



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

April 10, 2025

9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Meeting Attendance

Subcommittee Members Present

- Dr. Kathy Matt, University of Delaware, Co-Chair
- Nichole Moxley, Division of Public Health, Co-Chair
- Timothy Gibbs, Delaware Academy of Medicine / Delaware Public Health Association (DAM/DPHA)
- Brian Frazee, Delaware Healthcare Association
- Dr. Nicholas Conte, Bureau of Oral Health and Dental Services
- Cheryl Heiks, Delaware Health Care Facilities Association
- Joanna Staib, Executive Director at Delaware Workforce Development Board
- Shauna Slaughter, Division of Professional Regulation
- Mike Quaranta, Delaware Chamber of Commerce
- Elisabeth Massa, Delaware Health Care Commission
- Gwendolyn Scott-Jones, Delaware State University
- Christopher Otto, Delaware Nurses Association
- Rose Wurster, Bayhealth

Subcommittee Members Absent

- Maggie Norris-Bent, Westside Family Healthcare
- Dr. Avani Virani, Highmark
- Mark Thompson, Medical Society of Delaware

Delaware Health Care Commission (DHCC) Staff

- Elisabeth Massa, Delaware Health Care Commission
- Latoya Wright, Delaware Health Care Commission
- Colleen Cunningham, Delaware Health Care Commission
- Sheila Saylor, Delaware Health Care Commission

Public Attendance

- Elizabeth Speakman

- Jules Villecco, DHA
- Jacqueline Cooper, Student WilmU
- Bria Greenlee, 302 Strategies

Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Kathy Matt, Subcommittee co-chair, and Nichole Moxley, Subcommittee co-chair presided over the meeting and opened discussions at approximately 9:06 a.m. Dr. Matt asked Joanna Staib the newest Subcommittee Member to introduce herself.

ACTION ITEM: Approve March 19, 2025, meeting minutes

The board voted unanimously to approve the March 19, 2025, meeting minutes. The committee members approved the minutes, which are available on the [Workforce Subcommittee Website](#).

The Scholar Pipeline Project

Elizabeth Speakman, EdD, RN, FNAP, ANEF, FAAN
Sr Associate Dean and Chief Nurse Executive, School of Nursing, University of Delaware

Rosemary Wurster DNP, RN, MPH, NEA-BC, FACHE
Sr Vice President Patient Care Services, Chief Nurse Executive, Bayhealth

Dr. Wurster introduced the Scholar Pipeline Program, which is currently a collaboration between the University of Delaware and Bayhealth and provided background for the impetus for the program. Starting with the hospital RN turnover rate, which stands at 18.4%, 34% of RN turnover is with nurses with <1 year tenure, and the average nurse vacancy rate remains ~10%. Dr. Wurster stated that the nationwide shortage of nursing faculty is 9%, with Delaware facing a more significant 12.3% shortage for full-time faculty. The Scholar Project Pipeline strives to address current faculty and staff workforce challenges and was developed to build strong connections between nursing curricula and nursing practice. Dr. Wurster emphasized that the Scholar Pipeline Program is an opportunity to create a model that can be used across Delaware for all schools and health systems.

Dr. Wurster stated that the evidence-based data used was from the Colorado Clinical Model, which emphasizes structured academic-clinical partnerships to bolster nursing education and practice readiness. The model, which emphasizes continuity and in-depth involvement within a single healthcare setting, prepares students for a seamless transition from student roles to full-time positions, reducing the challenges of adapting to new workplace environments.

Dr. Wurster discussed the development and logistics of the program. Stating the project was designed/developed so that the final-year BSN students complete their senior year at an integrated community health system that serves both urban and rural communities, receiving a stipend and guaranteed employment with a two-year work commitment post-graduation. This was the first cohort for the program, and they completed their senior year at Bayhealth then the students moved directly into the accredited Nurse Residency program, guiding them from being a student into being a practicing professional nurse. The premise is that the scholars would go to a clinical area of need at BayHealth not only supporting the workforce but getting ingrained into the BayHealth system early. This cohort went to a medical-surgical unit, but the plan is for the future graduates to go to any area of need in the hospital. The resident/graduate scholar moves into their second year of professional practice, and the program gave them the opportunity for the next stage of growth in their careers. In the third year, which is their second year as a professional nurse, Bayhealth steers the students to higher disciplines in nursing. The students will do all their clinicals at Bay Health, receiving a stipend (\$10,000), with a two-year commitment to Bayhealth.

Dr. Speakman talked about the evaluation process, and one of the end results is job placement and the students taking and passing the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). Dr. Speakman stated UD wanted to see how to help with the retention of the students. UD offered surveys to the students in their first, second, and third years and did a comparison. After the data was collected, the students said they felt like they belonged. UD started off by making the students feel special, giving out backpacks and badges that say I'm a scholar to help the students feel engaged.

Dr. Speakman talked about how UD started a Masters in Nursing Education program. Currently at Bayhealth if a staff person decides to take a faculty position, they lose 30% of their pay. BayHealth subsidizes faculty members when they are not doing clinical rotations to help with faculty shortages in the masters program. The possible next step for the Scholar may be to go into the masters in nursing education and take courses to get ready for a faculty role. Bayhealth needs the faculty to be there to train more nurses.

Dr. Matt thanked Dr. Speakman and Dr. Wurster for the presentation and opened it up for questions.

Cheryl Heiks thanked the presenters for remembering long-term care in the equation. Ms. Heiks stated that the Delaware Health Care Facilities Association could use any help they can get and will reach out to the presenters to see what could be done together.

