



Overview of HECC Healthcare Workforce Development Activities

August 2026

Healthcare Industry Consortium

As part of the [Future Ready Oregon](#) workforce development investment package adopted by the Legislature, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) has convened a [statewide Healthcare Industry Consortium](#) since 2023. The Consortium brings together healthcare employers, higher education and training providers, workforce partners, community-based organizations, labor and state agency partners to identify healthcare workforce barriers, elevate regional and rural perspectives, and connect field-level needs with statewide workforce and education strategies.

The Consortium meets quarterly, and HECC staff's ongoing engagement with Consortium members between meetings helps create a feedback loop to surface emerging workforce needs and promising practices to inform potential statewide action. Addressing barriers and opportunities in the primary care workforce in connection with state-level healthcare workforce needs is an emerging area of focus for the Consortium.

Behavioral Health Workforce Development

The HECC recently hired a Behavioral Health Workforce Advisor charged with leading implementation of five key recommendations from the Governor's [Behavioral Health Talent Council report](#), issued earlier this year. These include the development of a behavioral health workforce resource hub; piloting a mentorship program to support credentialing and licensure for behavioral health candidates; strengthening connections between higher education and behavioral health employers; strengthening articulation and course credit mobility; and creating a resource to support the establishment and growth of behavioral health career and technical education (CTE) programs across the state.

HECC is also in its first year of administering the [Youth Mental Health Corps](#) through its national service entity, OregonServes. The program serves as an entry point into Oregon's behavioral health workforce, as participants gain exposure to credential pathways including Youth Peer Support Specialist and Community Health Worker.

Grantmaking to Support the Healthcare Workforce

- HECC [recently received \\$1.7M in federal funding](#) to expand Registered Apprenticeship Programs. A portion of funding will support new apprentices in roles such as medical assistants, behavioral health, paramedics, dental assistants, and surgical technologists in response to workforce needs identified through engagement with healthcare employers and other workforce and industry partners.
- From 2022 to 2024, the [HECC awarded 128 Workforce Ready Grants](#) across three funding cycles in healthcare, manufacturing, and technology (\$95M total awarded). Through the most recent round of funding, \$18M was awarded for healthcare workforce development, including \$9M for general healthcare and \$9M for nursing.

Aligning Academic Coursework with Healthcare Workforce Needs

Bachelor of Science: Nursing Programs at Oregon Community Colleges

The HECC manages the program review process for [bachelor's degrees proposed by Oregon community colleges](#), including Bachelor of Science: Nursing (BSN) programs. Over the past three years, six community colleges across the state have formed a BSN Consortium, using a shared services model and engaging with industry advisory groups to ensure alignment with regional and statewide workforce needs. HECC staff support the BSN consortium with technical assistance and act as a convening partner. Additionally, the HECC approved a stand-alone BSN program at Lane

Community College that launched in Fall 2025, and in August 2026, the commission received notification of Southwestern Oregon Community College's Statement of Need for a Bachelor of Applied Science in Behavioral Health, the first step in establishing this new program, which would be the first of its kind offered in the state.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Consortium and Pathways

Most Oregon community colleges offer emergency medical services programs, and the HECC works closely with the Oregon Health Authority, which oversees these programs, as a partner in the statewide EMS consortium. HECC also helps institutions assess and implement alternative instructional models like competency-based education, credit for prior learning, and dual enrollment to strengthen high school to college and adult learner pathways into EMS careers.

Aligning Student Transfer with Healthcare Workforce Needs

The HECC and public institutions are working together to [streamline the transfer of credits](#) between Oregon's 17 community colleges and seven public universities. [Major Transfer Maps \(MTMs\)](#) are major-specific transfer degrees that allow students to transfer credits from Oregon community colleges to Oregon public universities. In addition to MTMs, individual courses are aligned for statewide transferability through [Common Course Numbering \(CCN\)](#).

When selecting new MTMs, HECC is required to give weight to programs that align with Oregon's workforce needs. Biology was one of the first MTMs developed in recognition of Oregon's healthcare workforce needs. Similarly, MTMs in psychology, human development and family services, and sociology have been created in part to meet the state's workforce needs in behavioral health. CCN courses in biology, chemistry, psychology, and sociology support students to move more efficiently through required coursework toward healthcare credentials and degrees.

Research and Analysis on Oregon's Healthcare Workforce Needs

The HECC regularly conducts analysis of Oregon's workforce needs. Recent studies in healthcare include the following.

- [Oregon Behavioral Health Talent Assessment](#) and [Map of Behavioral Health Career Pathways](#) (2025) - Prepared for the HECC by Advocates for Human Potential, this report and map identify pathways for Oregonians to behavioral health careers, and evaluates barriers and opportunities for recruiting, training, and retaining a diverse behavioral health workforce. Its findings formed the basis for the recommendations in the Governor's Behavioral Health Talent Council report.
- [Healthcare Occupation and Wage Data](#) (2025) – Pursuant to ORS 660.410, each industry consortium is charged with biennially publishing occupational and wage data in the healthcare, manufacturing, and technology sectors. Compiled by HECC staff, the healthcare profile outlines education and training requirements in healthcare fields, along with employment and wage data for these occupations.
- [Postsecondary Healthcare Education Shortage in Oregon](#) (2023) – This report, produced by the Oregon Longitudinal Data Collaborative (OLDC) which is housed at the HECC, provides a statewide analysis of the nursing education shortage impacting every region of Oregon. The study was widely covered in state media outlets and cited as a motivating factor in the significant expansion of Rogue Community College's nursing program and the development of Central Oregon Community College's BSN program, also in 2023.

Funding to Support Students in Healthcare Programs

- **Healthcare Scholarships:** Through HECC's Office of Student Access and Completion ([OSAC scholarship catalog](#)), numerous scholarships are available to students pursuing healthcare careers. Additional scholarships and loan repayment programs for students in healthcare fields are [offered through the Oregon Health Authority](#).
- **Formula Funding Weight for Healthcare Programs:** HECC allocates funding to Oregon's seven universities through the [Student Success and Completion Model](#). The university funding model provides incentives for degree completions in high-demand, high-wage fields, including healthcare.