South Carolina Institute of
Medicine & Public Health

Legislative One-Pager
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The Evolving Workforce:
Redefining Health Care Delivery in South Carolina

The South Carolina Institute of Medicine and Public Health (IMPH) is committed to providing South Carolina's elected officials with nonpartisan information and research related to the health and well-being of our state's residents.

IMPH serves as a neutral convener to collectively inform policy to improve health and health care. In April 2018, the Workforce for Health Taskforce launched to determine South Carolina-specific policy changes and health care workforce solutions needed to create sustainable, person-centered systems of health care that promote population health.

The Taskforce represented more than 60 of the state's leading experts from health care systems, state agencies, consumer groups, academia, community-based organizations, nonprofits and philanthropic organizations.

State specific, evidence-based solutions for policies to improve South Carolina's health outcomes are outlined in four key areas:

- Embracing the evolution of health and human service roles,
- Training and educating health and human service providers,
- Behavioral health workforce needs and
- Setting the stage for the evolving workforce.

Embracing the evolution of health and human service roles

It is estimated that over 770,000 adults in South Carolina are caring for a family member, friend or spouse as a family caregiver. The state legislature should create systems to support, educate and train family caregivers and direct care workers. Highlighted action steps include:

- Explore the feasibility of creating and funding a 24-hour hotline for family caregivers.

Training and educating health and human service providers

The state legislature and other partners are encouraged to remove cost as a barrier to the pursuit of a certification or degree in health and human services. Highlighted action steps include:

- Continue to fund the South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium (AHEC)'s research initiatives, Health Careers Academy and expansion of health and human service curriculum to all public high schools in the state.
- Consider the use of lottery funds to support the education of minority and rural students for high-need, high priority health professions.
- Study ways to implement low- or no-cost ongoing training and career counseling programs to direct care workers.

Behavioral health workforce needs

Behavioral health is one this decade's biggest challenges as well as one of our most pressing needs. The state legislature should support improved pay and reimbursement for behavioral professionals as well as reduce financial barriers to entry for students interested in behavioral health certifications and degrees. Highlighted action steps include:

- Support adjusting public sector pay bands to be more competitive and reflect the level of education required to become a behavioral health provider.
- Encourage and support educational entities to provide behavioral health students and professionals with additional financial aid and incentive programs.

Setting the stage for the evolving workforce

The health care provider field is expanding to include more community-based professionals and specialized clinicians.These factors require that changes are made to how the workforce is educated and trained. Highlighted action steps include:

- Increase racial and ethnic diversity in health and human service organizations to improve access to professionals with the same racial/ethnic and cultural backgrounds as the people they serve by providing comprehensive academic, social, emotional and financial support to underrepresented minority students at the high school and undergraduate level.
- Health and human service providers across the state should participate in bidirectional data sharing at the local level by developing data sharing agreements that address HIPAA fears and adopt a common set of standards statewide to track health and human service referrals and social and health outcome data.
- The state legislature is encouraged to consider funding and incentives for health and human services professionals to receive education on screening tools for social determinants of health.

For more information, please visit IMPH.org or contact Brie Hunt at Brie@IMPH.org.