

HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING COMMISSION FUTURE READY OREGON

HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY CONSORTIUM

EMPLOYER FOCUS GROUPS:

INPUT SUMMARY

SEPTEMBER 24, 2024


JENSEN STRATEGIES

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Management consultants since 2012

- ☐ Portland Based
- ☐ Public Sector Focus (State and local government)

Services:

- ☐ Collaborative Decision-making / Facilitation
- ☐ Organizational Development
- ☐ Policy Analysis
- ☐ Executive Recruitment

JENSEN STRATEGIES

Focus Group Facilitators



Erik Jensen

Principal
Healthcare and Tech
Facilitator



Amelia Wallace

Senior Associate
Manufacturing
Facilitator

PROJECT OVERVIEW

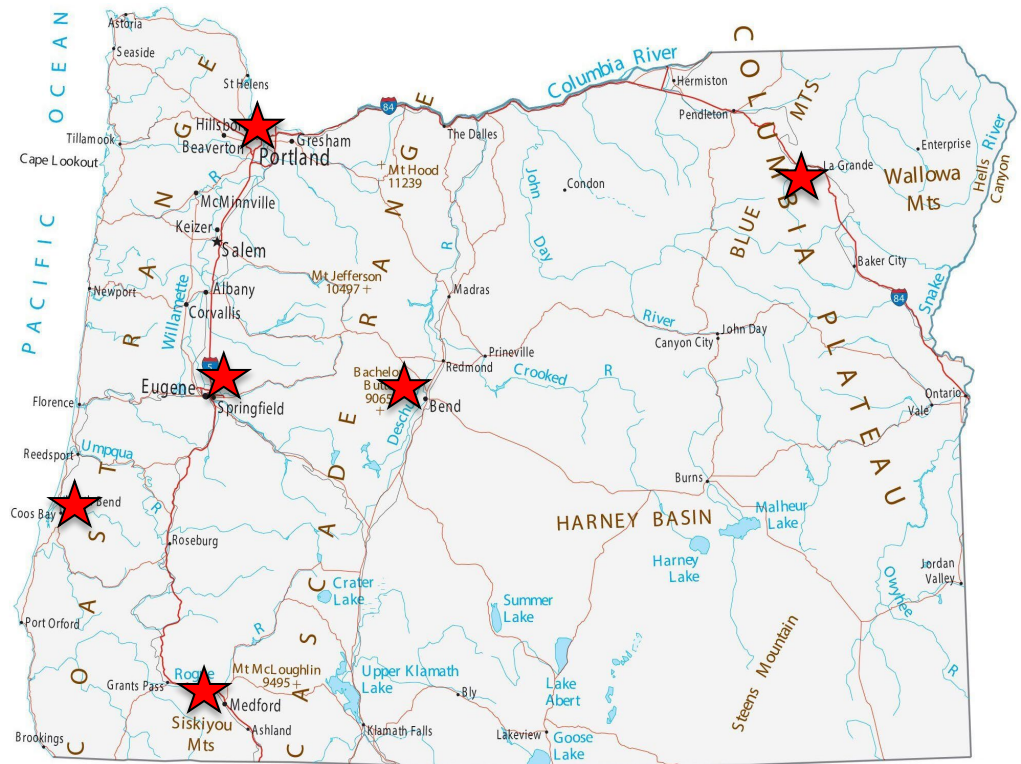
Objective:

To inform the Healthcare Consortium's discussions and recommendations, through a series of focus groups, obtain information and perspectives from Oregon healthcare employers on their experience and needs related to workforce planning, training, development, and retention.

FOCUS GROUPS

Seven in-person facilitated sessions held in six Oregon regions including:

- Portland Metro (2)
- Salem-Eugene
- Oregon Coast
- Rogue Valley
- Central Oregon
- Eastern Oregon



FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Participants limited to healthcare employers

Healthcare sectors represented:

- Hospitals – Direct Care
- Behavioral Health
- Long-term Care
- Clinics
- Community Based Care
- Federally Qualified Health Centers



41 Participants / 33 Employers

- 6 average participants per session
- Attendance ranged from 4 to 10 participants
- Some sessions had 2-3 representatives from a single employer
- One Healthcare Consortium member participated as an employer

FOCUS GROUP PREPARATION & DEVELOPMENT

Conducted 12 pre-assessment interviews with 12 Consortium members and other healthcare industry leaders

- Provided foundation for key issues and what information would be helpful to the Consortium
- Identification of potential focus group participants

Collaborated with HECC staff to help identify employer representatives to invite

DISCUSSION PARAMETERS

Based on the Foundational Focus Areas per HECC Consortia:

DEMAND PLANNING

in the context of workforce demand. What data do employers use? How do they predict their workforce needs?

