



Minutes

Eastern Connecticut Healthcare Partnership *October 2023 Partnership Meeting*

Friday, October 13, 2023 – 8:30am – 11:30am
Three Rivers Community College, 574 New London Turnpike, Norwich

Industry Partners Present: Courtney Arnold, Michelle Bedingfield (Apple Rehab); Diane Manning, Gina Donovan (United Services); Carrie Dyer (Reliance Health); Melissa Meyers (Generations Family Health Center); Billy Nelson (Fairview Healthcare Center), Damian Rickard (American Professional Education Services); Kaitlin Bolster Carley Warzecha, Melissa Riley (Hartford Healthcare); Caleb Roseme (Assured Quality Homecare); Barry Slotnick, Steve Vera (Wachusett Healthcare); Stacy Lawton (SCADD).

Support Partners Present: Paul Whitescarver, Joe Violette (SeCTer); Patricia Meyer, Erin Sullivan (CT State); Carol Labelle, Michael Nogelo, David Allard, Linda Riquier (EWIB); Malia Sieve (ReadyCT); Angela Adams (GNACC); Elle Goslin (NE CT Chamber); Anthony Dejesus, Karl Besel (Univ. St. Joseph); David Bechtel, Mark Nickel (CrossSector)

Welcome:

Paul Whitescarver greeted the group on behalf of the Convening team and opened the meeting. Paul introduced CT State Three Rivers, Dean of Students and Faculty, Kem Barfield who welcomed the group to the Three Rivers Campus.

Workforce Development Presentation – ([Presentation Linked Here](#)):

Michael Nogelo, President/CEO, Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board (EWIB), presented on the regional workforce development strategy supporting the Healthcare industry. The presentation discussed the history of convening healthcare employers in the region as one of two priority industries (manufacturing being the other). He shared that the successful Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI) influenced other regional and statewide workforce development initiatives including the Healthcare Pipeline (HPI), Youth Healthcare Pipeline (YHPI), and CareerConneCT. Michael also highlighted the plan for continued support and coordination of the Eastern CT Healthcare Partnership, using funding from the Strengthening Sectoral Partnership Initiative (SSPI) Good Jobs Challenge award.

Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Chief Workforce Officer, CT Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS), outlined the OWS strategic blueprint and the statewide workforce development initiatives. OWS is focused on responding to industry needs as communicated through regional sector partnerships throughout the state. Kelli highlighted three pillars of the OWS workforce development strategy (1) career pathways; (2) sector-based training; and (3) a business led agenda. These pillars rest on a foundation of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Access & Data.

The OWS recognizes that there are barriers to entering the workforce such as: lack of practical workforce experience; a skills mismatch between employers and jobseekers and talent attraction and retention for young people. Solutions include career pathway dual-credit opportunities, expanding work-based learning opportunities, emphasizing skills-based hiring practices, and expansion of nursing programs (3 new institutions coming online)

Career ConneCT, launched in January 2023 is supported by \$70M in state ARPA grants: 5 Workforce Investment Boards, and 7 Community-Based Organizations. The goal is to train and place: 6,000 unemployed and underemployed individuals in good jobs by June 2025.

State of the Partnership:

Patricia Meyer, Director of Workforce Development, CT State – QV, gave an update on the efforts of the partnership since the January 2023 launch. This included early wins of a Legislative breakfast, Healthcare Pipeline Webinar, “Inspire & Hire” Career Expo, and, most notably, a partnership with University of St. Joseph to expand Master of Social Work programming in Eastern, CT. The group has distributed two newsletters and held numerous action team meetings for the three priority groups: (1) Education, Training, Career Attraction, (2) Policy, (3) Quality of Life for employees.

Action Team Breakouts:

The three action teams met for facilitated discussions focused on a review of priority areas, re-engagement, and setting the agenda for the work ahead for action team. Each group reviewed current and future objectives and established a plan for the work ahead. Minutes from each action team breakout meeting will be distributed to the members of each team. For those who are not connected with an action team, please contact David Allard (allardd@ewib.org) to be added to an action team.

As the breakouts concluded, spokespersons from each action team reported on the updated priorities and set a timeline for follow-up. A summary of the reports is included here:

Healthcare Education, Attraction & Training (HEAT) Action team

Diane Manning, United Services:

- Create sustainable process to connect with schools.
- Be part of the curriculum starting in middle school.
- Build relationships with, and provide education to, Career Counselors/Education staff.
- Create shared calendar – for employers AND for schools (i.e., career fair events, list which employers are willing to provide internships, job shadowing, etc.
- Invite career advisors/teachers to do externships, attend training sessions AT healthcare provider facilities.
- Concentrate on CNA position as primary critical need in the healthcare industry. Continued focus on other areas of need such as mental/behavioral health.

Childcare (Formerly Quality of Life) Action Team:

David Allard, EWIB

- Focus exclusively on childcare related matters in the short-term. Defer other quality of life matters such as housing or licensing/credentialing and compensation for childcare providers to the policy group. SeCTer will continue to promote structure/systemic change solutions.
- Adjust the name of the Action Team to reflect its narrower scope of focus. This may also attract additional participants, partners, and even leaders involved in initiatives to expand early childhood and childcare options.
- Identify action items that are practical and achievable in the short-term and represent tangible solutions – including pilots or demonstration projects or events/resources designed to share best practices.
- Make a more intentional effort to understand the business case for how childcare affects employee recruitment and retention and the threshold where it may make sense for an employer to consider alternative solutions (vs. open positions and/or paying overtime).

Policy Action Team:

Steve Vera, Wachusett Healthcare

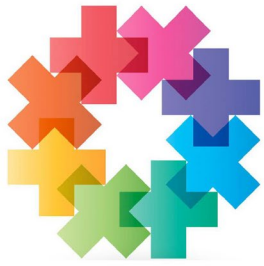
- Establish a 45-day schedule to create/finalize “pillars” for the next legislative session which is a short session.

- Finalize key pillars (Transportation / Housing)
- Be prepared with an ask and do not lead with a request for funding.
- Meet biweekly by December 1st to prepare strategy.

Wrap Up & Adjournment:

Patricia Meyer shared reminders about upcoming events (Co-chair meeting, 10/26; Healthcare Career Expo 11/3) and closed the meeting.

Diane Manning addressed the group to thank the presenters and employers for their participation and shared a special thank you to Patricia Meyer who announced she was leaving the Partnership due to a career change.



Eastern Connecticut Healthcare Partnership






























30+ Employers



14,000 Employees



40+ Towns

Sector	Stakeholders
Health Systems and Emergency Services	   
Nursing Homes and Rehabilitation	          
Home Care	  
Community Health	   
Behavioral Health	    
Support Partners	