

NC Center on the Workforce for Health

October 13, 2022 Meeting Summary

**Hilary Campbell** presented on the NC Sentinel Network's Spring 2022 results. The Sentinel Network is a questionnaire to employers of healthcare workers about their workforce needs. It is designed to gather insights and qualitative data about their current and emerging needs.

Long term care, behavioral health, and hospitals are the largest number of respondents.

Reports include:

- exceptionally long vacancies – RNs top response, CNAs, LPNs, and Environmental Services followed
- new healthcare roles that had not been filled previously – most notable was 16+ reports of creating Patient Care Aides and Nursing Assistant in Training roles
- Occupations most commonly redeployed – RNs, Office Staff, CNAs were reported most often

The next questionnaire will be distributed in November 2022 and results should be available in January or February 2023. Thanks so much to the partner organizations who encourage their members to respond to the questionnaire.

For more information, [www.nc.sentinelnetwork.org](http://www.nc.sentinelnetwork.org)

**David English** provided an update on a legislative study the UNC System, in coordination with the NC Community College System, asking for information about the methods and timeline needed to increase nursing graduates by fifty percent.

The study focuses on the public sector education pipeline not the private colleges, although all recognize they are important contributors to this training. The study is not a funding or authorizing document – it is limited to a study of the factors influencing nursing enrollment and degree production

David described the discussions with nursing deans/UNC system provosts, NC AHEC, NCIOM, Sheps, NC Board of Nursing, NC Community College System Office about the data and information needed to respond to the study. The data request will confirm figures on max enrollment; program graduates and information on requirements to increase graduates by 50%; current class and program enrollment; admissions and enrollment for 2017-2022; workforce connections (how programs engage and work with local employers to think about enrollment and areas of specialty for program planning)

Timeline – The data request sent to nursing programs September 2022; and the report will be reviewed at the January 18/19, 2023 Board of Governors meeting; February 2023 is the deadline for report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services.

There was extensive discussion (including from the Association for Home and Hospice Care of NC) about existing studies and information available, the need to ensure that we don't address LPN and RN shortages by exacerbating the CNA shortage, the need to be sure that the nursing faculty shortage is highlighted, and the ultimate need to be sure that responses recognize local nuances and needs.

**Vincent Ginski**, Vice President, Gaston Business Association, presented on Talent Pipeline Management (TPM).

Vincent is leading a bottom-up approach to address talent shortages in his community, starting in alignment and partnership with the Dept of Commerce, NC Community College System, DPI, NC Works and other statewide partners.

To do so, he is implementing the TPM framework in Gaston County. TPM is a process and approach for collective decision making and alignment related to developing and supporting the talent needed by employers. TPM has cross cutting benefits for employers and educators – and learners (employees).

Currently, there is no incentive for coordination - they are seeing challenges in communication and coordination across sectors. TPM is different from other alignment efforts because it is:

- Employer engaged
- Communicates industry needs clarity with one voice and at scale
- Aggregates demand driven, employer sources data around most critical talent pain points
- Facilitates employers and educators to first get the facts straight

Employers form a collaborative and identify a host organization to bring folks together – to coordinate systems alignment and help industries work better together

- Better informed investment decisions
- Facilitates local and regional solutions in coordination with statewide approaches

How TPM works

1. **Get organized** - organize an employer collaborative (ask employers to rank the jobs that are most important “keeping them up at night”)
2. **Get the facts straight** – demand driven job projections, helps determine the type of talent and what is needed – sourced directly from the employer, align and communicate our job requirements – to inform what is taught in classrooms, analyze talent supply chain
3. Implement
4. Improve

There was interest in how TPM applies to healthcare. Vincent offered to provide follow-up information about his experience and other states.

**Sabrena Lea**, Deputy Director, LTSS within NC Department of Health and Human Services presented on their current thinking about approaches to address direct care worker shortages.

There are estimates that 93,000 individuals in NC are available to work as a direct care worker today – only 75% of these are currently working in this role

- We want to understand why and how to engage them
- Direct Care workers – home health aides, nursing assistants, care aides, etc. – help with everyday living
- Largest job sector in the US – nursing assistants, home health aids, and personal care aids
- We want to make sure these folks have the opportunity for professional and economic growth

NC is an Aging State

- People are living longer with disabilities that impact their independence

Framing the Issue

- This is hard work – strenuous occupational demands
- Low wages – \$12.27/hr
- Low hanging fruit to provide supports to this workforce
  - Training Barriers – variations in methodologies to train these workers across settings, inconsistencies in job title, availability of training (long wait time for direct care training courses, currently not available in Spanish)
  - Recruitment – multifaceted issue, cultural implications, need to understand what draws these people to the work
  - Retention – low pay, irregular hours, hard work, seen as low value, not respected within the larger healthcare system
- Employment opportunities have declined as demand increases
- Potential Opportunities
  - Collaborate with partners to establish a standard statewide minimum program hours requirement – adding in options for hybrid curriculum
  - Enhance the nurse aid registration
  - Training available in other languages
  - Market research to understand the pipeline into the workforce
  - Launch marketing campaign to reduce stigma about the direct care workforce
  - Target recruitment of ESOL individuals
  - Increase salary requirements

Participants thanked Sabrena for her presentation and look forward to thinking about how to work together to address this problem.