

# WCMEW'S HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE STRATEGIC PLAN

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On behalf of the Wisconsin Council on Medical Education and Workforce (WCMEW) we are pleased to present WCMEW's "Healthcare Workforce Strategic Plan".

Over the past year, WCMEW—together with over 50 of its partners—has worked to seek solutions to Wisconsin's current and impending shortages of the healthcare workforce. Specifically, based on a 2021 WCMEW study, a shortfall of health professionals totaling over 25,000 is projected by 2035 unless bold action is taken. The work was divided into five areas, with work group addressing a specific aspect of the problem. Detailed recommendations and strategies are found in the following sections. Below is a summary of the recommendations:

- PROMOTE HEALTHCARE CAREERS
  - Expand efforts in high schools and post-secondary education that promote healthcare careers.
- STRENGTHEN OUR PHYSICIAN PATHWAYS
  - Focus on attracting and retaining physicians who will practice in Wisconsin.
  - Enhance collaboration between schools, programs, and health systems.
- NURSING PATHWAYS
  - Increase resources and place a greater focus on education and training.
  - Enhance integration of new nursing staff; expand career ladder opportunities.
- RETAIN HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS
  - Reduce burn-out.
  - Strengthen organizational/worker relationships.
- REDESIGN HEALTHCARE DELIVERY
  - Re-imagine care delivery.
  - Improve care models.

Our focus on activities in 2024 will include:

- Enhancing student engagement and promotion of healthcare careers
- Improving and expanding clinical training/education coordination
- Communicating and convening

**In presenting this report to all stakeholders in Wisconsin's healthcare workforce—health providers, educational institutions, policy makers, and our citizens—our hope is that it will energize all parties into taking action to address the impending workforce crisis.**

**Tim Size**  
WCMEW Chair

**George Quinn**  
WCMEW Executive Director

## List of Acronyms

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Full Name</b>
AHEC	Area Health Education Centers
APNP	Advanced Practice Nurse Practitioner
CESA	Cooperative Educational Service Agency
MCW	Medical College of Wisconsin
UWSMPH	UW School of Medicine and Public Health
WAFP	Wisconsin Academy of Family Physicians
WCRGME	Wisconsin Collaborative for Rural GME
WHA	Wisconsin Hospital Association
WiNC	Wisconsin Northern and Central Graduate Medical Education Consortium
WISHIN	Wisconsin Health Information Network
WMS	Wisconsin Medical Society
WNA	Wisconsin Nurses Association
WPHCA	Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to acknowledge task force members for their diligent work and thoughtful recommendations. Following are the work groups and their members:

### PROMOTING HEALTHCARE CAREEERS

Name		Title	Organization
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Brianna	Allard	Program Coordinator	South Central WI AHEC
Holly	Keddington	PA Student	UW Madison
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Caitlyn	Mowatt	Executive Director	WI Northern Highlands AHEC
Jill	Niemczyk	Executive Director	Northeast WI AHEC
Christina	Patrin	Education Consultant	Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Joanne	Sandvick	Project Manager	La Crosse Medical Science Consortium
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\*Work Group Lead

### STRENGTHENING OUR PHYSICIAN PATHWAYS

Name		Title	Organization
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Carl	Chan	Professor, Dept. of Psychiatry	MCW
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\*Work Group Lead

**STRENGTHENING OUR NURSING PATHWAYS**

Name		Title	Organization
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Meghan	Liebzeit	Associate Professor	Bellin College
Beth	Markham	WNA President, Nursing Director	WNA, Mount Mary College of Nursing
Tom	Veeseer	Interim President	Froedtert Holy Family Memorial
Linda	Young	Dean/Professor	UW Eau Claire

\*Work Group Lead

**RETAINING HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS**

Name		Title	Organization
Amy	Hermes	CNO	Stoughton Health
Jessie	Pondell	Manager of Talent Strategy	Prevea Health
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Hannah	Young	Director of Clinics	Prairie Ridge Health
Ann	Zenk	VP Workforce	WHA

**CARE REDESIGN**

Name		Title	Organization
Tim	Bartholow MD*	Board Chair	WISHIN
Hessam	Bavafa	Associate Professor	UW School of Business
John	Beasley MD*	Professor Emeritus - UWFM	UWSMPH
Tina	Bettin	APNP Family Medicine	ThedaCare
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Matt	Gigot	WISHIN Staff	WISHIN
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\*Work Group Co-Leads

## BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

In 2021, WCMEW published “**THE FUTURE OF WISCONSIN’S HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE**”, which provided a review of Wisconsin’s healthcare workforce across a broad spectrum of professionals. The report included projections of supply and demand of workers in 2035 and concluded that an overall shortage of 19% was likely unless aggressive actions were taken. The chart below provides a summary of the workforce deficit. A link to the full report can be found at [www.wcmew.org](http://www.wcmew.org) under “[reports](#)”.

Summary Wisconsin Healthcare Workforce Deficit	Total FTEs
<b>SUPPLY</b>	
Projected supply, 2035	98,613
Total Change, 2020-2035	-2,078
% change, 2020-2035	-2%
<b>DEMAND</b>	
Projected demand, 2035	124,055
Total change, 2020-2035	23,171
% change, 2020-2035	19%
<b>NET</b>	
Supply minus Demand	-25,442

## STRATEGIC PLAN

The WCMEW Advisory Council asked staff to prepare a strategic plan to address the challenges outlined in the report. Staff divided the task into five areas and created work groups for each area, as shown below:



In all, nearly 50 individuals—representing healthcare providers, educational institutions, clinical training programs, state government, and trade and professional organizations—volunteered their time on the work groups. They are recognized in the acknowledgement section above.

Each group met three or four times: starting with discussing their charge followed by an extended brainstorming session on the root causes of the problems related to their area, and with suggested solutions. In each subsequent meeting, the groups narrowed down the causes/solutions or categorized them into smaller groups. In the end, they each arrived at a specific set of recommendations, together with strategies to pursue.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR EACH WORKGROUP'S TOPIC AREA

In this section, we provide detailed recommendations and strategies to address each part of the problem. These plans are each meant to be a “call to action” and will be distributed to a wide audience of health providers, schools and programs, policy makers, and Wisconsin citizens in general.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW UP

In addressing the question of how recommendations and strategies are implemented, it is important to recall a section of WCMEW's mission: specifically, ***“The WCMEW Council Seeks to Find Common Ground on the Changes We Believe Need to Be Promoted, and Looks to Council Member Organizations to Realize That Vision”***. For purposes of implementing the plan, we need to keep in mind that WCMEW's role is one of researching workforce issues, convening groups to discuss, and promoting the recommendations we have made. We therefore will make clear what we think WCMEW can directly address, and what is left to our partners and others. In order to track progress towards our goals, we assign **Key Performance Indicators** (KPI) to each strategy. We will continue to monitor how well we are meeting KPIs and adjust our plans accordingly.

## PROMOTING HEALTHCARE CAREERS

The charge to this work group was to “focus on promoting and recruiting individuals into healthcare careers. By focusing on the “front end” of the healthcare career pathway, we can maximize the human resources we have in Wisconsin.” The work group, led by Liz Bush, Director, Wisconsin Area Health Education Councils, met 5 times to narrow in on major areas of emphasis. The process started with a brainstorming session, where member suggested causes and proposed solutions. Over the next meetings, the work group arrived at a set of recommendations and strategies intended to increase the number of young learners exploring and entering healthcare careers. The group decided to focus on the Department of Public Instruction’s “Patient Care Career Pathways”, as shown below:

<b>Recommendation/Strategy</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Recommendation #1: Build statewide awareness of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction’s (DPI) Direct Patient Care Career Pathway within Wisconsin public, private and homeschool high schools. See link <a href="#">here</a>.</b>			
Strategy #1: Create and implement a comprehensive communication plan leveraging existing groups and WCMEW to raise statewide awareness of Direct Patient Care Career Pathway.	See below		
Strategy #2: Support DPI's efforts to raise awareness with industry partners and schools (e.g., presenting at WI conferences, homeschool groups, etc.).	Plan developed and implemented with specific KPIs identified.	2024, 2025	WCMEW
Strategy #3: Support DPI’s efforts to collect and disseminate success stories of high schools and industry employers who’ve partnered to implement the Direct Patient Care Career Pathway.	Collect at least 3 success stories and share through WCMEW and partner news channels.	2024, 2025	WCMEW
<b>Recommendation #2: Increase adoption of the Direct Patient Care Career Pathway.</b>			
Strategy #1: Support DPI’s efforts to collect and disseminate current data on Direct Patient Care Career Pathway adoption towards identifying gaps and developing expansion goals.	WCMEW gathers data on adoption by school district to establish baseline and geographic distribution. WCMEW develops growth metrics with DPI.	2024	WCMEW and DPI partners
Strategy #2: Identify and recruit local champions to serve on Regional Collaboratives and support Direct Patient Care Career Pathway adoption advocacy.	WCMEW gathers data on current composition of Regional Collaboratives.	2024, 2025	WCMEW and DPI partners

