



**Delaware Health Care Commission
(DHCC) Health Workforce
Subcommittee Meeting**

December 11, 2024
9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Meeting Attendance

Subcommittee Members Present

- Dr. Kathy Matt, University of Delaware, Co-Chair
- Secretary Rick Geisenberger, Department of Finance, Co-Chair
- Nichole Moxley, Division of Public Health
- Timothy Gibbs, Delaware Academy of Medicine/Delaware Public Health Association (DAM/DPHA)
- Dr. Nicholas Conte, Bureau of Oral Health and Dental Services
- Mark Thompson, Medical Society of Delaware
- Cheryl Heiks, Delaware Health Care Facilities Association
- Maggie Norris-Bent, Westside Family Healthcare
- Gwendolyn Scott-Jones, Delaware State University
- Shauna Slaughter, Division of Professional Regulation
- Dr. Avani Virani, Highmark

Delaware Health Care Commission (DHCC) Staff Present

- Susan Walters

Subcommittee Members Not Present

- Brian Frazee, Delaware Healthcare Association
- Elisabeth Massa, Delaware Health Care Commission
- Christopher Otto, Delaware Nurses Association
- Mike Quaranta, Delaware Chamber of Commerce

Public Attendance

- Christina Bryan, Delaware Healthcare Association
- Eschalla Clarke, Division of Public Health
- Bria Greenlee, Delaware Healthcare Association
- Lisa Gruss, Medical Society of Delaware
- Ceil Tilney, League of Women Voters

Summary of Delaware Healthcare Commission Meeting – December 11, 2024

These notes summarize the key points discussed during the meeting, covering announcements, the approval of minutes, important topics of workforce development, and future steps for the committee.

Meeting Overview

The meeting commenced at 9:00 AM with Dr. Kathleen Matt from the University of Delaware leading the discussion. Planned topics included a report out of the DHCC retreat and to finalize priority recommendations for the Health Workforce during the 2025 calendar year.

Approval of Previous Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from the November 20th meeting was made and unanimously approved.

Key Discussion Points

Rural Designation Update

Effective November 21, 2024, all of Sussex County is considered rural by the Federal Office of Rural Health. This enables the state to extend grant-sponsored services throughout Sussex County. This change also opens up grant opportunities for the entire county. Nichole Moxley has met with DRHI to explore additional partnerships.

This designation update also adds importance to data collected by the Delaware Academy of Medicine/Delaware Public Health Association moving forward.

Increasing Dental Providers

A recommendation was made to consider additional partnerships with dental schools in Maryland. Dental students are usually not particular about the school location and adding Maryland Dental Schools to our partnership agreements may help attract additional dental providers downstate. This will be shared with DIDER board members.

Dr. Nicholas Conte has been approached about the need to expand access to dental services. Consideration needs to include business supports as well as patient access.

Tim Gibbs is doing deep dive into discipline specific data which may offer insight on educational migration.

Healthcare Workforce Subcommittee Discussion

Dr. Kathy Matt highlighted data presented at DHCC Retreat.

Items of merit included:

1. Need for additional clinical training opportunities
2. Ideas to increase availability of preceptorships
3. Enhancing healthcare workforce pipelines
4. Addressing healthcare professional shortages, especially physicians and dental providers
5. Long Term Care staffing and service delivery

6. Demographics of current healthcare workforce

The committee discussed the importance of the recent change in rural status of all of Sussex County and its implications for healthcare workforce data and access.

Tim Gibbs emphasized that the current ratio of providers to the population shows no improvement since 2012 and is expected to worsen in the next 5 to 10 years.

The need for better data on healthcare providers was highlighted, including the discussion of surveys to gather information on provider distribution and settings.

Healthcare Workforce Initiative Fund

The potential for funding through the Health Workforce Initiative Fund was mentioned, with suggestions to explore opportunities for public/private partnerships.

Community Health Workers

The need for certification for Community Health Workers (CHWs) was discussed, along with the importance of reimbursement mechanisms for their services.

Licensure Considerations

Discussion involved distribution of provider settings and future planning based on available data. Current data does not identify service location. Expansion of data elements would better project gaps and saturation of services. Elements that need to be included: is service inpatient, outpatient, in clinic, in community or independent practice, types of patients, and types of insurance accepted. It has been proposed that we embed these elements in surveys for all healthcare professionals. These data would inform planning and determine appropriate distribution of services.

Challenges Identified:

- Availability of demographic data from large institutions, even if considered mandatory
- Limited historical data across all disciplines causes delay in consistent reporting.

Current Activities

Bay Health and University of Delaware:

- UofD students completing clinical rotations at Bay Health.
- Bay Health offers salary to senior student.
- Students able to pay down on educational loans in exchange for two-year work agreement

Recommendation made to add Rosemary Wooster as a member to Health Workforce Subcommittee.

Beebe Healthcare, Delaware Technical and Community College, and University of Delaware Partnership:

- Partnership builds on maintaining skilled healthcare workforce by creating a pipeline that spans ability to progress from RN to BSN to MSN

Pathways Program:

- Funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies, potential interest from Dupont/Nemours
- Previously discussed proposals to expand opportunities by establishing healthcare-focused high schools in each county to educate and prepare students for careers in healthcare.
- Charter schools would be part of Delaware Public school system.
- Provides career-ladder training
- Cheryl Heiks shared this was accomplished in Alabama. Believes it was gubernatorial project. Will follow up with additional information

Long Term Care:

- Cheryl Heiks discussed various challenges and solutions in long-term care, including the need for disaster planning, loan repayment programs, and better integration of long-term care in workforce development.

Next Steps

Public and Private Partnerships:

- The need for innovative funding solutions through public-private partnerships was emphasized.

Request for Updated Study:

- Previous study conducted by Thomas Ferry approximately ten years ago. Study focused on DIMER student outcomes. Did they remain in Delaware? What are they doing now?
- Recommendation for updated study. Previously funded by Healthcare Commission. Plan to discuss at upcoming DHCC meeting.

Dental Access Task Force Final Report:

- Includes several recommendations on how to increase scope of practice for current providers
 - Delaware remains only state where dental hygienists cannot deliver local anesthetic
- Recommendation to follow up to revise current policy.

Incoming Administration:

- The committee plans to draft a white paper with recommendations for the incoming administration regarding healthcare workforce development.

The meeting concluded with a motion to adjourn, which was seconded and approved.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:10 AM