - Some organizations have training funds to help move entry level people (e.g. environmental services and dietary) into healthcare positions.



- There's significant need for work-based learning.
 - But because of regulations in healthcare, it is a challenge
- Majority of healthcare workforce is female.
 - Thus many of them put family as a priority over their career.
- Employees are required to work at night and weekend.
- It has been difficult to retain employees.
 - Many workers couldn't support themselves with low salary.
 - Address the provider burnout.
 - Limit the different locations where a job requires their staff to work.
 - Have 3-4 hours from home tele-working.
- Middle-aged care providers (45-50 years) are exiting the field.
 - The most talented and experience is leaving the field.
- There are no small steps along a career path from entry level positions to upper level positions,
 - i.e. to surgical technician or diagnostic imaging.
 - The path is long, hard and costly.
 - There are lots of people in the pipeline.

3. Suggestions for future workforce recruitment.

- Start outreach in high schools for grassroots recruitment.
- More information about the variety of healthcare positions available.
 - Can climb the ladder quickly even entering on the low level of the field.
- Work with colleges and universities to really amp up programs and recruitment into programs.
 - Educate general public about different types of occupations.
 - Talk to college and university students, and teach public about the variety of healthcare occupations.
 - Many people enter nursing programs without prior knowledge of the field.
- Training for working at hospital.
 - Homecare is different from hospital.
 - Many individuals want to work at a hospital but lack the education.
 - Today's community college education only focuses on homecare.
 - Gap between college and hospital.
- Develop high school program.



- Need to develop program for supporting roles.
 - Many other occupations within healthcare only require quick and low-cost education.
 - Ideal for people who come out right after high school.
 - Medical Assistants is a quick program to get people in (lots of opportunities).
- Some of the hospitals have a pipeline for interns (physicians).
- Managed Medical Assistance is a three-year program, and is a job that most are retrained into and could be trained directly into.
- So many skills and so many routes lead to an unclear picture on how to pull people into specific occupations.

4. Training/Education Needs.

- Need collaboration with community and technical colleges to provide adequate training.
- Need improved college advisory boards (for healthcare) because what is in place right now isn't working.
- Need better communication with programs at colleges to provide training components that are not currently being done.
- Better teachers and facilities focused in the community colleges.
 - Create programs to train professional teachers.
 - Hire experienced personnel from the industry, similar with MBA.
 - Better teaching indicates better graduates.
 - However, being a teacher usually makes less money than people in the industry.
 - Healthcare is difficult for people to do job shadowing, and expose them to healthcare working environment.
 - There is nothing like being within a real working setting.
- Becoming a doctor or high-level position within the sector could be costly due to training, licensing, and time.
- Ideally training and employers would be in line.
 - Employers feel that the education system does not listen to them.
 - Because of this, patients can be put into risk.
 - Employees need confidence before hands-on client experience.
 - Colleges are not providing the skills and experience to be hireable.
- Need training programs within hospitals and clinics.



- Some certifications are on a limited time frame and have hard requirements that stress that any missed class will equal failing the class.
 - Creates huge barriers for those with unstable lives and limits them.
- There is a need for Sterile Processing Technicians and Surgical Technicians but there are no local programs.
- Students are entering training programs without a real understanding of the different roles within healthcare.
 - Some go through the training and once they reach the field and get real world experience, they leave the occupation.
 - Need more practicums in school.
- Community and Technical Colleges need faculty to teach the current technology and techniques.
 - The challenge is that wages are lower so it's hard to recruit faculty.
 - How to repurpose experienced nurses? Could they become faculty?
- Need robust medicine simulation labs and more interactive training.
- Need more clinical externships and possibly partner with healthcare organizations to provide trainings.
- Need regular talks between educators and employers.
 - Some certificates being taught are not accepted by employers.
 - Many occupations have high barriers.
 - College training needs vastly more work-based and less class-based learning.
 - Opportunity in internship programs.
 - Outpatient care is overshadowed by in-patient.
 - Create teacher externships.
 - Shorten length of health education and more time in the field.
 - Many get hired and learn quickly that they do not like working with people.
 - This may be years in class to find out that the field is wrong for them.

5. Suggestions for job seekers.

- Be flexible.
 - It's difficult to secure full time positions right away.
 - Be willing to work part-time or per diem to gain experience.



- To determine what kind of healthcare position may be the best fit, look at the open positions on www.monster.com or on company websites.
 - Self-educate about the opportunities.
- There are many entry level jobs that only require 9 – 12 months of education.
- **Be aware that experience in long-term care or personal home care isn't always a pathway to clinical care.**
- Employers are looking for applicants with:
 - the “sparkle”
 - soft skills
 - customer service
 - professionalism
 - communication skills
 - team work
 - appearance
 - flexibility
 - reliability
 - practical experience
 - **Job seekers need to read applications before they fill them out.**
 - Apply for jobs that are posted, not the ones they want.
 - Understand that they are applying for a specific job.
 - Self-educate on position.
 - **Most hiring managers are spending 4 to 7 seconds scanning a resume.**
 - **Anything out of place and they will move on.**
- Be aware that Healthcare does not have hundreds of large businesses, they have five mega employers.
 - So when applying do not just apply for only one position with each organization. Apply for many within each company.
- Be aware that most healthcare jobs in the future will be in clinics instead of hospitals.

6. Other comments :

- **Healthcare may be overregulated and overcertified and needs additional advocacy to lower barriers.**
 - Government Intervention.



- Family Medical Leave Act regulations lead to staffing challenges.
- Recruiters believe government overregulate many things.
- Healthcare industry have many barriers due to regulation and laws.
 - This makes the healthcare industry difficult to enter, especially when many students come from disadvantage families.
 - Many employers stressed that excessive requirements and certificates and can greatly limit the ability of new hires and pulling people into the field.
 - Greatly limits entry level pipelines.

For any additional question on this document please contact:

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