SKILLS, CREDENTIALS, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING NEEDS

What are the high value and industry recognized credentials for that specific sector? Are there clear pathways and opportunities from entry to mid-level credentials that are in high demand? What are the perspectives of employers about how we can integrate education and training resources to meet the needs of the employers?

EQUITY AND INCLUSION / DIVERSIFYING WORKFORCE

the strategies employers are deploying to recruit and retain a diverse workforce? What are the biggest challenges in that specific industry sector to recruit and retain a diverse workforce?

SECTOR SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

FOCUS GROUP FRAMEWORK

AGENDA

- Welcome / Overview
- Focus Group Introductions
- Discussion Overview
- Discussion Topics*
 - Demand Planning / Recruitment
 - Training / Education
 - Career Pathways
 - Retention

* All topics included discussion of diversity workforce approaches

HANDOUTS

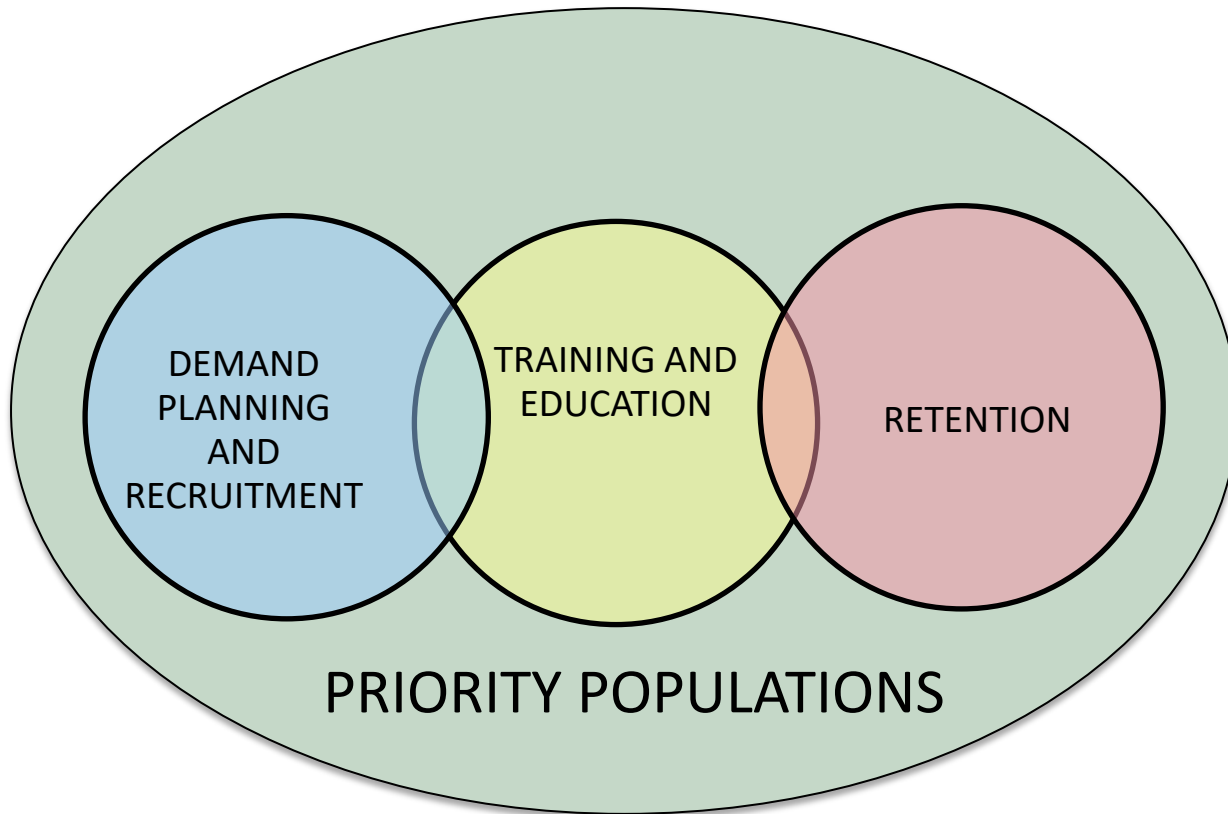
- Agenda
- Healthcare Consortium Member List
- Future Ready Oregon

