

State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING HARTFORD,
CT 06106-1591

Task Force to Study Methods to Address the Shortage of Radiologic Technologists,
Nuclear Medicine Technologists and Respiratory Care Practitioners in the State

Meeting Summary

Monday, September 16, 2024

12:00 PM on Zoom and YouTube Live

I. Convene Meeting and Review of the Charge

- Bernadette Mele convened the meeting at 12:00 PM.
- Attendance: Bernadette Mele, Matthew Green, Paul Kidwell, Sajjad Raza, Adam Kaye, and Karen Griffiths

II. Reports and Discussion

- Paul Kidwell reported that the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) surveyed a general list of job descriptions and that Rep. McCarthy-Vahey asked the Office of Legislative Research (OLR) to see if they can provide additional information. He asked the group about expanding the survey instrument to provide more detailed information with an additional request for information. He believes that the OLR might not be able to provide the group with the level of detail that the group is hoping for.
- Bernadette Mele asked Paul Kidwell if he will bring the survey information to the group.
- Paul Kidwell clarified that he would bring back the survey data to the group with the additional questions to the survey.

- Matthew Green presented his report on the Nuclear Medicine modality. The report included responses from education program directors of the modality, state actions to attract new people to the modality and infrastructure assistance.
- Bernadette Mele presented her report on the Radiologic Technologist modality. The report included responses from 50% of education program directors in the state as well as the Connecticut Society of Radiologic Technologists, understanding the shortage, program capacity and resources, support from the state, future planning, and recommendations to attract new people and/or retain current technologists.
- Karen Griffiths and Sajjad Raza presented their report on the Respiratory Care Practitioners (RCP). The report included responses from education program directors as well as managers of Respiratory Departments of hospitals. They highlighted the shortage, enrollment in entry level RCP programs in CT, program capacity and resources, creating partnerships between healthcare providers and respiratory programs, ideas for managing shortage and requested legislative support.
- Bernadette Mele asked members of other modalities if their national societies are running campaigns to promote awareness. She stated that Nuclear Medicine is included in the Society of Radiologic Technologists
- Karen Griffiths informed the group of a national campaign between the three respiratory organizations that is called "Be an RT". She stated that the campaign is not enough and that Respiratory Care therapists are unique because a lot of the work is in critical care. She added that the profession needs more assistance in marketing and advertising the profession.
- Adam Kaye asked if there could be collaboration between Nuclear Medicine Technologists and Radiologic Technologists. It seems that on one end there is an excess of people wanting to go into the profession and it's still leading to a shortage. He suggested that prospective students are not aware of Nuclear Medicine Technologists which is a similar but different job that is available to them. He asked the group if they felt that the shortage came from a lot of people wanting to come into the profession, but there are not enough spots to generate the number of techs needed in the state to perform Radiology services.
- Bernadette Mele agreed with that assessment about the shortage of Radiologic Technologists.
- Adam Kaye asked if they have exhausted all available options.
- Bernadette Mele answered that radiology groups are maxed out and

suggested that possible retention bonuses could help technologists stay in the profession.

- Adam Kaye asked if it would incentivize new faculty.
- Bernadette Mele clarified that it won't incentivize faculty, but it will incentivize technologists.
- Adam Kaye asked if when talking about the one-to-one hands-on experience, are they only talking about X-ray or does it also include CT and MRI.
- Bernadette Mele answered that CT and MRI are different as those technologists are already technologists. Unless they are an entry level technologist and there is no entry level MRI in the state. She added that individuals must become radiographers first, and then expand into the advanced modalities which results in a decrease in the number x-ray technologists doing plain radiography as they have gone into CT, and MRI, etc.
- Adam Kaye emphasized that there is still a shortage in those advanced modalities as the problem is compounded.
- Bernadette Mele pointed out that the vacancy rates from Paul Kidwell will be useful as it will give members a better picture of what is happening in the state.
- Paul Kidwell reported that the survey will be resent to his members and that the it will be more specific.
- Adam Kaye stated that they received responses from private groups and that he will reach out to get that information. He also stated that there aren't that many smaller independent practices in the state and that getting data from hospitals will be more representative of the problem.
- Karen Griffiths asked the group for guidance on what to prepare to present at the next meeting.
- Bernadette Mele answered that she would like for them to come up with 5 recommendations worthy to present to the State on how they might be able to support the shortage in their respective area. As well as giving out those 5 recommendations to stakeholders to find out what is most important.
- Karen Griffiths asked how the recommendations will be presented as there is overlap between the professions.

