



Healthcare Workforce Development Plan Update October 25, 2011

On September 28, 2010 the AWIB, in partnership with the Employment Security Division, was awarded a planning grant in the amount of \$150,000 as part of the State Health Care Workforce Development grant program authorized by the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), acting through the Administrator of the Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA). The grant ended on September 30, 2011 with the executive summary and final report being submitted on September 22, 2011 (report was due September 24, 2011). The final financial closeout is due by December 30, 2011.

The following is a brief summary of the findings for each benchmark outlined in the grant.

Analysis of State labor market information in order to create health care career pathways

Alaska is in the unique position to identify potential career pathways for students, adults and dislocated workers. Employers in Alaska are required to report the occupations of their employees on their Unemployment Insurance records, giving Alaska a unique opportunity to track the movements of workers from occupation to occupation over time through The Alaska Career Ladder. The career ladder is based on "real world" data analysis of Alaska's Occupational Data Base (ODB). The Career Ladder is part of the Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS), which contains comprehensive information on occupations, links to training programs and other related material to provide guidance to Alaskans looking for career pathways.

Identification of current and projected high demand health care occupations

The coalition assessed occupations priorities for Alaska utilizing data and information from a variety of sources, including the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) ten-year employment projections, the 2007 and 2009 vacancy studies conducted by the Alaska Center for rural Health of the University of Alaska, licensure and other studies; by the Department of Health and Social Services, and analyses by other state, federal and professional organizations.

Identification of existing Federal, state, and private resources to recruit, educate or train, and retain a skilled health care workforce and strengthen partnerships.

All information gathered was for FY 2010, using a variety of years that are commonly in use for both private, state and federal entities. Information from the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), State Training Employment Program (STEP) and the University of Alaska System was collected. A

survey on health industry investments was conducted with the Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association (ASHNA) and the Alaska Primary Care Association (ACPA) membership.

Description of the academic and health care industry skill standards

Skill standards used by the State of Alaska's Department of Education and Early Childhood for high school graduation, a program of study for health occupations developed by the Mat-Su School District, a review of the standards for the University of Alaska Anchorage and the licensure requirements for high-priority occupations were reviewed.

There has been an increased focus on the skills needed for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math and how those skills relate to the upcoming demands in the workforce as a whole. Recent efforts to coordinate through the Alaska Health Workforce Coalition resulted in an initiative to focus on the capacity building needed to adequately prepare young people for health careers. The effort focuses on three elements that are inter-related and supportive of each other: 1) Ensuring a strong and steady focus in both rural and urban schools on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) as a key skill set needed for the future. 2) Advancing the Alaska's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Plan, developed and launched in 2010, with the sustained effort and industry involvement needed to succeed. 3) Working with the myriad of partners involved in furthering a "Program of Study" (PoS) with an emphasis on health education and career success for more Alaskan youth. A group, the Health CTE Program of Study Task Force, is comprised of educators and employers and will be addressing adequate career preparation and standards for health careers.

Description of the state secondary and postsecondary education and training policies, models and practices for the health care sector

The five efforts that highlight an adequate description of the state secondary and postsecondary education and training policies, models and practices for the health care sector include the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's (DOLWD) Healthcare Career Guide position at the Anchorage Youth Job Center, Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Alaska Technical Institute (AVTEC), Health Career Education programs at Anchorage School District and the Mat-Su School District, Alaska's Area Health Education Center, and the University of Alaska.

Identification of Federal or State policies that act as barriers for developing a coherent and comprehensive health care workforce development strategy and a plan to resolve those barriers.

In the strategies discussed to meet the overarching goals contained in the 2010 Health Workforce Plan, issues emerged that act as barriers for developing a coherent and comprehensive health workforce development strategy. These include: 1) loan repayment and incentive programs, 2) apprenticeships for direct care workers, 3) regulatory processes such as professional licensing and the State of Alaska's Background Check Program and 4) data collection and reporting of health workforce issues. There are specific objectives associated with each one of these four areas which are detailed in the Final Program Report.

At this time there are no proposed implementation grants from HRSA. The data gathered in the Healthcare Workforce Planning Grant will be used by the Alaska Health Workforce Coalition in implementing the Action Agenda 2012 – 2015.