

HEALTH CARE NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

HEALTH CARE ISSUES

Healthcare is important to the entire Silicon Valley region, where almost 10% of the region's jobs are in health and human services. From 2007 through 2012, the sector experienced employment growth of 10.4% compared to a decline in overall employment of 1.9% (*2013 Index of Silicon Valley*). Healthcare is an industry in transition. The Affordable Care Act, health information technology, and the changing demographics of an aging population will have a significant impact on workforce preparation in the years to come.

The Economic Modeling Specialists Incorporated (EMSI) database revealed high demand occupations with a large number of openings in allied health care fields in San Mateo County:

<i>High Demand Occupations</i>	<i>2017 Jobs</i>	<i>Openings through 2012-2017</i>
Registered Nurses	5,155	781
Nursing Aides, Orderlies and Attendants	2,328	177
CAN/Home Health Aides	1,886	403
Medical Laboratory Technician	496	93
Radiologic Technician	381	50
EMT/Paramedics	255	49
Surgical Technicians	308	65

The data alone paints an incomplete picture. We know from faculty in our programs that many employers are not currently hiring for these occupations. By holding focus groups with health care employers, the health care assessment helped us complete the picture. The focus groups centered on occupational changes and skill gaps.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

An internal work group comprised of faculty and deans from allied health care fields at all three colleges analyzed data and met to discuss the questions that should be posed to health care providers. They also participated in the health care focus groups. One focus group was held with hospital executives; two focus groups were held with Human Resources and operational personnel from local hospitals; and a final focus group was held with Human Resource personnel and managers from both hospitals and home health care organizations.

To kick off the health care needs assessment, in October 2012, eleven hospital Chief Executives participated in a focus group centered on allied health care needs. Their concerns were framed by health care reform's effect on overall operations and offered a pulse on regional health care challenges. All CEOs agreed that hospitals are struggling to determine how to perform better and more cost efficiently because of health care reform.

Within the shifting landscape of health care reform, allied health care roles are changing and expanding. Under health care reform, hospitals' reimbursements will be partially based on the "patient experience" (i.e., how patients rate their experiences in local hospitals), which indicates a need to improve employees' "soft skills": communication, customer service and critical thinking. Reimbursements will also be partially based on 30 day readmissions data; hospitals will be working to assure continuity of care beyond an acute hospital stay so that patients are not readmitted. This

aspect of health care reform may call for creation and/or realignment of specialized positions with a variety of titles such as “Home Health Manager, Transitions Coach, Case Managers, or Care Managers.” Under health care reform, long term care facilities and home care will become increasingly important which indicates a need for more CNAs (Certified Nursing Assistants) and Medical Assistants. Implementation of new technology (particularly regarding patient records and information sharing) will also pose a challenge to hospitals and other health care providers and will require increased technology training.

The CEOs stated that current and future employees should expect changing job roles and responsibilities. They indicated that, in the future, required licenses (for RNs, radiologic technology, etc.) will represent baseline requirements as jobs are constantly redefined. The three focus groups with both hospital and long-term care professionals identified specific employer needs:

- *Patient experience/customer satisfaction:* Soft skills such as communications skills, customer service and critical thinking are increasingly important under the Affordable Care Act. These skills will be required for all new workers and are lacking in some current employees.
- *Technology:* All health care workers will need basic computer/technology skills as health care employers increase the use of technology and implement electronic health records.
- *Experience:* Hospitals value internships as a means for students to gain experience and for hospitals to vet potential employees.
- *Perioperative RN specialization:* HR Directors believe there is a need for a Perioperative RN program. This nursing specialty works with patients who are having operative or other invasive procedures.
- *CNA Training:* Hospital and long term care directors indicated that there is a growing need for well-trained Certified Nursing Assistants. There are a number of proprietary schools that offer short term training which is seen as inadequate by some of the health care directors.
- *English language learners and the need for accent reduction:* Strong foreign accents and limited English language skills can sometimes impair customer satisfaction. HR Directors indicated that future employees will need to be English proficient and current employees may need additional language instruction.
- *Career mobility:* The HR directors indicated a need for current employees to have the capacity to move up the organizational ladder and identified management skills and technology education as two essential skills.

FINDINGS FOR THE COLLEGES

- The nursing programs are currently full and there is a wait list. The Hospital CEOs expressed dissatisfaction with the current admission process; their perception is that the most capable students are not always the ones who are admitted to the CSM nursing program. Under the current system, a student must complete 10 prerequisite courses with a minimum C grade in each course, have a cumulative GPA of 2.5, and a subset GPA of 2.5 in Anatomy, Physiology, and Microbiology with no more than one repetition. The applicant must also complete the TEAS exam with a minimum 62% cumulative score. Anyone who meets these criteria is entered into a lottery for spots in the nursing program.

A recent California law (AB 1559) allows for a new Merit-Based Admission Policy using specific

criteria. Under this policy, a College can assign weights to various criteria and set minimums for GPAs, test scores etc. The criteria include:

- ✓ Academic degrees or diplomas
- ✓ Grade-point average in relevant coursework
- ✓ Any relevant work or volunteer experience
- ✓ Life experiences or special circumstances of an applicant, including, but not necessarily limited to the following experiences or circumstances, such as disabilities; low family income; first generation of family to attend college; need to work; disadvantaged social or educational environment; refugee or veteran status.
- ✓ Proficiency or advanced level coursework in languages other than English
- ✓ Successful completion of the TEAS exam.

