

Join the Movement to Grow the Future Health Care Workforce in Delaware

BY OMAR KHAN AND CHANDLEE KUHN

IT'S AN EXCITING and forward-looking time to be in the health care industry. As our work in building healthier communities evolves, so too do our workforce needs.

We know that just as the tools of medicine have grown more powerful and more complex, high-quality care today requires multidisciplinary teams of physicians, nurses and other health care professionals to work collaboratively with patients to improve their health.

As leaders in local health care and workforce development, we're hard at work addressing the state's immediate workforce needs—such as more primary care providers—as well as a longer-term strategy for Delaware's health care industry.

This past December, we helped launch Delaware's new Health Care Industry Council, a group of professionals and employers who come together to work with Delaware's students and educators to build the state's future workforce.

Hundreds of employers are getting involved through eight statewide industry councils in areas such as engineering and manufacturing, banking and finance, hospitality, IT and construction trades.

The industry-led councils share their perspectives on topics such as work-based learning goals, curriculum development and relevant credentials, tools, support and professional development. They share the needs and skills required to thrive in their industry and provide Delaware students with immersive work-based learning experiences.

In organizations like Christiana Care Health System, which is continually innovating to find new ways to improve the health of the communities it serves, positions like community health ambassadors, behavioral health counselors, licensed practical nurses, IT and systems workers have become huge needs. And, as we come together to better understand our community's needs, we will engage with our colleagues in education to inform training, work-based learning experiences, certification programs, and even middle- and high-school curricula.

Delaware is emerging as a national leader when it comes to career and technical education, and preparing young people for life after high school, thanks in part to our cross-sector collaboration among the K-12 public school system, local employers, community organizations and higher education. This fall, 12,000 high-school students are enrolled in 14 state model career pathways, opening access to industry credentials, early college credits, and work-based learning experiences.

We are especially excited about the Patient Care Pathway launching next year, to meet a growing industry need and through which high school students will graduate with three industry credentials. Delaware Technical Community College and its Office of Work-Based Learning plays an



important role in connecting the right people to the right resources and opportunities.

In health care, we apply acute care strategies to our patients' immediate symptoms and preventative care strategies for the long-term health of our community. That's what we're looking to do with our own workforce. When employers connect with schools, we can address both, and that's going to make our state's economy far healthier.

Interested in learning more about the Health Care Industry Council or future industry councils? Sign up to learn more about work-based learning and get engaged at www.pathways.org/owbl/getinvolved. We look forward to hearing from all those connected with health in Delaware, and to serving our neighbors' needs together. ■

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