	WCMEW identifies and aims to recruit candidates.		
Strategy #3: Develop advocacy tools for local champions to engage in outreach to their local high schools to encourage Direct Patient Care Career Pathway adoption.	See below		
Strategy #4: Support DPI's efforts to build employer and industry partner knowledge and understanding of Career Based Learning Experiences (CBLEs) and Work Based Learning (WBL) and why they should engage in this work through the Direct Patient Care Career Pathway.	WCMEW develops outreach tools (e.g. one-pager, infographic, etc.) with DPI on the Direct Patient Care Pathway and makes widely available.	2025	WCMEW and DPI partners
<b>Recommendation #3: Support DPI's ongoing revision and enhancement of the Direct Patient Care Career Pathway.</b>			
Strategy #1: Recruit representatives from local academic institutions and employers to serve on Regional Collaboratives to build connections.	WCMEW gathers data on current composition of Regional Collaboratives. WCMEW identifies and aims to recruit candidates.	2024, 2025	WCMEW and DPI partners
Strategy #2: Develop and support implementation of a method for adding health career exploration opportunities to the appropriate level (statewide, regional, local) list on the Direct Patient Care Career Pathway.	WI AHEC develops a process for and supports implementation of with DPI.	2024, 2025	WI AHEC and DPI partners

## STRENGTHENING OUR PHYSICIAN PATHWAYS

This group's charge was to *"focus on ways to increase investment in our education and training pathways involving physicians. Wisconsin's education and training infrastructure for physicians must be expanded and strengthened if we are to avoid a significant shortage in the future."*

The work group was led by Lisa Dodson, MD, Dean, Medical College of Wisconsin North Central Campus. It followed the same process as the other groups, starting with brainstorming problems and solutions, and moving on to priority areas. Its recommendations are shown below.

<b>Recommendation/Strategy</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Recommendation #1</b> Focus on attracting and retaining physicians who will practice in Wisconsin.			
Strategy 1: Expand our community-based undergrad and GME programs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop scorecard (including historical data)</li> <li>2. Develop targets with linkages</li> </ol>	Fall 2023	MCW, UW, WiNC, other GME, RPRAP
Strategy 2: Promote these programs at schools, communities, and businesses.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Launch "Meet your next doctor" program</li> <li>2. Launch "Doctor means teacher" program</li> </ol>	Spring 2024	WCMEW, WMS
Strategy 3: Encourage more high school students to explore medical careers.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disseminate existing materials and programs</li> <li>2. Enhance HOSA, encourage new affiliations</li> </ol>	Link to promote group	HOSA, AHEC
<b>Recommendation #2:</b> Enhance collaboration between schools, programs, and health systems.			
Strategy 1: Improve health system partnerships in education and training	Convene health systems, schools and programs to exchange ideas and develop best practices	Spring 2024	Health education programs, health systems
Strategy 2: Disseminate best practices in health systems recruitment and onboarding to stakeholders statewide	Develop materials linking precepting to recruitment, satisfaction and retention	Spring-Summer 2024	WCMEW with academic partners

<p>Strategy 3: Enhance ability for preceptors to provide training</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop incentives, such as payment and production credits.</li> <li>2. Create an information hub for health systems, preceptors, and schools that provides data on preceptor openings, curriculum, and best practices.</li> <li>3. Legislative advocacy</li> </ol>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>WMS, WHA, WCMEW, specialty societies</p>
<p>Strategy 4: Ensure good student experiences in community settings</p>	<p>Disseminate best practices</p>	<p>Fall 2024</p>	<p>MCW (Regional campuses), UW (WARM),</p>
	<p>Survey students and preceptors regarding experiences</p>		

