

Health Works Commission
Minutes

Friday, August 2, 2024

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

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

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Demetrius Porche, Chair, called the August Health Works Commission meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

Members Present	Affiliation
Christina Costanza	LA State Board of Practical Nurse Examiners
Susannah Craig	LA Board of Regents
Sandra Brown	Southern University System*
Sharon Dunn	LSUHSC-Shreveport*
Rick Gallot	University of Louisiana System *
Tina Holland	LA Association of Independent Colleges & Universities*
Drew Maranto	LA Department of Health
Ragan LeBlanc	LA Academy of Family Physicians*
Karen Lyon	LA State Board of Nursing (LSBN)
Jim Carlson	Senate Committee on Health & Welfare, Chair
Wendi Palermo	LA Community & Technical College System
Demetrius Porche	LSUHSC - New Orleans*
Paul Salles	LA Hospital Association*
Wes Hataway	LA Nursing Home Association
Emily DiPalma	LA Department of Labor (Workforce)
Members Not Present	Affiliation

Jawanda Givens	Occupational Forecasting Conference
Melissa Nunn (designee)	LA Association of Nurse Practitioners
Ahnyel Burkes	Nursing Supply & Demand Council*
Dustin Miller	House Committee on Health & Welfare
Jeffery Williams	LA State Medical Society*
Benita Chatman	LA Nurses Association
Daryl Lofaso	Simulation Medical Training & Ed. Council**

* Members of the Executive Committee

** Ad-Hoc Member

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 19, 2023, MINUTES

Dr. Porche asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 19, 2023, Health Works Commission meeting. On motion of Mr. Drew Maranto, seconded by Mr. Paul Salles, the Commission voted to approve the minutes.

NEW TRANSFER PATHWAYS/HOW THEY APPLY TO HEALTHCARE-RELATED PROGRAMS

Dr. Tristan Denley, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Innovation at the Board of Regents, discussed the new transfer pathways and how they apply to healthcare-related programs. He began by sharing that the goal of the original 2022 legislation was to ensure that general education courses taken at any public institution would transfer easily. He noted that, with universal transfer pathways, all general education courses can now seamlessly transition, as guaranteed through a very robust transfer matrix.

Dr. Denley then discussed how Louisiana can build on this work and noted that there are some problems with general education transfers. The main issue is that students often take courses that do not meet the requirements of the new program into which they enroll when they transfer to another institution. For example, a student might take U.S. History instead of the required Western Civilization, or College Algebra instead of Statistics. He noted that such misaligned course selections often occur because students and institutions are not aware of others' degree requirements. Dr. Denley highlighted further issues with course transfers, particularly for students in specific degree programs. He indicated that while 39 general education

hours are typically transferable, an additional 21 hours required for an associate's degree often include discipline-specific courses, like Introduction to Accounting for Business majors or Anatomy and Physiology for Nursing majors; these courses are not part of the general education framework and therefore lack guaranteed transferability. To address this, he added, in 2022 new language was added to transfer legislation to create universal transfer pathways. These pathways ensure that up to 60 hours of coursework can be transferred and counted towards a degree at any four-year institution within the state. Various degree programs, such as nursing, are included in the program, which aims to provide a clear and guaranteed path for students transferring between institutions. He shared that in 2023, around 600 faculty members worked to craft curricula for various programs, including accounting, business, nursing, and cybersecurity. Their effort guarantees that students' coursework will be honored and appropriately transferred.

Dr. Denley also highlighted ongoing work to create additional universal transfer pathways, particularly in health-related fields. He noted that an additional 16 pathways, including allied health, are in development and expected to be presented for Board of Regents approval at its December meeting. There was a concern raised about how information is disseminated within higher education institutions to ensure it reaches the necessary individuals. Commission members highlighted the need for assistant CEOs to ensure that students are informed about transferable courses and stressed the importance of clear information to facilitate a smooth transfer process. Members also suggested announcing the pathways through LACANE. Members expressed interest in transfer agreements, the specific menu of courses, and whether correlation studies were done to assess the level of student preparation and its impact on performance. It was noted that these pathways do not guarantee admittance to any program, but simply ensure that if a student gains admission, their earned credits will be honored and counted. The pathways incorporate best practices, including appropriate math pathways and discipline-specific courses aimed at student success.

