

March 2023 Newsletter

WCMEW WORK GROUPS – FIRST MEETINGS

All five WCMEW strategic planning work groups have held their first meetings of the year. Each group had extensive discussions and brainstormed over current problems or root causes, and explored potential solutions to addressing the projected shortfall in healthcare professions. Below are some high points of those discussions for each group:

- **Promoting Healthcare Careers and Recruiting Professionals**

The discussion on root causes centered on competing industries and their pay levels, differing expectations from the newer generation of workers, wait lists at tech schools, barriers to education and training, and limited exposure to health care careers in middle and high schools.

Proposed solutions included more flexibility in education and training, greater collaboration between schools and healthcare systems, and expanding Cooperative Educational Service Agency and Future Health Professional programs in schools.

- **Strengthening Our Physician Education and Training Pathways – Physicians**

Existing problems with Wisconsin's physician pathways suggested by this group included insufficient numbers of graduate medical education residency programs (and lack of awareness of existing programs), physician burnout leading to early retirement, and inadequate resources devoted to education and training.

Suggested solutions included increased resources into education and training, enhanced healthcare system partnering in education and onboarding, early retirees becoming mentors, more team-based care, and changing medical school admission policies to target in-state residents.

- **Strengthening Our Physician Education and Training Pathways – Nursing**

The Nursing Pathways group focused on issues such as lack of childcare services, the workforce not being reflective of the state's demographics, differing expectations of the newer generation of workers, nurse faculty shortages, lack of sufficient career ladder opportunities, lack of flexibility and expense in education and training, and underutilized simulation techniques.

Solutions included scholarships to fund education, providing for more flexibility in education and training, reaching out to minority students, expanding career learning opportunities, expanding the use of simulation, increasing the number of faculty, tax breaks for preceptors, and expanding community collaborations between healthcare systems, schools, and programs.

- **Retaining Professionals**

The issues discussed in this group centered on the desire of “Gen Z” workers to have more flexibility in work hours and workplace, childcare, abusive patients, varying institution definitions of “teams”, administrative burdens, EMR and other technologies not increasing efficiency, and additional workload created by training new workers.

Solutions posed by the group included greater collaboration with schools and programs, flexible work hours and workplace, more effective team-based care, greater use of retirement-age workers as mentors, involving students more in patient care, and better use of technology.

- **Redesigning Care Delivery**

This group pointed to the following problem areas: administrative burdens not related to patient care, inefficient care delivery processes, lack of adequate patient transportation, insufficient focus on population health and disease management, and insufficient coordination between sites of care.

Solutions offered included greater use of (and enhancement of) technology such as telemedicine and artificial intelligence, increase coordination with public health resources, providing better access, for example, treating patients at public places and traveling to homes, enhancing patient transportation, improving chronic disease management, and improving the care models to optimize resource capabilities between sites of care.

All of the groups will be meeting in April to refine their lists and begin to prioritize next steps. If you have any questions about the work group activities, please contact George Quinn at gquinn@wcmew.org.

WORKFORCE IN THE NEWS

[Med students given a taste of rural medicine more likely to return](#) – **UW Medicine**

UW medical school alumni who had trained as medical students in rural areas were almost twice as likely to set up their practices in a rural location, a new UW Medicine led study has found.

[Almost Half of Health Systems Use AI for Workforce Issues](#) – **Health IT Analytics**

A survey shows that 47.5 percent of health systems currently use artificial intelligence solutions to address workforce challenges, with the rest considering an AI solution for this purpose.