

**Health Works Commission**

**Minutes**

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Iowa Room, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor of the Claiborne Building  
1201 North 3<sup>rd</sup> St.  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

**CALL TO ORDER**

Dr. Demetrius Porche, Chair, called the December Health Works Commission meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

The roll was called by Ms. Cara Landry and a quorum was established.

| <b>Members Present</b>             | <b>Affiliation</b>                                     |
|------------------------------------|--|
| John Becknell (designee)           | LA State Board of Practical Nurse Examiners            |
| Melissa Nunn (designee)            | LA Association of Nurse Practitioners                  |
| Susannah Craig                     | LA Board of Regents                                    |
| Sharon Dunn                        | LSUHSC-Shreveport*                                     |
| Jawanda Givens                     | Occupational Forecasting Conference                    |
| Tina Holland                       | LA Association of Independent Colleges & Universities* |
| Rep. Chris Turner                  | House Committee on Health & Welfare                    |
| Lisa Broussard (designee)          | House Committee on Health & Welfare                    |
| Danielle Trahan-Vauclin (designee) | LA Community & Technical College System*               |
| Demetrius Porche                   | LSUHSC - New Orleans*                                  |
| Paul Salles                        | LA Hospital Association*                               |
| Jeffery Williams                   | LA State Medical Society*                              |
| Benita Chatman                     | LA Nurses Association                                  |
| Daryl Lofaso                       | Simulation Medical Training& Education Council*        |
| <b>Members Not Present</b>         | <b>Affiliation</b>                                     |
| Claire Stevenson                   | Governor's Office                                      |
| Ahnyel Burkes                      | Nursing Supply & Demand Council*                       |
| Sandra Brown                       | Southern University System*                            |
| Jeannine O'Rourke                  | University of Louisiana System *                       |
| Karen Lyon                         | LA State Board of Nursing (LSBN)                       |

|                              |                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Chaquetta Johnson            | LA Department of Health            |
| Ragan Leblanc                | LA Academy of Family Physicians*   |
| Kellie Taylor-White          | LA Department of Labor (Workforce) |
| Wes Hataway                  | LA Nursing Home Association        |
| <b>Ad-Hoc Member Present</b> | <b>Affiliation</b>                 |
| Daryl Lofaso                 | Simulation Council**               |

\* Members of the Executive Committee

\*\* Ad-Hoc Member

#### APPROVAL OF AUGUST 29, 2023 MINUTES

**Dr. Porche asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the August 29, 2023 Health Works Commission meeting. On the motion of Dr. Dunn, seconded by Mr. Salles, the Commission voted to approve the minutes.**

#### REGIONAL HEALTHCARE INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Dr. Porche introduced the additional Regional Healthcare Innovation Partnership program presentations. Ms. Mellynn Baker, Board of Regents, reminded the Commission that four presentations – from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Southern University A&M, Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University, and Nunez Community College – occurred at the last meeting, and that three more would be provided during this meeting. Ms. Baker shared that the purpose of the partnership programs was to establish regional healthcare innovation partnerships bringing together higher education institutions with healthcare providers and/or regional not-for-profits to increase the number of healthcare graduates in each identified regional labor market. Ms. Baker noted that the Louisiana Legislature created the Healthcare Employment Reinvestment Opportunity (H.E.R.O.) Fund to specifically target the employment needs in the nursing and allied health professions. To respond to this legislation, she noted that the Commission created the Regional Healthcare Innovation Partnership Program and released an RFA seeking entities to establish regional healthcare innovation partnerships throughout Louisiana to increase the number of healthcare graduates in multiple regions. The RFA required academic programs to partner with one or more healthcare providers and/or regional not-for-profits to leverage public and private funds to increase the workforce

pipeline to fulfill the healthcare workforce needs of the targeted region. She noted that nine institutions were granted funding to initiate their partnerships. Ms. Baker indicated that this program will utilize \$3.9M of the Healthcare Employment Reinvestment Opportunity (H.E.R.O.) Fund. She called on Dr. Sarita James, Director of the School of Nursing at LSU Alexandria, to present on its partnership.