Dr. Denley explained the plan to use data to track students following universal transfer pathways. He noted that, with the help of Dr. Palermo, a data structure has been created to monitor students' progress across the public higher education sector. It was added that a significant benefit of the new pathways is in

preventing students from having to retake courses or lose credits when transferring from a two-year to a four-year institution. Dr. Denley indicated that the process of creating pathways varied by discipline—engineering, for example, resulted in multiple pathways, while business yielded a unified pathway covering finance, marketing, and management. He noted that allied health will follow a similar approach to engineering, with multiple pathways tailored to different specializations rather than a single one-size-fits-all solution.

SIMULATION AND MEDICAL TRAINING COUNCIL UPDATE

Dr. Michelle DeMeulenaere, Board of Regents, provided updates regarding the Simulation and Medical Training Council. She shared that the first meeting of the Simulation Council was an eye-opener for many attendees, particularly those new to the field. The Council's mission is to enhance simulation training for students, residents, fellows, and practitioners across the state through various methods including webinars, expos, camps, and educational opportunities. She noted that the Council held an annual Lunch-and-Learn event in February attended by about 50 online participants, focusing on developing interpersonal simulation-based education; this event will be continued annually. Additionally, the Council hosted a Film Expo at LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans, featuring national speakers with 14 presentations from 11 organizations and approximately 225 registrations, predominantly from nursing, and 10 exhibitors. Dr. DeMeulenaere shared that a highlight of the Council's activities was a one-week summer camp designed for middle school students entering grades 8 or 9, to introduce them to healthcare through CPR certification, simulation activities, and lab experiments. She noted that this year's camp drew 78 participants, the largest number in its history. Dr. DeMeulenaere also shared that for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the Council's budget included \$22,510 for Sim Expo, \$4,800 for Certified Healthcare Simulation Educator (CHSE) certification, and \$13,292 for Camp Fast Forward payments, totaling \$40,602, and that actual expenditures came in under budget. Dr. DeMeulenaere indicated that the Council is preparing to request funding for the FY 2024-2025

period, with the request details released in mid-September and selections expected to be determined by October 15th. She noted that past funded projects have included Camp Fast Forward, CHSE certification, and other related initiatives. She shared that the total budget for the Medical Training Council came in under budget by \$20,000, primarily due to the absence of overhead costs at LSU Health Sciences Center-New Orleans.

NURSING SUPPLY AND DEMAND COUNCIL UPDATE

Mr. Wes Hataway shared updates regarding the Nursing Supply and Demand Council, including a legislative issue from two years ago that was recently resolved. This legislative change was related to healthcare and nursing home operations. For the current year, funding for nursing-related initiatives was reported at \$1.7 million. He noted that despite a significant level of funding, the nursing sector faces ongoing challenges, particularly with the aging Baby Boomer population. By 2025, a substantial increase in the elderly population is expected, putting additional pressure on nursing homes. He shared that there is an urgent need for more nurses and mentioned new methods of data analysis and preferences for nursing roles being explored to better address these issues.

Mr. Hataway then provided an analysis of the distribution of registered nurses (RNs) and licensed practical nurses (LPNs) across different regions. The largest percentage of RNs per capita is found in St. Tammany Parish, which is relatively urban, suggesting a higher concentration of healthcare professionals in more developed areas. The highest concentration of LPNs is observed in rural areas, reflecting the demand for LPNs in regions where healthcare services are more essential due to fewer resources and facilities. He expressed the need for further analysis by mapping nursing facility locations onto other relevant data, such as hospital locations and educational institutions. He shared that the ongoing efforts are focused on refining these graphics and analyses to develop effective strategies for addressing nursing shortages and improving healthcare access across various regions.

