

Topic: Steering Committee Kickoff

Alaska Nursing Workforce Center Kickoff

The meeting served as a kickoff for establishing a nursing workforce center in Alaska, with Schawna Thoma and Katy Suddock from Northern Compass Group introducing the consulting team. Jana Bitten from the Oregon Center for Nursing provided background on the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers and their experience in forming similar centers. Margie Hamburger from the Alaska Hospital and Healthcare Association outlined the project's origins and goals, emphasizing collaboration among various stakeholders, including healthcare providers, educators, and policymakers. The group discussed the importance of working together to address nursing workforce challenges in Alaska, with several participants sharing their perspectives and roles in the initiative.

Alaska Nursing Workforce Center Development

Marjie presented on the development of a nursing workforce center in Alaska, highlighting the need for such a center due to the state's significant nursing workforce requirements. She explained the concept, goals, and progress made so far, including stakeholder engagement and funding. Jana shared insights from the Oregon Center for Nursing, emphasizing the importance of an independent, mission-driven focus, strong partnerships, and diverse representation. She outlined expectations for steering committee members, including evaluating ideas, building a mission statement, choosing a center model, and considering a sustainable business model for funding.

Priority Identification Mapping Activity

During the brainstorming portion of the first steering committee meeting, participants were asked to describe what they envisioned for the Alaska Nursing Workforce Center in five years.

From this discussion, six main themes emerged and are listed below. Beneath those main themes are listed subtopics also contributed by participants in the meeting. *(NOTE: Every item appears in the original phrasing from our meeting in order to accurately represent the will of the steering committee)*

1. EDUCATION PIPELINE

Building and supporting the full continuum from interest in nursing to advanced education.

- Continuing education
- Support Growing Our Own – both nursing faculty and nurses (Registered Nursing and Advanced Practice Nursing)
- Robust, accessible online platform that delivers continuing education and professional resources to nurses across state
- Faculty shortage – impacts nursing education capacity. The salary differential between nursing academic and clinical practice is significant
- Nursing schools expand and grow to meet industry needs
- Health Occupation Services – summer internship/shadowing program in schools

- Drop in students applying to school, and nursing student volume, interest in leaving state – highlighting what a great education opportunity we have in the state. Disconnect between expectation and what their skill level is reflecting. Pathways of growth, fostered by mentorship that will line them up for success
- Create pathway for experienced international talent to
- Create lower 48 talent interest in moving to Alaska
- Organization of statewide education resources – perhaps preceptorships, internships, hiring events
- Internship, shadowing, support them through nursing school
- A go to place for the nursing workforce seeking jobs, education, and resources.

2. MENTORSHIP & SUPPORT

Guiding and uplifting individuals throughout their nursing journey, from entry to retirement.

- Resources, mentorship for students and new nurses, public health development
- Creating a center that supports nursing practice from the time a person has an idea of becoming a nurse through becoming a retired nurse. Lifelong support and resources
- Mentorship, hard to support more than one at a time
- When a student is enrolled and accepted, they can join and connect and find a group of peers and mentors, a central place to go for these things
- Creating a mentorship for future nurses
- Opportunity to meet up with other nurses, working and retired, give them info on what it's like to be a nurse, help with specific situations, can feel confident that they will be greeted with positivity
- Professional place to work through difficult problems
- Build side by side together to support each other, a lot of alignment
- Someone to reach out to about their cultures, specific patient care needs
- Learning from others, not replicating errors
- There is a profound need for healing wounded healers ... don't know that this Center is the right spot however it does impact our ability to attract

3. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Ensuring a strong, prepared, and sustainable nursing workforce across the state.

- Helping achieve something that wouldn't have happened otherwise
- Achieved results – graduates, growing our own
- Workforce – we have a lot of traveling nurses. Would like to share staff across the State of Alaska
- Statewide clinical placements – bridge between healthcare organizations and education organizations – BIG DREAM
- Growing our own, retain them
- Grow our own, reaching out to Alaska Native patients and recipients
- Looking at growing our Alaska Native workforce
- Centralized place for trusted info for employers and nurses
- Data collection, a bipartisan neutral party to be an expert for the legislature to call on

4. ACCESS & EQUITY

Increasing diversity, reaching rural communities, and simplifying access to resources and opportunities.