Dr. James discussed the program's charge to increase the number of healthcare graduates in Regional Labor Market 6, leverage current partners with regional interests, and create a pathway for current healthcare workers to improve nursing workforce healthcare workforce endeavors. Dr. James explained project workforce goals, which include admitting at least 30 LPNs, providing at least 30 scholarships to LPNs, developing and implementing a Paramedic-ASN program option, and admitting at least six licensed paramedics with scholarships. Dr. James discussed the support offered such as faculty for programs, adjunct faculty for clinicals, program supplies, professional advisors, marketing, renewal conferences, recruiting events, scholarship interests, and paramedic program developments. There was discussion on student success initiatives such as success coaches, peer mentors, and small-group NCLEX prep. Dr. James discussed community partners, which include: clinical sites, skills labs, flu clinics, nurse extern positions, scholarship and grant opportunities, and scrub tech opportunities for LPNs. Dr. Porche asked for the target number on the paramedic portion, and Dr. James responded that the goal is to admit at least ten. Dr. Broussard asked how long the program takes to complete, and Dr. James responded that this depends on the student but can take up to three semesters. Mr. Salles asked if participants continue their jobs at the hospitals when they are enrolled. Dr. James responded that they do.

Dr. Joel Hicks, Dean of the College of Nursing and School of Allied Health at Northwestern State University, presented on NSU's partnership, which has a purpose of increasing the number of RNs in the workforce, particularly within Natchitoches Parish. He discussed alternative education opportunities to support LPNs employed at NRMC who are motivated to become registered nurses, such as evening and

weekend classes, clinical opportunities that would allow them to continue working, and a flexible work schedule provided by NRMHC to support education activities. He noted that more than 30% of Louisiana nurses are projected to leave the profession in the next ten years. He also shared that Louisiana ranks 50<sup>th</sup> in overall healthcare indicators and has 176 Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas. He discussed the estimated shortage of approximately 6,000 RNs by 2030 and further discussed the shortage. Dr. Hicks then provided information on NSU's partnership with Natchitoches Regional Medical Center (NRMHC). He shared that NRMHC, a healthcare system in Natchitoches, comprises a 96-bed hospital and 20 clinical facilities. He noted that NRMHC plans to prioritize eligible LPN employees for a program in collaboration with NSU, providing financial assistance and flexible schedules. The initiative aims to develop and retain a skilled healthcare workforce. He then discussed that LPNs could complete an ASN degree program in as few as three semesters by applying already-completed coursework to the degree requirements. Dr. Hicks also discussed student stipends and how the three-year project will support Student Tuition and Financial Assistance for up to ten students in each cohort as they progress through three clinical semesters. Dr. Hicks outlined strategies for success, including a stipend where students can receive \$4,000 per year, a hybrid education model, and additional educators. Dr. Porche raised the point that if there are any additional funds, the group should consider looking into NCLEX reviews. Dr. Holland noted that students tend to do great job in the clinical portion, but struggle with the pre-requisites and general education courses. She asked if there was any academic support to assist with that.

Dr. Danielle Vauclin, Dean of Nursing and Allied Health at Fletcher Technical Community College, then presented on FTCC's partnership program. She noted that the Board of Regents program has allowed the college to take its Medical Assistant program to surrounding communities, including areas still affected by Hurricane Ida. She added that instructors travel to these areas once a week to provide labs to those students. Dr. Vauclin also indicated that FTCC has partnered with Terrebonne Parish Recreation District No.

7 and uses a gym there. She noted that eight students were enrolled in the course in Chauvin and were provided with laptops, books, tuition, and other things needed. She said that the funding will enable this to happen four times, with the next course starting in February in Cut Off. Dr. Vauclin also stated that the funding will allow her to start a Cardiovascular Sonography Program, to fill a gap currently in the area. She said that the intention is for students to start pre-requisite courses next fall and clinicals in the summer. There was discussion about internet access issues for students, and Dr. Vauclin responded that there is internet in the gym.