Dr. Matt asked about cost of this program, both from the Bay Health side and from the UD side. Dr. Speakman answered that from the UD side there is no cost because the students are doing their clinical rotations, so they're just placed at Bay Health. The faculty who came together to

train did it all in kind. There might be a little cost when UD moves into the creating the scholar faculty. Dr. Wurster outlined the operational costs for Bayhealth. Some of the costs are nurse turnover, the stipend for the scholars but funds are redirected, and the return on investment is that there is the retention of nurses giving them the opportunity to grow in the industry. Dr. Wurster stated that in one-year Bayhealth will tally expenses.

Ms. Scott-Jones asked how she could learn more about the Scholars Pipeline Program and how Delaware State University can collaborate with this program. Dr. Wurster answered that she would be reaching out and was excited to hear that they are neighbors, and this speaks to where we must be as the state of Delaware and that is highly collaborative.

Dr. Matt mentioned that the Workforce Subcommittee is creating a round table with hospitals and clinical entities, and academic institutions at the table with so that more of these initiatives can be built. If the Subcommittee is successful creating Dr. Matt asked the presenters could come and present the Scholar Pipeline program as a great example of what is already in place.

Dr. Matt asked how many students were presently in the program. Dr. Speakman answered 6 students with 8 applicants. The application process is a collaboration between BayHealth and UD to make sure that those students are a good fit to Bayhealth. UD and Bayhealth will be interviewing together. Scholar Pipeline Program presentation is available on the [Workforce Subcommittee Website](#).

Update Data/Surveys/ Licensure

Ms. Moxley gave an update on health workforce data collection legislation. Ms. Moxley stated there was a meeting with a legislator that is interested in introducing the health workforce data collection legislation.

The draft bill should be introduced to the Subcommittee soon, and we may or may not during this session have legislation that supports the collection of health workforce data at the licensure level for clinicians across the different boards under the division of professional regulation.

The data collection will be in the form of surveys. The questions that are going to be invented and the surveys will help us answer key factors and help to understand what is happening in the healthcare space and adjust the Subcommittee's agenda to meet the needs of our workforce and community. We need more information but not limited to where our clinicians are, what are their specialties, how many are in a rural and urban setting, what are the types of

patients are they seeing, working conditions, what are their challenges and the cost of their malpractice insurance.

Mr. Otto asked would the Subcommittee be able to review that draft legislation and is the draft a product of the Subcommittee or is it a product of the State. Ms. Moxley answered that it is a product of the State. Mr. Gibbs shared that once the next draft is worked out that it can be shared amongst the Subcommittee. Mr. Quaranta asked if the draft legislation providing legal authority to conduct the survey, could be done administratively. Mr. Gibbs answered that the Governor's office prefers legislation. Dr. Matt commented that the Subcommittee is starting to see some things that have been incubating in the Subcommittee are now having an opportunity to take hold. Mr. Otto voiced concerns regarding the Subcommittee not being privy to see the draft. He stated that the draft cannot be labeled as a collaboration of the Subcommittee if it has not been reviewed and put to a vote. Dr. Matt stated that she would ask Kathryn Evinger, Policy Director Delaware State Senate that when the new draft is available to share with the Subcommittee. Several Subcommittee members agreed with the opinion because of their other administrative roles they may be able to see a wrinkle that someone drafting the legislation may not see.

Health Workforce Recommendations

Dr. Matt updated the Subcommittee on the State's investment for the Workforce Initiative and Innovation Fund. There was a meeting with Dr. Hockstein and the Governor's staff and the Workforce Initiative and Innovation Fund is on hold until information regarding budgets is clear.

Healthcare Education Roundtable recommendation was discussed next. The Roundtable would bring clinical groups and the academic groups together that would review proposals and choose the ones that would be available for funding. Ms. Heiks asked that the Delaware Health Care Facilities Association be included in the roundtable. Mr. Quaranta asked that Wilmington University be included. Mr. Otto asked that Association for Home and Community Care be included.

Ms Staib wanted to put on the Subcommittee's radar the executive order which is trying to connect young people coming out of high school or college to positions within the state. There

could be some good opportunities to introduce these students to the healthcare field. It is not only state employment, but other employment apprenticeships, co-ops, internships. Dr. Matt asked if Ms. Staib would report back to the Subcommittee once the report is released.

Mr. Quaranta spoke about a report to the Governor and members of the General Assembly of an analysis on who we are as a state demographically. Two data points prevalent one, out of every 10 Delawareans were born in a foreign country and one out of seven in the workforce were born in another state. The fastest growing demographic in the state is people of age and the Spanish speaking population is growing rapidly. Can we think about being intentional about driving into those communities of interest and bring in persons that give the Subcommittee career awareness for people who either weren't born here or are part of a growing and expanding demographic. Dr. Matt asked Mr. Quaranta to present his report to the Subcommittee.

Dr. Matt encouraged the Subcommittee to read the paper she sent out that shows the connection between dental and overall general health from a program in Washington State where Dental graduates do their training and experience in rural populations. She highlighted how the program enhances the ability to recruit individuals and retain the workforce and could be modeled in Delaware. Dr. Conte stated that there is a program close by (Rutgers) where 4th year dental students do their education at Rutgers satellite clinics all around South Jersey and that program has been in place more than 30 years.

Public Comment

None

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:35 am.

UPCOMING MEETING

The next Health Workforce Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 8, 2025, 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. The anchor location for the meeting:

Room 198
Department of Health and Social Services
Herman Holloway Campus
1901 N. DuPont Highway
New Castle, DE 19720