- Special focus on supporting nurses in rural and underserved communities
- Centralized resource center!
- Become an "easy button" for anyone exploring a nursing career – making it simple to find and access thousands of available grants, scholarships, and employer programs to pay for their education
- One stop shop
- Go to place for local, state, and federal support – where they look to
- Independent source of information
- Central place for nursing issues to be discussed from all aspects, points of view
- What is our multi prong pipeline, how do these pieces connect. A braided model at the end
- Connect to look at what else is out there for their next step

5. ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE & SUSTAINABILITY

Building the organizational structure, systems, and funding base to support long-term success.

- In existence with a structure and sustainable funding to continue work into future
- Sustainable center, nursing compact, growing our own, nursing wellness programs
- AHEC is supposed to do this work – but they are struggling with funding
- Leverage resources that already exist. Things AHEC already has the structure for
- Why reinvent new – could AHEC host this center
- North Carolina is prestigious model to Alaska – look at and follow
- Sustainability
- In 5 years, I would like to see the Nursing workforce center established and funded. A place where data, education, and nursing resources are housed.

6. CENTRALIZED DATA & INFORMATION

Collecting and providing access to non-partisan, accurate data and information for all sectors of the nursing profession.

- Centralized resource center!
- Become an "easy button" for anyone exploring a nursing career – making it simple to find and access thousands of available grants, scholarships, and employer program to pay for their education
- A bipartisan neutral party to be an expert for the legislature to call on
- One stop shop
- Go to place for local, state, and federal support – where they look to
- Independent source of information
- Central place for nursing issues to be discussed from all aspects, points of view

NEXT STEPS

The group agreed to meet twice monthly for 90-minute sessions over the next six months to develop a nursing workforce center model, with topics including nursing workforce center models, funding structures, and clinical placement opportunities.

Schawna/Katy committed to sending calendar invites and a detailed meeting schedule, while Marjie mentioned a dedicated webpage being created on the AHHA website to track project information.

Developing a Nursing Workforce Center for Alaska

Project Steering Committee Kick-Off Meeting
May 28, 2025

Marjie Hamburger, Director of Workforce
mhamburger@alaskahha.org



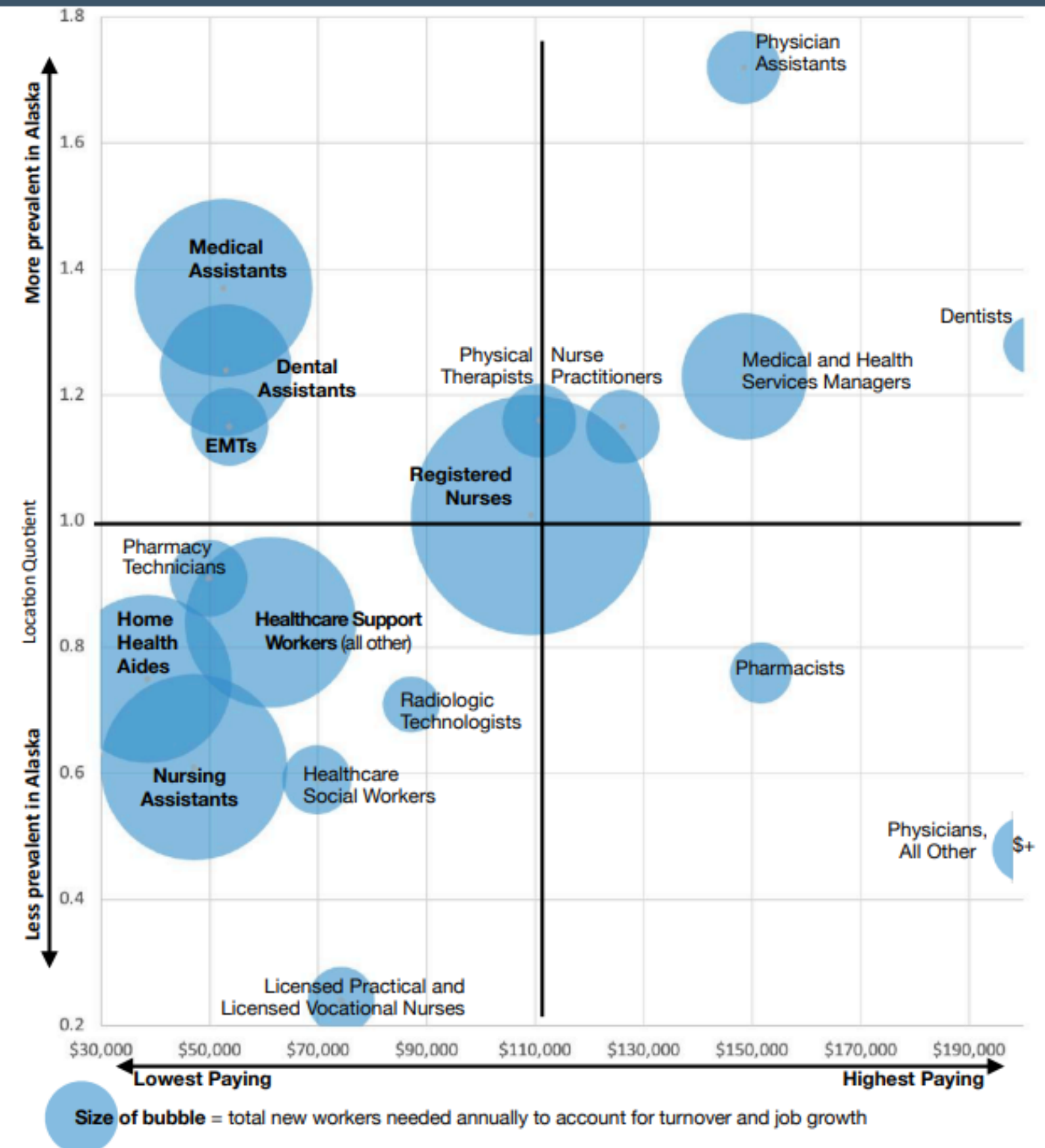
Status of the Nursing Workforce in Alaska

