

Topic: Workforce Data & Analysis, Part 2

Summary

Consultant Patricia Moulton Burwell presented the second half of the data on nursing workforce, focusing on the demand side. The committee recognized the need for improved data collection methods to better inform workforce planning.

Looking ahead, the committee discussed the importance of the upcoming launch of the Nursing Workforce Center and the need for stakeholder engagement. Plans for the November 4th launch were outlined, with an emphasis on presenting a draft vision for the center and soliciting feedback from participants. September 3rd's meeting will focus on funding strategies and insights from discussions with potential funders, as the committee aims to take ownership of the center's direction and ensure it effectively addresses the challenges facing Alaska's nursing workforce.

Update on Rural Health Transformation Fund

Marjie Hamburger, AHHA's Director of Workforce, discussed the Rural Health Transformation Fund and the December deadline for the state to submit a plan to the federal government. AHHA proposed several initiatives in their RFI response, including support for the Nursing Workforce Center. The state's job is to review and prioritize projects based on submitted proposals and develop their plan for how to apply the approximately \$100 million per year for 5 years to "health related activities".

Nursing Workforce Data Discussion

Part 2 of Patricia's data presentation centered around demand data related to the nursing workforce, emphasizing its importance in understanding the number of nurses needed in various settings. She highlighted the use of employer surveys and Department of Labor data to estimate shortages and hard-to-fill roles. The significance of wage data and inflation considerations in analyzing workforce trends was also mentioned.

LPN, RN, NP, and Faculty Employment and Wage Trends in Alaska

The employment and wage trends for LPNs, RNs, NPs, and nursing faculty in Alaska was discussed. LPN jobs had seen a 9% decrease, while RN jobs had increased by 12%, with an average wage of \$112,040 in 2024. NPs experienced a 26% decrease in jobs but a 29% increase in wages, highlighting competitive salary trends in different sectors.

Data Gaps and Workforce Projections in Alaska's Nursing Sector

The presentation included information on the need for improved data collection in Alaska's nursing workforce, noting the lack of healthcare facility surveys and job posting data. The consultant emphasized the importance of accurate labor market data, particularly regarding CRNA statistics, and suggested looking into job posting data from sources like Burning Glass. A steering committee member expressed the need to capture and tout the benefits of data collection to support the Nursing Workforce Center's funding and initiatives.

Understanding Nurse Supply and Demand Imbalances

Three types of imbalances in the nursing workforce were outlined: oversupply, uneven distribution, and shortages. The consultant explained that while oversupply could lead to

unemployment and low wages, the more pressing issue in Alaska was the uneven distribution of nurses, with most located in urban centers.

Labor Market Projections for Nursing in Alaska

Projected growth data of nursing jobs in Alaska was presented and it was explained that these projections were based on national models and local survey data, which could vary in accuracy depending on response rates. Additionally, the consultant pointed out that the average growth rate for all occupations in Alaska was 6.92%, indicating a higher demand for nursing roles.

Projection Modeling for Nursing Workforce in Alaska

A modified supply projection model for Alaska's nursing workforce, which incorporated available state-based data was presented. The consultant compared different methods of estimating supply and demand, revealing a potential shortage of LPNs while indicating an adequate supply of RNs depending on the projection model. The discussion highlighted the need for better data collection to enhance the accuracy of future projections.

Gaps in Nursing Workforce Data and Projections

Critical data gaps affecting nursing workforce projections became obvious, including missing non-renewal data and employment zip codes. The consultant recommended engaging Global Data to enhance the accuracy of workforce models and noted the alarming trend of older LPNs nearing retirement. Additionally, the consultant stressed the importance of addressing faculty burnout and increasing funding for nursing programs to maintain student output.

Insights and Recommendations for Alaska's Nursing Workforce

A report on Alaska's nursing workforce including insights from committee members is being prepared. The need for ongoing data collection and analysis to support the establishment of a Nursing Workforce Center seemed evident from the presentation. Consultant Jana Bitton added that the data could help address the maldistribution of nurses in the state.

Upcoming Plans for the Nursing Workforce Center

The next meeting is on September 3rd. The topics for discussion will include a funding matrix.

November 4th is the date for the Nursing Workforce Center in-person convening in Anchorage. It is hoped that attendance at this one-day meeting will include representation from the bigger stakeholder group. The steering committee and consultants will present the center's vision, purpose, recommended home, and recommended funding strategy to attendees, seeking feedback to inform the implementation phase of the project.