- Bernadette Mele answered that she feels that each modality should be presented separately and then have a discussion during that meeting to determine what is best for all the professions and then to present that as a whole.
- Karen Griffiths asked if the January meeting will be an in-person meeting where they will be presenting or if they will write the recommendations and submit them.
- Bernadette Mele responded that the October meeting will be where the recommendations are brought forth and discussed, and the November meeting will be where the draft is written.
- Karen Griffiths asked if a decision then to combine or separate the three modalities. She asked if the group felt that combining the recommendations would help more than the other as it could be more powerful.
- Bernadette Mele answered that every prospective student wanting to become a radiologic technologist might not become a radiologic technologist and it might be nice to make them aware of other tracks or modalities. She asked if the University of Hartford has collective fairs with radiologic technologist.
- Karen Griffiths answered that they hold an open house with all health professions.
- Bernadette Mele suggested that high school counselors or guidance counselors can get invited to an open house where RCP's can talk about respiratory therapists.
- Karen Griffiths agreed with that idea and added that it was close to her HOSA idea. She expressed hope in getting state support for HOSAs and believes this is low hanging fruit that can attract 3 times more people. She explained how getting assistance with marketing tools would be helpful as how other states have a video that promotes the profession. Currently the video that the state has is too old and each hospital stated that they cannot afford or have the resources for a new video. She suggested that hospitals combine their resources, get state help or get someone come up with a great video to promote the profession.
- Bernadette Mele agreed that's what each profession needs and that including inter pathways could help attract prospective applicants in those professions to the different modalities. Bernadette emphasized finances and that it is hard for someone to advance if they don't have the means or support and believes that is a major issue in CT.

- Karen Griffith explained the vicious cycle where educational programs can't take students even though they need students and how help is needed to get these positions filled. She added that people are leaving the profession due to the workload which is contributing to the negative impact.
- Paul Kidwell suggested that when thinking about the report and recommendations that would require legislative action, that the group should find areas where all the recommendation will be supported. He added that if the group can find opportunities that have universal agreement it would be best as the Legislature has limited time to dedicate to any one thing.
- Bernadette Mele stated that Respiratory Care Practitioners and Radiologic Technologists need their licensure fees addressed because they are too high.
- Matthew Green acknowledged he knows about the licensure issue regarding nurses but is not sure about licensure regarding Radiology. He does not know if that is an option out there as licensure is a barrier to getting people into the State or staying as it is cost prohibitive.
- Karen Griffiths expressed her belief that the fee amount is not outrageous, and that student loan forgiveness or tuition assistance will go a lot further getting people into these programs.
- Bernadette Mele asked the group if they thought about affordable housing or state support in providing housing.
- Karen Griffiths stated that some hospital managers addressed that issue in areas where they are having trouble attracting RCP's and believes that it can help attract people from out of state.
- Paul Kidwell views this with two lenses and he wonders if the group will want to include affordable housing as the number of recommendations being presented will be limited.
- Karen Griffiths agrees with Paul Kidwell.
- Bernadette Mele asked the group if there is any further discussion.
- Paul Kidwell informed the group that last legislative session the Legislature considered two bills regarding licensure and offered to provide information to the group. He added that licensure is an ongoing discussion and not just in healthcare.
- Sajjad Raza suggested that in anticipation of the next meeting each member could individually think about what is going to overlap as well as the

distinction between what can come from the Legislature versus what can come from a grass roots perspective. He added that suggestions that were presented earlier could be done by the state societies instead of the state which could help prevent overlap of ideas.

- Karen Griffiths asked Paul Kidwell when they should expect the survey results.
- Paul Kidwell stated that it will be sent out early next week.
- Karen Griffiths asked if there will be a meeting a month from now.
- Bernadette Mele stated that a poll was already sent but that it will be resent.
- Bernadette Mele stated that they are looking at October for the next meeting.

III. Adjournment

- Bernadette Mele asked for a motion to adjourn. Paul Kidwell offered the motion to adjourn and it is seconded by Karen Griffiths.
- The meeting adjourned at 1:05 PM.