This chart cross-tabulates new workers needed on an annual basis by count, location quotient, and salary data, and charts them into a picture of the state’s future healthcare workforce needs. It provides a visual blueprint for where resources should be focused when attracting workers to Alaska, or for growing our own workforce.

The size of the bubble corresponds to the number of workers needed to be hired annually to keep pace with turnover and job growth. Registered nurses have the highest workforce development need of all position categories. While the position is growing at the average pace for all healthcare jobs — 11% in ten years — combined growth and turnover rates mean that an additional 1,412 registered nurses will be needed annually over the next ten years (including 67 new registered nurse positions created annually).

Source: [Alaska Healthcare Workforce Analysis 2024](#)

Graphic of Annual Healthcare Workforce Development Needs



What is a Nursing Workforce Center?

- State-level organization ensuring a robust, diverse, and well-prepared nursing workforce
- Works to address nursing shortages, support nursing education, protect the well-being of nurses, and other matters affecting the nursing workforce to meet the state's health care needs
- Use a data-driven approach to nursing workforce planning.
- 45 state organizations across the country

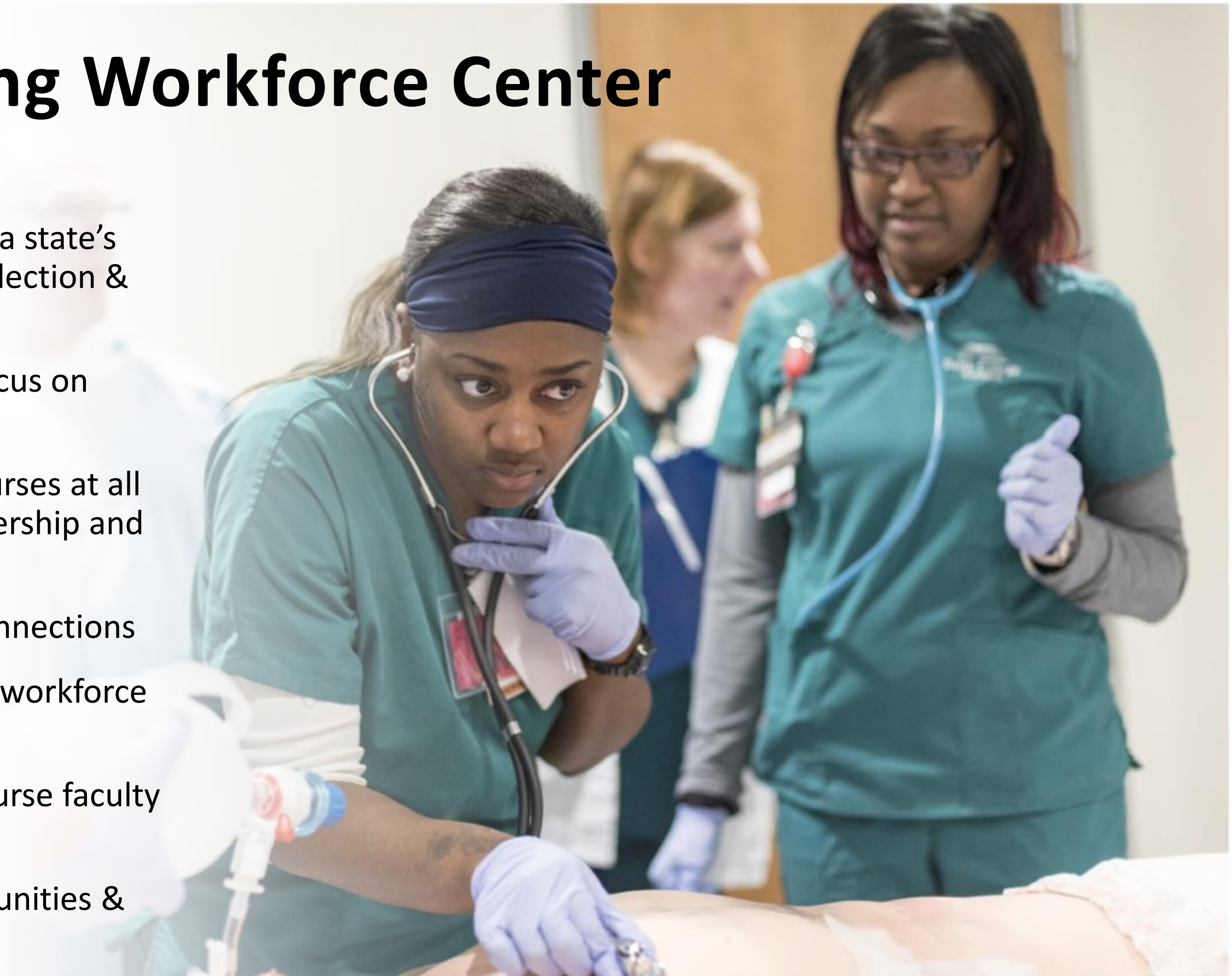
“State nursing workforce centers help to clarify the meaning and context of nursing shortages at the local and state level. We need to ask the right people, the right questions, to define the right problems.”

- Georgia Nursing Workforce

Focus of a Nursing Workforce Center

Some Examples:

- Study the unique characteristics of a state's nursing workforce through data collection & analysis
- Promote nursing as a career and focus on retaining nurses
- Create training opportunities for nurses at all levels and settings to advance leadership and professional practice
- Strengthen employer-education connections
- Build programs to diversify nursing workforce such as mentoring
- Collect data and test solutions to nurse faculty shortages
- Enhance clinical experience opportunities & scheduling



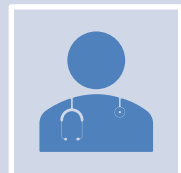
Why a Nursing Workforce Center in Alaska?



Unite partners across Alaska to ensure that the state has a well supported, robust, and sustainable nursing workforce