FOCUS GROUPS EXPERIENCE

- Participants were VERY APPRECIATIVE of being invited and of the regional approach
- Full and robust participation by all attendees
- Input was constructive, thoughtful, and solution-oriented
- Recognized addressing workforce issues does not rest solely on the State
- Participants developed connections among each other
- Participants desire continued involvement and dialogue with HECC/State



FOCUS GROUPS FINDINGS



FINDINGS CONTEXT- GENERAL

- ❑ Findings are based on solely on participants' input shared at the focus groups
- ❑ Findings shared today are a summary – more, but consistent, information to be shared in report
- ❑ Most findings are relevant across the regions while some are region specific

NOTE: The healthcare industry is recovering from the Covid pandemic impact

- Input during this period of time is unique and reflects a changing workforce landscape
- The full employee lifecycle has experienced unprecedented challenges resulting from the pandemic and employee expectations – leaving employers to chart new approaches

FINDINGS: EMPLOYER EXPERIENCE

DEMAND PLANNING

- Workforce demand planning is short-term for nearly all healthcare employers
 - "Planning in the moment" – addressing immediate needs
 - Annual planning
 - 1-2 years
 - 5 years (only if required for funding)
- Challenges to long-term workforce planning
 - Catching up and recalibrating after pandemic workforce shortages
 - Changing workforce expectations
 - Unpredictable staffing supply
 - Government funding cycles (for public health employers)

FINDINGS: EMPLOYER EXPERIENCE

DEMAND PLANNING (cont.)

- Data/information:
 - Internal
 - Organization retirements
 - Current vacancies
 - Community / State
 - Community Assessments
 - Medicaid participant statistics
 - Demographics / Population Trends
 - Regulatory / Public Funding Availability
 - State requirements – e.g. patient/nursing ratios
 - Accreditation requirements (public health)
 - Available funding (public health)
 - Data Sources
 - Bureau of Labor Statistics
 - Oregon Healthcare Association data
 - Regional sources

FINDINGS: EMPLOYER EXPERIENCE

RECRUITMENT

- Recruitment Approaches for Existing Vacancies
 - Internal recruitment
 - Advertising/Postings (e.g., company website, Indeed, targeted professional & priority population websites, local ads)
 - LinkedIn
 - Provider network
 - Job fairs
 - Word of mouth
 - Social media posts
 - Recruiters
 - Temp Agencies
 - International Resources
- Proactive Recruitment (for future hires)
 - High School: partnering on programs to build awareness/experience around healthcare careers
 - Higher Education: partnering with institutions for internships, fellowships, etc.

FINDINGS: EMPLOYER EXPERIENCE

RECRUITMENT (cont.)

- Difficult Positions to Fill:
 - Nurses
 - Behavioral Health: Psychiatrists, LCSW, QMHP, After Hours Supervisors
 - Techs: Lab, Imaging, Surgical, Respiratory Therapists
 - Dental Hygienists
 - Non-Credentialed: Housekeepers, Dietary Aides
 - Primary Care and Specialist Positions
 - Doulas
 - Patient Navigators

FINDINGS: EMPLOYER EXPERIENCE

EDUCATION / TRAINING

- Higher education graduates not prepared for positions and workplace environment
- Many higher education institutions partner with employers for student job experience programs
- Gaps and challenges in Oregon healthcare education
 - Availability
 - Capacity / Supply
 - Geographic

FINDINGS: EMPLOYER EXPERIENCE

CAREER PATHWAYS

- Overall, employers say career pathways for entry-level or mid-level employees are not clearly delineated or communicated.
- Seeking growth between credentialed positions has challenges
- Career pathways can be particularly challenging for priority populations

