

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

Thursday, October 31, 2024

1:30 PM on Zoom and YouTube Live

I. Convene Meeting and Review of the Charge

- Bernadette Mele convened the meeting at 1:31 PM.
- Attendance: Bernadette Mele, Matthew Green, Rep. Cristin McCarthy-Vahey, Paul Kidwell, Adam Kaye, and Karen Griffiths
- Guests: Kat Hall

II. Reports and Discussion

- Bernadette Mele presented an overview of the agenda as well as the status of the Task Force.
- Paul Kidwell stated that they polled the 27 acute care hospitals in the state for vacancy rates.
- Kat Hall presented the survey results to the Task Force.
- Paul Kidwell stated that they can share the survey results with members and explained that categories that didn't have information was the result of receiving too few responses.

- Karen Griffiths asked who was polled and who responded.
- Paul Kidwell stated that their HR executives received the survey and the main request, and that they have various affinity groups for each of those categories and it was a mixed bag on who responded.
- Karen Griffiths asked if they had a pretty good response rate as they were getting a higher vacancy rate.
- Paul Kidwell responded that they didn't ask about temporary workers and that generally our state relies on travel professionals more than other states nationally. He stated that they had a good response rate and that the results indicated a high critical vacancy rate in all these disciplines. The pool of people to draw from is lower than other disciplines so having a modest vacancy rate indicates a need which is harder to fill for these positions.
- Karen Griffiths stated that when they polled larger health care organizations there was a thirty to forty percent vacancy rate not including travel therapists.
- Paul Kidwell stated that their takeaway was that there was a significant need in the state in these areas.
- Adam Kaye asked about the different categories of radiologic technologists and radiography and if they were delineated.
- Kat Hall responded that they were not delineated.
- Adam Kaye commented that temporary workers are prevalent in radiology and that the position is not considered a fully filled position by most health care organizations. He stated that temporary workers are expensive and not a sustainable solution to this problem as they want workers attracted to this full time.
- Paul Kidwell stated that when hospital members calculate vacancy rates, they do not include temporary labor. He stated that he hears members say that temporary labor usage is widespread.
- Karen Griffiths asked if traveling respiratory therapists are considered as temporary workers.
- Paul Kidwell responded that when calculating vacancy rates that they do not include travelers as they are temporary labor, but he will clarify and report back to the group.
- Adam Kaye presented the radiological society of Connecticut survey results of Radiology practices regarding workforce shortages.

- Paul Kidwell stated that asking about delay in services is an important question.
- Adam Kaye stated that he was surprised when they got a response about delay in services.
- Matthew Green stated that his recommendation for the nuclear medicine modality is keeping the one program for nuclear medicine technologists in Connecticut open.
- Karen Griffiths stated that her recommendations for the respiratory therapist modality is aiding with student loans as well as tuition and grant funds. She commented that members of the Task Force should keep in mind the growth of each modality as the shortage is expected to increase. Awareness of this issue faced by this modality is most important.
- Paul Kidwell commented that the University of Connecticut's (UConn) Area of Health Center (AHEC) handles the universities loan forgiveness program for health care providers and wondered if they have flexibility to add providers to the program or if it must be legislatively changed. He stated that he could reach out and ask. He added that a recommendation could be how to engage high school students to better understand health care careers.
- Karen Griffiths commented on Career Technical School Organizations (CTSO) which fall under the State Department of Education (DOE) and are funded by the Perkin's Federal Grant and considering setting up these organizations regarding health sciences.
- Bernadette Mele presented the impact of the shortage, the estimated vacancy rates, survey results of vacancy rates, supply and demand of radiography exams and vacancy rates, factors that play into the shortage as an area of focus for the Task Force, and key recommendations.
- Paul Kidwell asked a clarifying question regarding the recommendation of recognizing and giving reimbursement for radiological assistants and other advanced practitioners so that the professional can bill on their own rather than being part of the bundled payment more like a physician.
- Bernadette Mele answered that they would be closer to a physician assistant and would still work under the radiologist. She believes it would encourage more recognition for this profession as a complement to this field.
- Paul Kidwell stated that they would be billed as under supervision under a separate billing for this service. He also asked a clarifying question about a professional designation recommendation that was something intended to bring additional prestige to the work.

- Bernadette Mele agreed with that characterization as the profession isn't recognized the same way others in the field are recognized and they should be designated the same way.
- Adam Kaye added that when they are talking about outreach that they should emphasize the management piece as there is a lot of growth potential in this area
- Bernadette Mele added that in all these professions there is also a focus on not only an aging patient population, but also aging educators that must be replaced. She believes that incentives will be helpful in enticing more individuals into the field.
- Paul Kidwell stated that in the hospital space they are competing with different employers in the non-clinical space and are thinking about showing individuals the opportunity to move up.
- Bernadette Mele added that when she talks with people in hospital settings or outpatient settings they talk about aid. She also asked members if there was any additional discussion on recommendations. She went over the next steps of the Task Force and an overview of the report.
- Paul Kidwell stated that he likes the format, and it tells the story.
- Karen Griffiths asked for guidance regarding recommendations and the goal for the next meeting.
- Bernadette Mele asked Rep. Cristin McCarthy-Vahey for any insight on how to propose these recommendations.
- Rep. Cristin McCarthy-Vahey answered that there isn't necessarily a specific format but that they should think about the intended audience.
- Bernadette Mele doesn't know if fifty plus recommendations is something that they should approach and that honing down the recommendations is best and asked Rep. Cristin McCarthy-Vahey her thoughts.
- Rep. Cristin McCarthy-Vahey agrees with Bernadette Mele and suggests to clearly prioritize and focus concisely these recommendations as legislators will be ramping up for the legislative session mid-December.
- Bernadette Mele states that they will go with what they have and refine the recommendations. She asked members if there is any additional recommendation or changes.
- Karen Griffiths asked that when the report is written that it will be on behalf of

all the three different professions.

- Paul Kidwell states that if they can identify priorities that are important to all three professions then that would be a good strategy.
- Karen Griffiths asked if they should have a short summary for each profession.
- Bernadette Mele responded affirmatively.
- Karen Griffiths asked if it is possible to do a subgroup to prepare for the next meeting with individuals from each profession to come up with a presentation.
- Rep. Cristin McCarthy-Vahey responded that there can be working meetings and conversations to get ready. She again asked for members to keep in mind the audience of the report.
- Bernadette Mele stated that the report will be comprehensive, and she will coordinate with administrative staff on a subgroup to work on the report.
- Paul Kidwell stated that he agrees with that.
- Bernadette Mele asked if there is any additional discussion.
- Karen Griffiths asked if she could send an outline of what they need to complete to the group.
- Bernadette Mele stated that she will send an outline.

### III. Adjournment

- Bernadette Mele asked for a motion to adjourn. Paul Kidwell motioned to adjourn, and it was seconded by Bernadette Mele.
- The meeting adjourned at 2:31 PM.