#### CONSIDERATION OF 2023 ANUAL REPORT REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Dr. Porche introduced the 2023 Annual Report Review and Recommendations and called on Ms. Baker to provide more information. Ms. Baker stated that the goal is for the Commission to review the report and provide feedback on major sections, as well as discuss recommendations. Ms. Baker flagged new additions to the report, including an overview of Health Works Commission activities, revised format and organization of the Report Key Takeaway Section, reduced number of recommendations, and expanded appendices. Discussion was had on data included in the report and the best way to communicate specific trends and information, including five-year comparisons and other data points that could be compared.

Ms. Baker then provided details about the flow and structure of the report and data regarding APRN, RN, LPN, and NA numbers. The data showed that in 2022, Louisiana had 9,048 active APRNs, marking an 8% increase from the previous year. She noted the demand data for healthcare professionals showed 391 open positions for Certified Nurse Practitioners and 114 for Nurse Anesthetists, but none for Nurse Midwives as of September 2023. In terms of enrollment, 1,433 students were enrolled in Louisiana's APRN programs. However, the number of graduates in 2022 was 435, reflecting a 39% decrease compared to the 606 graduates in 2021. She mentioned the "Council Impression" section included in each data section of the report. Dr. Holland suggested it may be beneficial to show the number of open positions alongside the number of students graduating and entering that profession. Ms. Baker then discussed data regarding RNs.

She noted that in 2022, Louisiana had 65,596 active RNs, a slight increase from 65,131 in 2021. She indicated that demand for RNs is evident, with 5,067 open positions listed on the Louisiana Workforce Commission website as of September 2023. Enrollment data for 2022 showed 13,284 students declared nursing as their major, a decrease from 14,079 in the previous report. Among the 2022 pre-RN graduates, 60% completed BSN programs, 38% completed ADN programs, and the rest completed diploma programs. Dr. Broussard noted that programs are accepting more applicants and though there are not as many applicants overall, fewer are being turned away. Ms. Baker shared information on LPNs: in 2022, Louisiana had 21,722 licensed LPNs, a slight increase from 21,481 in the previous year. She noted that enrollment data are being edited, but current information indicated 1,593 students in 2022-23, an increase from 1,359 in the 2021-22 academic year. She also noted that 1,156 students withdrew from LPN programs in 2022-2023, compared to 1,414 in the previous academic year. The most recent report indicates 993 graduates from Louisiana's LPN programs, a slight increase from the 984 graduates in the 2021-2022 academic year. She also noted some of Council impressions regarding the withdrawal and failure rates and discussion was had on this topic. Mr. John Becknell, LA State Board of Practical Nurse Examiners, noted that the high rate of withdrawal was concerning to the Board members over a year prior and they tasked their advisory committee to study this attrition rate. This information request prompted stakeholders to voice concerns regarding this study, so the Board plans to examine the data at a later date to determine next steps.

Ms. Baker then discussed information regarding Nurse Aides (NAs). She noted that collecting data regarding NAs can be difficult, due to certain fields and jobs not being included. In 2022, there were 214,728 NAs in the registry, including both certified and uncertified, compared to 211,898 in 2021. The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) reported certifying 2,754 NAs in 2022, while 3,140 previously listed CNAs were not renewed. The total number of CNAs on the registry in 2022 was 40,350, with clear demand for this position. She noted, additionally, 301 active nurse aide training programs approved by LDH in 2022, with 94 nursing homes and 207 schools approved for CNA training. She indicated that the Commission is looking

forward to seeing the impact of Act 80 of the 2023 Legislative Session, permitting an individual who successfully completes one semester of an RN or LPN program to sit for the Nurse Aide exam. Dr. Porche asked why NAs are not renewing their certifications and discussion was had.

