

Health Workforce Council Strategic Priority Areas Discussion

September 21, 2023





June 2023 Port Angeles Meeting

Overview of the June meeting

- Review of original 2002 Health Workforce Strategic Plan and implementation of goals/strategies/policy recommendations
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) activity with all attendees to learn more about our current situation in the Council and the larger policy environment
- Following the SWOT activity, all attendees were able to vote on their first and second topic areas from the 11 pre-generated topics based on the March Council meeting, feedback sessions, and interviews, then join in small group discussions on the top five topics



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SWOT Analysis: Select Strengths of the Council

- The Council has a charge in statute to make recommendations to policymakers about how to ensure an adequate supply of healthcare personnel that allows for quality, accessible healthcare in the state.
- The Council can change focus areas within its statutory charge to address changing areas of need or new priorities.
- The Council has access to many groups via members, experts, and interested parties.
- The Council has access to the Legislature as a trusted voice and staff can advocate for Council recommendations.



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SWOT Analysis: Select Weaknesses of the Council

- Significant turnover of Council staff, members and policymakers means history and momentum on a topic are easily lost.
- Council members can have competing interests that lead to the Council avoiding conversations/recommendations in some topics.
- There are no current mission/vision/values determined for the Council.
- The Council has no authority for implementation on its recommendations.



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SWOT Analysis: Select Opportunities for the Council

- Pandemic and post-pandemic period have put health workforce topics in a spotlight.
- Severity of challenges have created a generational opportunity to reconsider longstanding models/systems across the health professional education and care delivery system.

SWOT Analysis: Select Threats for the Council

- A perception that large employers “own” the workforce policy discussions.
- With limited information available on the health workforce, policy solutions may be driven by compelling stories/anecdotes rather than data.



Health Workforce Data for Planning/Policy

- The Council can improve the state of health workforce data by bringing people together to identify and prioritize workforce search areas, advocate for objective data collection/analysis and given credible, data driven insights to address workforce challenges.
- Council work towards the creation of a health workforce data organization that would host a comprehensive data catalog that serves as a centralized location for researchers, organizations, and state agencies to learn about available health workforce data.
- This resource would include clear instructions on how to access the data and guidelines on proper use, including insights into connecting data.

(Short excerpt from Health Workforce Council June 22 meeting notes.)



Rural Health Workforce Strategies

- Rural communities face healthcare workforce challenges that are different from those faced by urban communities. Strategies to address these challenges must be tailored to the unique needs of rural areas.
- The Council should create a rural-focused subgroup or assist with resourcing another agency with rural health care workforce as a focus. This group will act as a trusted voice and advocate for the specific needs of rural communities and drive targeted rural initiatives.

(Short excerpt from Health Workforce Council June 22 meeting notes.)



Increase Collaboration

- The Council can evolve towards more a dynamic and integrated approach to its work, where collaboration and equitable representation serve as fundamental operating principles guiding our actions.
- Increasing collaboration would ensure that the Council hears diverse perspectives, allow stakeholders to communicate and engage in decision-making processes on an equal footing, and would lead to a shared agenda that reflects the collective interests and priorities of all Health Workforce Council members.

(Short excerpt from Health Workforce Council June 22 meeting notes.)



Clarify Career Pathways

- The Council can act as a cross-sector convener and advocate for expanded and latticed health career pathways.
- Council members and stakeholders can envision a clear system where students can begin meaningful career progress in high school and smoothly transition into postsecondary systems and the workforce.
- Opportunities must be expanded to include both traditional higher education as well as earn-as-you-learn models to allow individuals to support their families and minimize educational debt.

(Short excerpt from Health Workforce Council June 22 meeting notes.)



Simplify the Regulatory Environment

- Washington policymakers and agencies seek to balance access to care, patient safety, quality assurance, fiscal responsibility, and competition in the healthcare regulatory and payment environment. However, various regulatory structures do not always harmonize well.
- The Council could act as a neutral convener for these important discussions and explore reviews of laws or rules that limit individuals' ability to move between different healthcare settings or professions.

(Short excerpt from Health Workforce Council June 22 meeting notes.)



Next Steps

- Council members and their delegates will receive a rank-order survey with summaries of the five areas next week along with the results of the non-binding votes taken by attendees today.
- Once votes have been returned, Council staff can move forward with announcing the first two focus areas, begin subcommittee meeting planning, charter development and outreach.
- Council will receive updates on subcommittee progress during quarterly meetings.

Questions?

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