## STRENGTHENING OUR NURSING PATHWAYS

The charge for this groups was very similar to that of the physician group, but with a focus on nursing: *focus on ways to increase investment in our education and training pathways involving nursing.*

*Wisconsin’s education and training infrastructure for physicians must be expanded and strengthened if we are to avoid a significant shortage in the future.”* After several meetings, the group, led by Gina Dennik-Champion, RN, Executive Director, Wisconsin Nurses Association, arrived at the following findings, recommendations, and strategies.

<b>Recommendation/Strategy</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Recommendation #1:</b> Increase focus on education and training resources.			
Strategy 1: Provide incentives for nurses to become educators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. 75% of 2023-24 Wisconsin Nurse Educator Program (WNEP-2) Loan Forgiveness Funding will be awarded.</li> <li>B. Some graduates of the WNEP- 1 will begin their “teach back”.</li> <li>C. Convene a committee a stakeholders to create a permanent solution to resolve the nurse educator shortage.</li> </ul>	July 2024 September 2024	WCMEW and key partners
Strategy 2: Promote availability of clinical sites to support the educational preparation of Wisconsin’s future nursing workforce.	Sponsor meetings between nursing education programs and health care organizations/agencies to identify the barriers and solutions to providing clinical educational experiences for nursing students.	December 2024	WCMEW and key partners
Strategy 3: Increase compensation for nurse educators and funding to nursing schools.	Develop a consensus statement that demonstrates the disparities and barriers to recruiting and retaining an adequate supply of nurse educators with recommendations/strategies to rectify the identified gaps.	June 2024	WCMEW and key partners
Strategy 4: Provide incentives for nurses to become preceptors or clinical education, such as compensation, tax credit, and professional development.	Launch a career ladder model that incentivizes and promotes prepared clinical nursing staff to function as preceptors to nursing students.	July 2024	WCMEW and key partners
Strategy 5: Increase resources and/or improve strategies to expand integration of clinical staff as adjunct faculty.	Demonstrate successful pilot partnership models that utilize clinical nursing staff as adjunct faculty.	December 2024	WCMEW and key partners

Strategy 6: Support utilization of best generational teaching/learning practices in their care patients/clients changing clinical needs.	Develop a statewide tool of evidence-based best practices for educating nurses in Wisconsin.	December 2024	WCMEW and key partners
Strategy 7: Promote investment in infrastructure that supports simulation across Wisconsin.	A. Create a regional nursing inventory of simulation facilities and resources. B. Assess opportunities for interprofessional learning by region.	December 2024	WCMEW and key partners
<b>Recommendation #2: Enhance integration of new nurse staff; expand career ladder opportunities.</b>			
Strategy 1: Create programming for transitioning from school to nursing practice.	Pilot best-practice model (one per region), that support on-boarding of new nursing graduates, pre-licensed and advanced practice, report results including retention rates of the new employees	December 2024	WCMEW and key partners
Strategy 2: Encourage and promote a greater number of career ladder opportunities.	A. Support and recognize the value of nurses serving as preceptors for nursing students and staff nurses. B. Identify and report best-practices for nursing career ladders that focus on the categories related to improving practice outcomes, professional development and leadership, reporting retention rates and incentives utilized. C. Create incentives to increase the number of nurse preceptors available in all clinical settings that include career ladder, professional development opportunities and/or tax credits.	December 2024	WCMEW and key partners
Strategy 3: Expand the number of community collaborations by creative new grant programs.	Create a grant opportunity that focuses on community collaborations, strengthening public and population health practices.	December 2024	WCMEW and key partners
Strategy 4: Create new workforce development grants for healthcare organizations and educational institutions partnerships.	A. Create a grant that pilots partnership models between healthcare organizations and educational institutions that	December 2024	WCMEW and key partners

	<p>increase the supply of the nursing workforce.</p> <p>B. Explore partnership models that foster retention of nurses and nurse educators that result in building capacity for both entities.</p>		
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## RETAINING HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

This work group focused on: *“improving work environments by researching causes of workforce dissatisfaction and current efforts to reduce them by Identifying and disseminate best practices, such as methods to identify burnout, promoting flexible work models, and reducing burdens.”*

Recommendations and strategies are shown below.