The CSM Nursing staff is evaluating this new admissions criteria method with a target to implement a merit-based admission process beginning with the Fall 2015 semester.

- The Patient Care Navigator role is an emerging position that merits further research. It combines elements of the Community Health Care Workers, Discharge Planners, and Nurses. Our focus group with hospitals and Home Health Care providers revealed numerous skill requirements. They believe that the Health Care Navigator role needs to:
 - ✓ Understand what health care services are available throughout the County
 - ✓ Understand preventative health care strategies
 - ✓ Connect individuals to needed programs; refer individuals to social services in the community
 - ✓ Link patients and their families to hospice care
 - ✓ Offer family education regarding diagnoses and available resources
 - ✓ Provide medication resources to patients and their families
- The Case Manager role is evolving into one of Patient Care Transitions. Our focus group with hospitals and Home Health Care providers revealed numerous skill requirements for the role:
 - ✓ Provide transition care to a facility or home after an acute-care hospital stay
 - ✓ Provide resources/oversee the transition of medication
 - ✓ Comply with medication needs and regulations
 - ✓ Handle communications regarding a successful patient transition among multiple care providers
- Patient experience is directly linked to hospital reimbursement and the affordable care act. Emphasis on generalized curriculum to improve the patient experience—communications skills and customer service training—is valuable to hospitals.
- Critical thinking skills are in high demand and need to be strongly emphasized across the board for all allied health students.
- Basic math and technology are an integral part of all health care career paths.
- Customized solutions to health care issues are needed. Hospitals need customized solutions to training needs and are willing to outsource the need when appropriate solutions can be offered in a timely manner.

IMPACT ON DISTRICT PROGRAMS

- *Strengthened collaboration among the Colleges:* The health care work group, comprised of faculty and deans from all three colleges, met frequently over the course of eight months to analyze data and

determine focus areas. The process strengthened collaboration and fostered a deeper understanding of programmatic issues and opportunities. The Colleges have agreed to continue the effort of convening educators, hospital/health care executives and workforce investment board representatives on a quarterly basis.

- *Increased partnership capacity with health care employers in San Mateo County:* Executives who participated in focus groups have indicated a willingness to participate in curriculum development and advisory roles moving forward.
- *Merit based admission for the RN student lottery:* In response to feedback from hospital executives and others, the RN program is moving to a merit based admissions process as previously described.
- *Re-institution of Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program at CSM:* The changing health care landscape indicates a need for more CNAs. CSM is planning to introduce a CNA/Home Health Aide training program (probably in Spring 2014) which is expected to be 10 weeks long and can accommodate 20-24 students. The actual number of students admitted will depend on how many students can be placed in clinical settings.
- *Medical Assistant Programs:* Through the CAA, Cañada has developed curriculum which integrates model strategies into the pathway. Skyline is in the process of revising curriculum to meet current employer needs for Medical Assisting. Collaboration is taking place between Skyline, Cañada, and Cabrillo College with support through Bay Area College Consortium initiatives.
- *The Perioperative RN program:* The Perioperative program at CSM was discontinued due to lack of enrollment. During the focus groups, CSM committed to reinstating this program if the hospitals could pool employees with appropriate qualifications, with a minimum of 10 students. Hospitals are aware of this option and exploring potential candidates
- *Customized solutions to health care issues:* The Colleges can work with local hospitals to develop customized solutions to some of the identified skills gaps. Training in communications, critical thinking, customer service, ESL, technology/math and other identified areas can be taught (on a cohort basis) at the hospitals and/or incorporated into current allied health offerings.
- *Improving English skills of non-native-speaking health care workers:* Skyline College has begun offering an “English for Health Care Workers” series, based upon the English Health Train curriculum created by the Welcome Back Center of San Francisco. This curriculum is designed to provide non-native-speaking health care workers with the English skills needed to communicate and function effectively in the workplace and to help them achieve their professional goals in the U.S. The integrated English language skills training (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are based on themes, issues, and situations in health care. The target audience is foreign-trained health care professionals, immigrants seeking to enter health care careers and incumbent health care workers with limited English proficiency. The courses are designed as a series of three, and there are discussions of revising it to make it an even more streamlined offering for hospitals, businesses, and students in health fields.
- *HCAHP Survey (Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems) for patient satisfaction is an instructional tool:* Allied health care faculty and deans throughout the district have an increased awareness of the importance of patient satisfaction and employability. The Colleges will incorporate customer service training into health programs’ curriculum.

- *Career Advancement Academy:* The Health Care Career Advancement Academy successfully guides students into allied health care fields along a variety of increasingly responsible career pathways. The Colleges believe that students success in moving through the career ladders is tied to a cohort model with extensive student support services available to students. The Colleges will be institutionalizing the supportive services in relevant programs that will increase the pipeline of successful students in the health care field.
- *Collaborative conversation with Hospitals and Home Health Care Providers:* At the conclusion of our last focus group, participants and faculty alike expressed a desire to address emerging Affordable Care Act issues. Skyline College has agreed to coordinate quarterly meetings with hospital/home healthcare providers to continue the conversations begun in this Health Care Needs Assessment.