FINDINGS: EMPLOYER EXPERIENCE

RETENTION

- Contributing factors to retention are changing
- Turnover rates – highest in first year
- Current retention approaches:
 - Bonuses, tuition financial assistance,
 - Paying for required licensing, credentialing, and certifications
 - Tuition – payments, reimbursements
 - Conducts employee satisfaction surveys (and acts on them)
 - Housing financing assistance
 - Staying competitive, if possible, with wages and benefits



TAKEAWAYS AND OPPORTUNITIES

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **There are more opportunities for Oregon healthcare employers and higher education institutions to enhance their working relationships and communication related to connecting education with workforce needs.**
 - Curriculum development
 - Career pathway definition and promotion
 - Student preparation and exposure to their future workplaces/positions
- **Oregon healthcare education program limitations and gaps contribute to current workforce shortages particularly for nursing, techs, and behavioral health positions.**
- **Accessibility to healthcare education is limited by geography, and financial resources.**
- **Healthcare employers stress the importance of a continued voice in State policy and regulation development as well as implementation.**

KEY TAKEAWAYS (cont.)

- **Priority population representation and access to the healthcare industry can have limitations:**
 - Healthcare employers hiring from Oregon healthcare educational programs are limited to the composition of those graduates
 - Job seeking coaching, both for professional and personal planning, is generally not available to assist employment candidates
 - Career path definitions and clarity are lacking
 - Employers located in communities lacking similar priority populations may deter some candidates
 - Lack of early educational exposure of healthcare career opportunities and accessibility can miss opportunities to engage some priority populations.

OPPORTUNITIES: GENERAL

- **Foster and support opportunities for healthcare employers and higher education practitioners to collaborate on developing and implementing educational curriculum and associated programs that support student success in the workforce.**

OPPORTUNITIES: DEMAND PLANNING

- Establish a central data resource website accessible to all healthcare employers including, but not limited to, state and/or national information on:
 - Demographics and population trends (regional, state, national)
 - Employer retention levels by position, category, and/or sector
 - Medicaid participants (geographically)
 - Position vacancy statistics
 - Wages
 - Cost of care

OPPORTUNITIES: RECRUITMENT

1. Develop reciprocity agreements, or a similar programs, that allow for transferability of healthcare professionals with other states.
2. Streamline processes to transition credentialed candidates hired by Oregon employers
3. Collaboration between healthcare employers to share candidate pools
4. Creating new roles that build the workforce but don't require licensure (e.g. Patient Tech)
5. Assisting employer's ability to recruit out of country candidates

OPPORTUNITIES: EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. Utilize healthcare professional associations to represent and/or facilitate healthcare employers' interests with higher education institutions
2. Ensure rural representation in employer/higher education discussions
3. Establish a state level position charged with coordinating dialogue between healthcare employers and Oregon's educational system
4. Strengthen Oregon mental health professional educational programs
5. Expand geographic access to higher educational opportunities
6. Reduce barriers, red tape, and/or qualifying criteria for existing scholarships such as the National Health Service Corps or OHA HRSA Provide targeted funding to increase pay for higher education instructors who are training highly needed credentialed positions

OPPORTUNITIES: EDUCATION AND TRAINING (cont.)

