



Summary of LARC Regional Program Advisory on Healthcare

March 4th, 2025

The meeting explored the current state of the healthcare industry in LA County, covering everything from job growth to wages. Discussions focused on the crucial role of soft skills and human interaction, alongside the growing impact of AI and technology. The meeting also addressed the need for better workforce development, including closing skills gaps and preparing people for the industry's demands. The panel discussion highlighted practical challenges: getting people the right skills, ensuring business readiness, and focusing on patient care, while also considering larger trends like housing and environmental impacts.

Summary of Advisory by section

Healthcare Industry in LA County

The meeting began with an overview of the healthcare industry in Los Angeles County, presented by Matthew Skyberg, Senior GIS Research Analyst, from the Institute for Applied Economics at LAEDC. Matthew discussed employment trends, wages, workforce demographics, and future job growth projections. The healthcare industry in LA County has shown steady growth, employing over 466,000 people in 2023, with ambulatory healthcare services representing the largest share at 54.7%. Wages in the industry are competitive, with an average annual wage of \$74,800. Employment is projected to grow by 9% through 2028, adding 42,000 new jobs, with nursing and residential care facilities expected to grow the fastest at 11.3%.

Healthcare Industry Data in LA County

Matthew presented data on the healthcare industry in Los Angeles County, highlighting the 5 companies with the most job postings since 2013. Kaiser Permanente, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Providence Southern California, PIH Health, and City of Hope represented 22% of nearly 1 million unique job postings in the healthcare industry. The age distribution in the healthcare workforce showed a strong presence of mid-career workers and a potential need for more pipeline programs to recruit younger workers. The educational attainment of healthcare workers showed higher levels of formal education compared to other industries. The healthcare workforce was one of the most diverse industries in Los Angeles County, with less than 24% of workers identifying as white. The healthcare industry was female-dominated, with over 70% of healthcare workers being female. The data suggested a strong career mobility in the healthcare industry, with many positions requiring certifications, associate degrees, or professional licensing. The healthcare industry remained one of the most stable and expanding industries in Los Angeles County, with a projected 9% growth in employment by 2028.

Healthcare Industry and LA Community Colleges

Pablo Martinez, Asst. Program Manager at LAEDC, then introduced Luke Meyer, Director of the Center of Excellence at Mt. San Antonio College, who shared findings on healthcare programs at LA community colleges. Kristen Moore, a research analyst with the COE, provided detailed

insights on healthcare enrollments, demographics, employment outcomes, and earnings of students in these programs. The data showed a high number of health students, particularly in nursing, with a notable percentage in jobs related to their field of study. There was a positive change in earnings for many healthcare graduates, though they generally earned less than all CTE students. The living wage was attained by about half of the healthcare students.

Healthcare Occupations and Nursing Positions

Kristen continued exploring the data on healthcare occupations, focusing on nursing positions. LA County's self-sufficiency standard wage is \$24.30 per hour, but nursing assistants, at 10% growth, are not reaching this wage. Registered nurses and LVNs meet the standard. Job postings in 2024 showed 83% for RNS, 10% for LVNs, and 7% for CNAs. Top employers included Prospect Medical Holdings, Kaiser Permanente, Providence, and MLK Community Hospital. Advertised wages for nursing jobs ranged from \$109,000 to \$118,000 annually.

Exploring Healthcare Partnerships and Collaboration

The next section was a panel discussion featuring industry experts: Joanna Romana from UCLA Health, Andy Ortiz from Cedars-Sinai, Dr. Natasha Milatovich from AltaMed Health Services, and Marianna Volodarskiy from Kaiser Permanente. Jose Pelayo, Director of Workforce Development at LAEDC, initiated an in-depth discussion with the panelists. The panelists provided an overview of their organizations' services, operations, and commitment to healthcare delivery. They highlighted their focus on patient care, community outreach, and reducing healthcare disparities. The discussion aimed to explore potential partnerships and collaborations to strengthen programs and improve workforce readiness.

Healthcare Trends, Challenges, and Workforce

The panelists discussed the current trends and challenges in the healthcare industry. They highlighted the shift from fee-for-service to value-based models, the need for a skilled workforce in population health management, data analytics, and integrated care delivery. They also emphasized the importance of reducing healthcare disparities, expanding access to culturally competent services, and addressing workforce shortages. The team acknowledged the financial headwinds impacting their organizations and the confusion surrounding executive orders related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. They agreed on the need to prepare their workforce for future professional development and to improve communication skills and empathy. The discussion also touched on the importance of setting up young professionals for future growth and the need to understand and recognize current regulatory standards and expectations in healthcare.