Dr. Denley noted that a more interactive visualization of the nursing supply data is being introduced. The new charts use a blue scale to represent percentages of RNs and LPNs across different parishes, so it is easier to understand where higher concentrations are located. The updated charts include heat maps with dots and shades of orange to visually represent the density of nursing professionals in each parish. Users can interact with the data by selecting different views or focusing on specific regions. This interactive feature allows for a more detailed exploration of the distribution patterns. He added that these improvements aim to make the data more accessible and easier to interpret, helping stakeholders make informed decisions based on the visualized information.

The Commission then discussed the challenges in accurately representing nursing data, noting that current information is based on nurses' residency rather than their employment locations. This can lead to discrepancies, as nurses may work in different parishes from where they live. Dr. Denley shared that efforts are underway to improve data accuracy by integrating employment information from various sources, including quarterly censuses and state revenue departments. He shared that the complexity of multi-state licensure adds another layer of difficulty in capturing a complete picture of the nursing workforce. There was then discussion of the need to identify gaps in nursing data to improve understanding and planning and to connect data on nursing supply with population health outcomes, as recent research suggests significant links between these factors.

Dr. Denley then discussed understanding nursing program completion and success rates. It was noted that approximately two-thirds of students who start a nursing program complete it, and about 85% of those pass the NCLEX exam on their first attempt. There was concern about students who do not complete their programs, including whether they transition to other healthcare roles or leave the field entirely. It was shared that initiatives like LA First are being used to track these outcomes and identify strategies to support students more effectively, including developing alternative pathways for those who struggle with initial nursing requirements. There was also discussion of the achievement of training and certification goals. A

commitment was made to produce 5,000 short-term credentials, particularly CNAs and LPNs, which was eventually exceeded, leading to a new internal goal of 8,000. The focus was on tracking and reporting these credentials accurately, ensuring that only those who passed licensure were counted, and reflecting real progress in nursing education and certification. Commission members discussed new goals for nursing credentials, with a target of 10,000 for the upcoming year. The positive impact of workforce initiatives was highlighted, particularly reductions in nursing job vacancies. It was shared that challenges remain, particularly with entry-level positions leading to nursing roles and securing funding for essential training programs. Concerns were raised about low uptake in employment despite high entry wages and the need to address funding issues for critical training programs. It was shared that legislative updates included the creation of Louisiana's first surge in general health initiatives and ongoing efforts to improve healthcare outcomes, with a focus on managing Medicaid and addressing provider credentialing challenges.

2024 LEGISLATIVE UPDATES AND NEXT STEPS

Mr. Drew Maranto, Louisiana Department of Health, shared legislative updates and next steps. He noted that The Louisiana Department of Health is working on establishing a centralized credentialing system to streamline the process with the six Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), as the current fragmented approach has been deemed unsustainable. Additionally, efforts are underway to reduce lengthy licensing times for physicians, which have sometimes exceeded six months. The goal is to enable physicians to be licensed and receive their Medicaid numbers on the same day.

Significant legislative updates included the transfer under House Bill 329 of the H.E.R.O. Fund to the Louisiana Department of Health. Mr. Maranto shared that this transition aims to build on past workforce development initiatives and will include provisions for industry matching funds to amplify the impact. Furthermore, new legislation will ease the process for international medical graduates, allowing them to practice in Louisiana with a reduced commitment period if their credentials are comparable to local

standards. He shared that the H.E.R.O. Fund's remaining balance of \$15.5 million has been allocated to the Department of Health. Existing contracts with the Board of Regents will be honored, with the new funds supporting ongoing workforce development efforts.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dr. Porche opened the meeting for public comments. Dr. Cynthia Bienemy of All Things Professional, LLC stated that the best source of data regarding nursing is from the Board of Nursing. In the past, she used these data on nursing workforce in a forecast model to determine initial employment and secondary employment. She emphasized that using this source of data was ideal and wanted to share this information with the Commission.

NEXT STEPS & ADJOURNMENT

There being no further comments or announcements, Dr. Porche asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. **On motion of Dr. Sharon Dunn, seconded by Dr. Melissa Nunn, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.**