<b>Recommendation/ strategy</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Recommendation #1</b> Reduce Burnout and Moral Injury			
Strategy 1: Accelerate team-based care by WCMEW convening stakeholders and identifying and disseminating best practices.	WCMEW gathers data and convenes Summit	2024	WCMEW and Partners
Strategy 2: Increase prevalence of flexible work models.	50% of health systems incorporate flexible models.	2025	WCMEW and Partners
Strategy 3: Reduce burden by making better use of technology and eliminating unnecessary steps.	Convene conferences to share most successful strategies for reducing administrative waste; provide compendium of literature on effective methods of streamlining care processes.	Annually starting in 2024	WCMEW and Partners
<b>Recommendation #2:</b> Strengthen organizational/worker relationships.			
Strategy 1: Create/expand effective onboarding models.	Disseminate best practices.	2024	WCMEW and Partners
Strategy 2: Provide growth and educational opportunities by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporating workforce development grants in organizations</li> <li>Involving students more in providing care</li> <li>Recruiting retirement age workers as resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convene conferences to share most successful strategies.</li> <li>Create an information hub for health systems and schools that provides data on best practices.</li> <li>Legislative advocacy</li> </ul>	2024	WCMEW and Partners

## REDESIGNING CARE DELIVERY

The fifth work group’s mission was to: *“arrive at recommendations regarding redesigning patient care in order to make more efficient use of our healthcare workforce.”* In creating the other work groups, we recognized that their efforts would not be sufficient alone in addressing future shortages. Therefore, some attention needed to be focused on changing how care delivery would have to change as well.

Led by Drs. Tim Bartholow and John Beasley, the group arrived at the following recommendations and strategies:

<i>Recommendation/Strategy</i>	<i>Key Performance Indicators</i>	<i>Timing</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
<b>Recommendation #1: Re-imagine care delivery</b>			
Strategy 1: Move care closer to the patient – using public places, travel to patient homes, making transportation more available, hospital-at-home care, and better-equipped family care givers.	Convene conferences highlighting best practices. Publish in newsletters.	Annually, monthly starting in 2024	WCMEW and partners
Strategy 2: Leverage the use of technology in enhancing and maximizing the workforce.	Convene conferences highlighting best practices. Publish in newsletters.	Annually, monthly starting in 2024	WCMEW and partners
Strategy 3: Reduce administrative burden.	Convene conferences to share most successful strategies for reducing administrative waste; provide compendium of literature on effective methods of streamlining care processes.	Annually starting in 2024	WCMEW and partners
<b>Recommendation #2: Improve care models</b>			

<b>Strategy 1: Accelerate use of team-based/interprofessional care.</b>	Re-convene WCMEW Care Delivery Task Force. Convene conferences highlighting best practices.	Annually starting in 2024	WCMEW and partners
<b>Strategy 2: Optimize coordination between sites of care, identify ways to improve referral management, and enhance relationships and collaboration.</b>	Re-convene WCMEW Care Delivery Task Force. Convene conferences highlighting best practices.	Annually starting in 2024	WCMEW and partners

## NEXT STEPS

Our first effort will be to focus on 2024 priorities, package them into cohesive sets of activities, and form groups that will work on them. Each “package” of activities represents a cross-cutting strategy as opposed to the original 5 work group areas. Those activity groupings will be:

- *Enhancing student engagement and promoting healthcare careers.* This group will use the DPI Direct Patient Career Pathways program to focus on promoting healthcare careers to middle- and high-school students. Main activities will include building statewide awareness and increasing the adoption of the Pathways.
- *Improving and expanding clinical training/education coordination, partnerships between schools and sites.* The work of this group will combine some of the recommendations and strategies from several of the original groups, but concentrating on commonalities that relate to coordination of clinical training and education, and onboarding of newly hired workers.
- *Communication and Convening.* This group will be responsible for gathering information regarding success stories, best practices, and successful policy initiatives. The information will be distributed in the WCMEW newsletter, as presentations at the annual Summit, and other communication opportunities.