Workforce Development and Human Experience in Healthcare

Andy provided critical insights into the challenges faced by healthcare professionals, emphasizing the need for a mission-oriented workforce. He noted that burnout and staffing challenges contribute to lower engagement. Ghada Dunbar, SCAL Regional Director at Kaiser Permanente, who was invited to the spotlight, underscored the importance of soft skills and human experience in healthcare. The panel discussed the need for workforce development, with a focus on technical skills, patient-centric care, and emotional intelligence. Challenges in upscaling

the current workforce, including time and resource constraints and the need for customized professional development, were also addressed.

AI's Impact on Healthcare Workforce

The team discussed the impact of technology and artificial intelligence (AI) on the workforce, particularly healthcare professionals. They highlighted that AI's effectiveness relies on the quality of information it receives, which is often provided by frontline workers. The group emphasized the need for employees to understand how their basic skills, such as patient assessment and documentation, are critical to AI's success. They also noted that the workforce faces challenges in keeping up with rapidly evolving technology and stressed the importance of employees developing complementary skills. The team also touched on the role of telehealth and the potential for AI to improve patient care and administrative tasks. They agreed that AI is here to stay and should not be feared but embraced and understood to improve healthcare delivery.

Addressing Workforce Gaps and Needs

During the Q&A section, representatives from the community colleges and healthcare organizations discussed addressing workforce gaps and needs. Community colleges proposed expanding certificate and fast-track programs, increasing access to clinical training sites, and engaging high school students in healthcare career awareness. Healthcare organizations, such as Cedar Sinai, planned to build their own training programs and partner with community colleges while continuing to recruit from them. The importance of targeted community conversations with high school students and addressing rare programs was emphasized.

Healthcare Workforce Development Challenges

The panel discussed challenges and opportunities in healthcare workforce development. Key points include the need for students to have technical skills, business readiness, and patient-centric care knowledge. Obstacles mentioned are time and resources for upskilling current workers. Telehealth and AI are identified as ongoing trends. The importance of soft skills is emphasized. Panelists also address issues of housing affordability, talent retention, and the impact of wildfires on recruitment. The discussion concludes with suggestions for innovative partnerships to address the shortage of clinical training sites for students.

Panelist Key Takeaways:

- Joanna Romana (UCLA Health):
 - Emphasized the importance of culturally competent services and reducing healthcare disparities.
 - Highlighted the need for a workforce prepared for future professional development, with strong communication skills and empathy.
 - Focused on the shift towards value-based care and the need for professionals skilled in integrated care delivery.
- Andy Ortiz (Cedars-Sinai):
 - Stressed the critical need for a mission-oriented workforce and addressed the challenges of burnout and staffing shortages.

- Highlighted the importance of understanding the business of healthcare and the need for a "human touch" in patient care.
- Discussed the organization's plans to build their own training programs and strengthen partnerships with community colleges.
- Dr. Natasha Milatovich (AltaMed Health Services):
 - Focused on expanding access to healthcare and addressing workforce shortages.
 - Recognized the financial headwinds impacting healthcare organizations and the importance of adapting to evolving regulatory standards.
 - Stressed the importance of population health management, and data analytics.
- Marianna Volodarskiy (Kaiser Permanente):
 - Highlighted the organization's commitment to community outreach and reducing healthcare disparities.
 - Discussed the impact of technology and AI, emphasizing the need for employees to develop complementary skills.
 - Showed the importance of talent retention, and preparing young professionals for growth.

Proposed Next Steps / Talking Points / Conclusions:

- LA's 19 community colleges might explore the expansion of certificate and fast-track programs for in-demand healthcare roles, such as LVNs, CNAs, and MAs.
- LA's 19 community colleges could investigate increasing access to clinical training sites through partnerships with healthcare organizations.
- LA's 19 community colleges may want to consider engaging high school students earlier to raise awareness of healthcare career paths.
- LA's 19 community colleges could explore ways to enhance students' job readiness skills, including resume writing, interviewing, and networking.
- LA's 19 community colleges might consider incorporating training on data-driven decision-making and healthcare analytics into their programs.
- LA's 19 community colleges could explore innovative solutions for providing clinical preceptors, such as hiring dedicated instructors or forming partnerships with multiple hospitals to share costs.
- Healthcare employers may wish to continue partnering with community colleges for recruitment while also exploring the development of internal training programs.
- LA's 19 community colleges could consider developing programs for hard-to-fill roles, such as surgical scrub technicians.
- LA's 19 community colleges might explore providing support for students in obtaining certifications following program completion.
- Healthcare employers and community colleges could consider collaborating to address housing affordability issues for healthcare workers.