

Delaware Healthcare Commission Workforce Subcommittee

Richard J. Geisenberger and Nicholas A. Moriello, R.H.U.

As co-chairs of the Workforce Subcommittee of the Delaware Healthcare Commission, we are pleased to welcome you to the first “State of the Healthcare Workforce in Delaware: Action and Opportunity” Report.

This report focuses on select components of the healthcare workforce, including primary care, dentistry, behavioral health, and others. It seeks a broader view of the entire healthcare sector, composed of physicians, dentists, nurses, physician assistants, the allied therapies, dental hygienists, and a vast ecosystem of providers.

We acknowledge and appreciate the work of others in this space. Work on this initiative was started by the Delaware Academy of Medicine / Delaware Public Health Association (Academy/DPHA) and the Delaware Health Sciences Alliance (DHSA) long before the COVID-19 pandemic changed our world, and the landscape of healthcare. As the reader knows, the pandemic directly and profoundly impacted both healthcare systems and individual providers.

Before the pandemic, there were tectonic workforce and demographic challenges facing almost every major industry in our State and our nation: the aging of our population, the related increase in the incidence and burden of chronic disease, and the concurrent aging of the healthcare workforce. And the financial impact is clear: the healthcare industry is rapidly approaching one-fifth of the United States Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The contents of this report are based upon an unprecedented collaboration between multiple components of State government including the Delaware Healthcare Commission, the Division of Professional Regulation, the Delaware Institute for Medical Education and Research (DIMER), the Division of Public Health Primary Care Office, and the Departments of Finance and Labor. They are joined by the Academy/DPHA, DHSA, and the Delaware Health Information Network, and many other organizations playing essential smaller roles.

This public-private partnership has gathered data on the healthcare workforce and analyzed the needs—both current and future—of the State of Delaware. The strategies within this report are based on hard data and analysis and recommend support for policies that will strengthen the healthcare workforce for years to come.

During the past two-years of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have experienced stress and crisis. We now have an extraordinary, federally-funded opportunity to take meaningful action to address the opportunities in our healthcare sector for employment throughout the workforce, as well as novel models (including telehealth and nurse-led health clinics) leading the way.

Copyright (c) 2022 Delaware Academy of Medicine / Delaware Public Health Association.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>) which permits unrestricted non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.