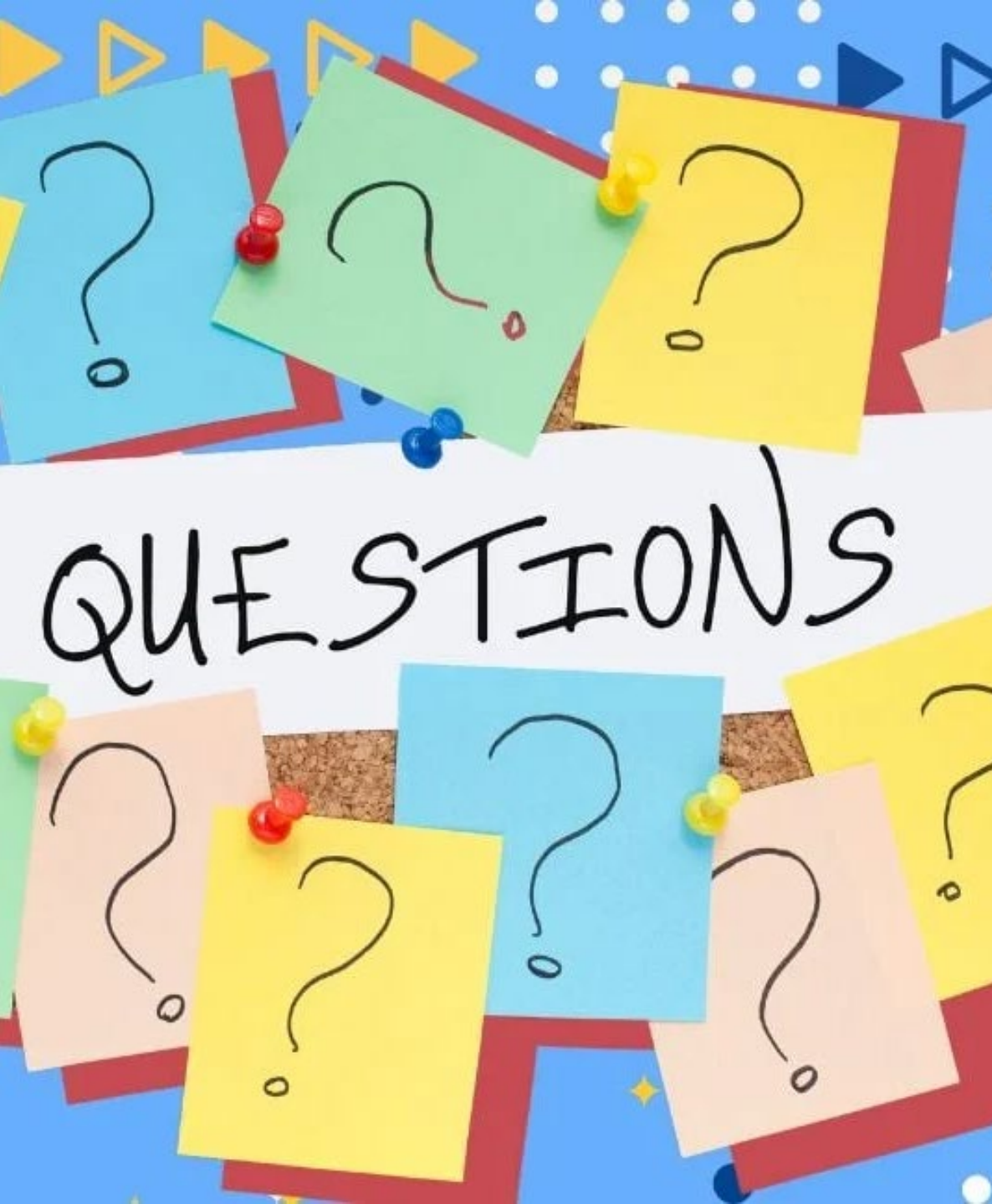
7. Allow healthcare employer staff to teach in higher education programs
8. Create required job exposure for students
9. Enable healthcare employers to establish credentialing and other training programs onsite
10. Provide childcare for student parents
11. Establish healthcare training programs in areas with significant priority populations
12. Continue and enhance healthcare career programs in high school

OPPORTUNITIES: CAREER PATHWAYS

1. Work with higher education healthcare programs to define and communicate career pathways for students
2. Support professional growth opportunities (e.g., credentialling) for employees by providing onsite training and/or financial support for living expenses
3. Create “bridge positions” to help transitions in career growth
4. Improve OHA licensure boards processing time on renewal and new licenses

OPPORTUNITIES: RETENTION

1. Provide education to healthcare employer leadership and staff on DEI including cultural competency
2. Enable and support onsite childcare
3. Enable and support employee housing assistance
4. Investing in workplace violence prevention and reduction through training, education, and legislation that holds people accountable for their violent actions
5. Address social challenges that result in repeat medical visits and a lack of available treatment
6. Provide enhanced education on substance abuse and how that impacts behavior



Q & A

THANK YOU!

