

**Vermont State Workforce Development Board**

Health Care Committee - Meeting Minutes

September 16th, 2022

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Committee Members in Attendance**: Ena Backus, Lisa Fox, Anne Bilodeau, Baron Glassgow, Jessa Barnard, Jill Olson, Elizabeth Cote, Rebecca Kapsalis, Stephanie Pagliuca, Brian Kerns

**Guests in Attendance**: Abby Rhim, Mary Anne Sheahan, Wendy Trafton, Mary Kate Mohlman, Laura Wreschnig, Betsy Hassan, Jessica Wood

Ena Backus began the meeting with brief introductions from each of the committee members.

General Update on Act 183 Implementation

Ena provided a high-level overview of Act 183 (formerly S.11), noting that many of the initiatives align directly with the Health Care Workforce Development Strategic Plan. She also noted that while the funding source allocated for this programming is through the Fiscal Recovery Fund, the group must work within federal funding parameters while balancing legislative intent. Lastly, she noted that the Agency of Human Services will likely need help administering these programs.

Update on Premium Pay Programming/Retention Grants

Wendy Trafton highlighted the $60M in funding, appropriated through Act 183, which provides funding for eligible providers for workforce recruitment and retention programs. Initial payments began in the beginning of June 2022. So far, they have awarded $32.4 million to 132 eligible employers. She noted that reconciliation data will be collected to see impacts on vacancy rates over time. Additionally, there will be a second round of funding for health care and social service provider types. She then welcomed feedback from the group.

Ena Backus noted that she would follow up with the group regarding a hard deadline for feedback. Additionally, she suggested that the group meet more frequently (monthly) to gather feedback on programs that are in motion.

Jill Olson noted that actual members of associations might need to come into direct contact with the Advisory Group for feedback. It would be more efficient.

Ena Backus agreed with Jill. She then highlighted that the Agency of Human Services might hire a workforce strategic plan development coordinator to assist in gathering feedback.

Discussion of Feedback on Apprenticeship Grant Program

Wendy Trafton highlighted the $2.5M in funding, appropriated through Act 183, which provides funding for grants to health care employers to establish or expand partnerships with Vermont nursing schools to create nursing pipelines or apprenticeship programs or both. She noted that she has been working with the Agency of Administration on how to use funds to best fulfill legislative intent. This includes enhancement of health care capacity to mitigate and prevent COVID-19 through upskilling. She noted that the Agency of Human Services has already received some feedback, both positive and constructive.

Ena Backus stressed understanding the reach of the apprenticeship program. This means that regarding cost, the program is unable to address housing, childcare, food, family necessities, etc. She did note that in the future, she envisions a program that is flexible enough to address each employer’s needs, individually. Until then, she noted that overall workforce development issues should still be highlighted within this group, and shared with committee members, like the Vermont State Workforce Development Board staff, in attendance.

Lisa Fox noted that her biggest loss of students is due to food insecurity, living costs or childcare. She suggested utilizing funding for partnerships, across facilities and agencies, to provide support structures for students.

Elizabeth Cote asked for clarification regarding capacity of programs. She shared that with Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Program at UVM, while they can create interest around nursing programs, there is not an increase in application spots, therefore things are becoming more competitive but there isn’t an increase in nurses in the end.

Lisa Fox noted that there is capacity in the southern part of Vermont. She also noted that with these programs, it is dependent on the facility that programs work with.

Betsy Hassan highlighted the importance of understanding what different programs offer and matching participants with the right program for best success.

Request for Recommendations for Members of the Preceptorship Working Group

Ena Backus noted that there needs to be a working group that convenes to look at the capacity of the education system for additional learners. This will include discussing a statewide preceptorship model. She will send a follow up email on this topic.