Strengthen collaboration between education programs and healthcare industry



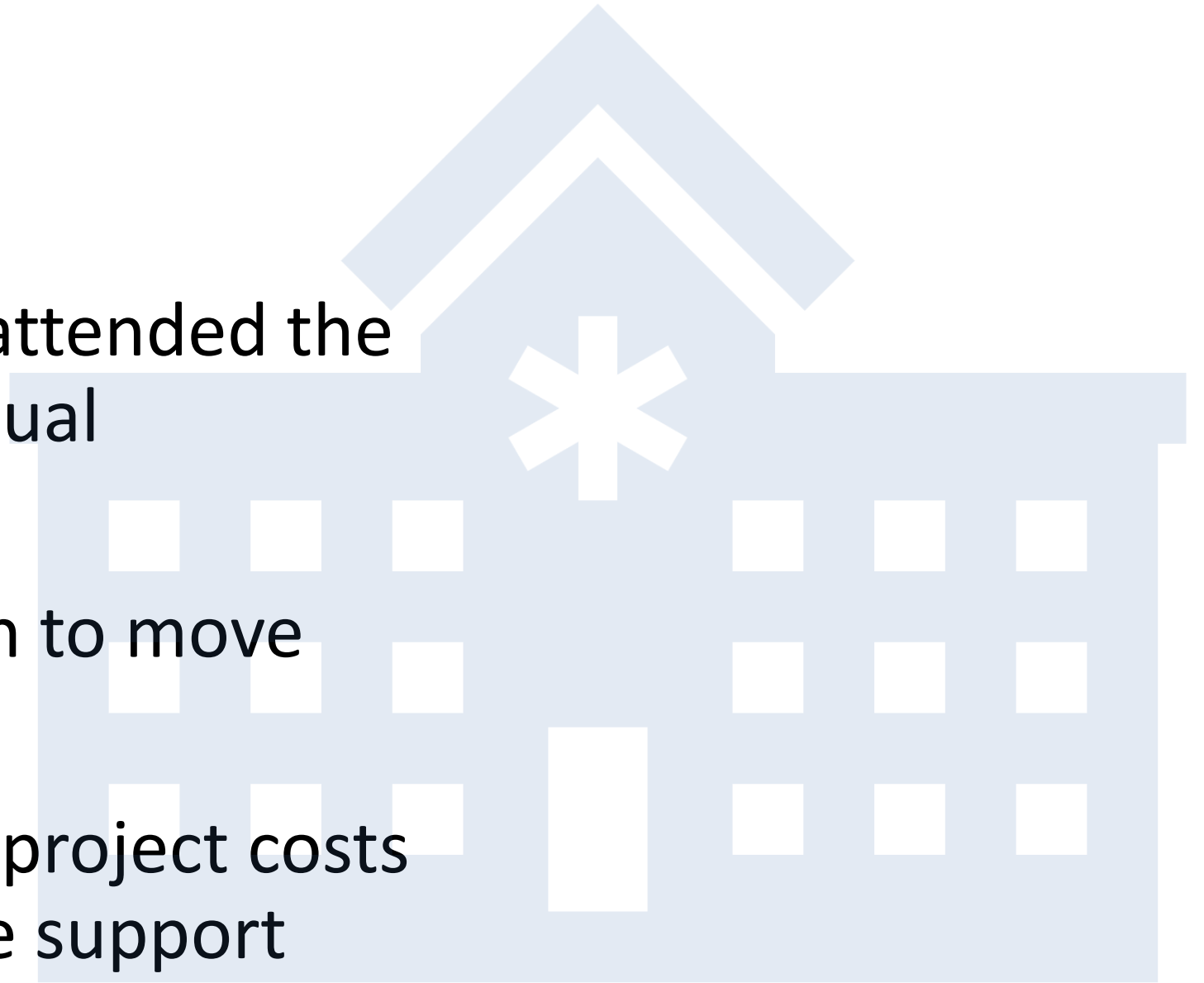
Collect state level data on nursing workforce to provide context for productive conversations about real problems facing the nursing workforce and practical solutions



Secure funding to support initiatives across the healthcare continuum such as nursing externships, transition to practice & leadership development.

Alaska's Progress Towards a Nursing Workforce Center

- AHHA convened stakeholders in March 2024
- Ten people representing a variety of stakeholders attended the National Forum on Nursing Workforce Centers annual conference in June 2024
- Stakeholder discussions in July 2024 led to decision to move forward with developing the concept
- AHHA secured funding to convene partners, cover project costs through June 2026, and hire consultants to provide support with identifying goals and achieving desired outcomes
- As of May 2025 – consultant teams contracted; steering committee formed



Initial Stakeholders Engaged in the Process

Education/Academic Nurse Education Programs

Alaska Pacific University
AHEC/Center for Rural Health
UAA School of Nursing
Charter College
University of Providence

Employers/Healthcare Industry

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Bartlett Regional Hospital
Foundation Health Partners
Providence Alaska Medical Center
Alaska Regional Hospital
Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium
South Peninsula Hospital

Associations/Other

Alaska Hospital and Healthcare Assoc.
Alaska Nurses Association
APRN Alliance
Mat-Su Health Foundation
School Nurses Association

Government Entities

Alaska Board of Nursing
State of Alaska Division of Public Health,
School Nursing



Elements of a Successful Nursing Workforce Center

- Mission-Driven Focus on the Nursing Workforce
- Trusted Source of Independent Data and Research
- Strong Statewide Partnerships
- Ability to Convene Stakeholders
- Action-Oriented Programs with Measurable Impact