Ms. Baker shared the seven action items including:

1. Advocating funding of academic-practice partnerships to leverage public and private investments designed to encourage innovation, increase the capacity of healthcare programs, and address regional healthcare workforce needs.
2. Aligning nurse faculty salaries with median national salary market data.
3. Supporting funding opportunities to decrease tuition costs for nursing students, especially those from diverse backgrounds and with barriers related to social determinants of health.
4. Reinstating the stipend program previously administered by the Board of Regents, which provided a maximum of \$40,000 to nurses who agreed to pursue an academic graduate degree in nursing and committed to teach in a Louisiana RN program one year for each \$10,000 received in support.
5. Standardizing and streamlining roles and regulatory requirements for healthcare occupations, reviewing for barriers that limit access to care and demand appropriate to meet population needs. Continue to advocate for capitation funds, which provide support for postsecondary education institutions to increase the capacity of RN and LPN programs in Louisiana.
6. Recommending the Board of Regents research the development of prospective or real-time reporting related to the feasibility of a process for universities to source denied students to schools with open seats if available while highlighting contributing factors of denials for the RN-qualified students. This report will also highlight individual nursing program eligibility. To assist this effort, funding should also be made available to support potential nursing students' application fees for admittance into public postsecondary institutions.

Dr. Craig asked if the items were ranked, and Ms. Baker responded that they were. There was then further discussion regarding the recommendations, who addresses them, the audience for this report and the reporting of the capitation programs.

Dr. Porche summarized the motion.

**On the motion of Dr. Nunn, seconded by Dr. Chatman, the Commission members voted to approve the report to include the additions and edits recommended.**

#### FUNDING PRIORITIES DISCUSSION

Dr. Porche opened discussion on funding priority areas and called on Ms. Baker to speak about the

funding of the Commission.

Ms. Baker shared that at the May 2023 meeting, the Commission approved the Fiscal Year 2024 budget spread. At this time, the Commission had cash authority up to \$5M of the H.E.R.O. Fund. She shared that, as the Commission wanted to pilot the newly created regional healthcare innovation partnership program, \$1M was set aside for later use. Now that the Regional Healthcare Innovation Partnership program has been initiated and the foundation and templates for this program have been created, it would be positive to expand the program by another \$1M, inviting to participate in those projects that ranked below those selected in the first round. She indicated that staff will bring this to the Board of Regents for approval and proceed with expanding this opportunity to other institutions in FY 2023-24. Dr. Holland to clarify that previously submitted Regional Healthcare Innovation Partnership programs that were unfunded would be the pool for the competition if additional funding is available. Ms. Baker stated that this would be the most efficient way to proceed. Ms. Baker committed that a further plan for the remaining funds in the H.E.R.O. Fund would be brought to the next meeting. Additional discussion was had regarding budget authority.

#### COMMISSION UPDATES

Dr. Porche introduced updates from two of the supporting Councils. To speak about the work of the Simulation Medical Training and Education Council of Louisiana, he called on Dr. Daryl Lofaso. Dr. Lofaso announced that the Simulation Expo will be held on April 19 in New Orleans and provided details on this event.

Dr. Porche noted that Dr. Ahnyel Burkes was not present so no update would be provided from the Nursing Supply and Demand Council.

#### OTHER BUSINESS



Dr. Porche called on Dr. Tina Gunaldo to provide updates related to the Interprofessional Consortium. Dr. Gunaldo discussed the faculty development session, at which they had two speakers. She noted that LSUA has agreed to host a conference in April for the Consortium.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dr. Cynthia Bienemy stated that, considering decreases in the number of RNs, a contributing factor may be the number of compact nurses who are no longer licensed by Louisiana. She also discussed the ways in which data collection has changed.

#### NEXT STEPS & ADJOURNMENT

There being no further comments or announcements, Dr. Porche asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:50 p.m.

**On motion of Dr. Nunn, seconded by Ms. Chatman, the meeting was adjourned.**

#### ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES & GUESTS

| Name             | Affiliation                |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| Mellynn Baker    | BOR                        |
| Cara Landry      | BOR                        |
| Hannah Courtney  | BOR                        |
| Doreen Brasseaux |                            |
| Cynthia Bienemy  | All Thing Professional LLC |
| Lisa Deaton      | LAC-Public                 |
| Tina Gunaldo     | IP LA Consortium           |