Steering Committee Member Expectations

- Create a Mission/Vision Statement
- Choose a Center Model
- Choose a Leadership Structure
- Choose a Business Model

Timeline

May 2025	Project Kick Off!
June 2025	Nursing Workforce Center Models
July 2025	Understanding Alaska Workforce Data
August 2025	Workforce Center Funding Strategies
September 2025	Leadership and Governance Models
October 2025	Final Decision
November 2025	Official Launch of the Alaska Nursing Workforce Center

EDUCATION PIPELINE	MENTORSHIP & SUPPORT	WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	Centralized data and Information	ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE & SUSTAINABILITY	ACCESS & EQUITY
positive Summary: Building and supporting the full continuum from interest in nursing to advanced education.	Summary: Guiding and uplifting individuals throughout their nursing journey, from entry to retirement.	Summary: Ensuring a strong, prepared, and sustainable nursing workforce across the state with an emphasis of recruiting students from within Alaska.	Summary: Collect and providing access to non-partisan, accurate data and information for all sectors of the nursing profession	Summary: Building the organizational structure, systems, and funding base to support long-term success	Summary: Increasing diversity, reaching rural communities, and simplifying access to resources and opportunities.
Early exposure to a career in nursing positive	Resources, mentorship for students and new nurses, public health development	Helping achieve something that wouldn't have happened otherwise	Centralized resource center!	a structure and sustainable funding to continue work into future	Special focus on supporting nurses in rural and underserved communities
Provide internship clearinghouse, job shadowing opportunities, support for various types of nursing professions	Creating a center that supports nursing practice from the time a person has an idea of becoming a nurse through becoming a retired nurse. Lifelong support and resources	Achieved results – graduates, growing our own	Become an "easy button" for anyone exploring a nursing career – making it simple to find and access thousands of available grants, scholarships, and employer programs to pay for their education	Consider AHEC as host for this center	Connect to look at what else is out there for their next step
Continuing education	Mentorship, hard to support more than one at a time	Workforce – we have a lot of traveling nurses. Would like to share staff across the State of Alaska	Data collection, a bipartisan neutral party to be an expert for the legislature to call on	Leverage resources that already exist. Things AHEC already has the structure for	
Create lower 48 talent interest in moving to Alaska	When a student is enrolled and accepted, they can join and connect and find a group of peers and mentors, a central place to go for these things	Statewide clinical placements – bridge between healthcare organizations and education organizations – BIG DREAM	One stop shop	Why reinvent new – could AHEC host this center	
Drop in students applying to school, and nursing student volume, interest in leaving state –	Creating a mentorship for future nurses	Growing our own, retain them	Go to place for local, state, and federal support – where they look to	North Carolina is a model to Alaska – look at and follow	
Highlighting what a great education opportunity we have in the state.	Opportunity to meet up with other nurses, working and retired, give them info on what it's like to be a nurse, help with specific situations, can feel confident that they will be greeted with positivity	Grow our own, reaching out to Alaska Native patients and recipients	Independent source of information	In 5 years, I would like to see the Nursing workforce center established and funded. A place where data, education, and nursing resources are housed.	
There is a disconnect between expectation and what their skill level is reflecting. Pathways of growth, fostered by mentorship that will line them up for success	There is a profound need for healing wounded healers ... don't know that this Center is the right spot however it does impact our ability to attract	Looking at growing our Alaska Native workforce	Central place for nursing issues to be discussed from all aspects, points of view		
Health Occupation Services – summer internship/shadowing program in schools	Professional place to work through difficult problems	Centralized place for trusted info for employers and nurses			
Nursing schools expand and grow to meet industry needs	Build side by side together to support each other, a lot of alignment	Growing our own nursing workforce			
Robust, accessible online platform that delivers continuing education and professional resources to nurses across state	Someone to reach out to about their cultures, specific patient care needs	Nursing compact			
Create pathway for experienced international talent to enter workforce	Learning from others, not replicating errors				
Faculty shortage – impacts nursing education capacity. The salary differential between nursing academic and clinical practice is significant	Offer nursing wellness programs				
Support Growing Our Own – both nursing faculty and nurses (Registered Nursing and Advanced Practice Nursing)					
Organization of statewide education resources – perhaps preceptorships, internships, hiring events					
Internship, shadowing, support them through nursing school					
A go to place for the nursing workforce seeking jobs, education, and resources.					