

## Overview

To meet the demand for health care workforce development and expansion, New York's Staten Island Performing Provider System (SI PPS) partnered with the College of Staten Island and SEIU/1199 Training and Education Fund to sponsor an apprenticeship program and short- and long-term training strategies.

Richmond University Medical Center and Staten Island University Hospital formed SI PPS to implement the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) Program, a state-federal collaboration aimed at improving the quality of care for Medicaid patients and the uninsured. SI PPS has more than 75 network partners – health care and community-based organizations, organized labor and higher education institutions.

Results from a 2015 SI PPS partner survey indicated unmet training and job development needs. Health care delivery is moving towards a greater emphasis on community-focused care, creating new positions such as community health worker (CHW) and certified peer recovery advocate (CPRA). To help hospitals and health systems meet emerging workforce demands, SI PPS developed new training programs specifically

for impending needs for certified nurse aides (CNAs), CHWs and CPRAs to address the opioid crisis.

## Certified Nurse Aides

SI PPS convened all partners (higher education, organized labor, employers and front-line staff like CNAs) to examine the gaps in the current curriculum and recommend how to redesign it to ensure that critical information and skills were incorporated into

the apprenticeship program. The first class debuted in 2017 with nine students, who took the coursework while working as nursing home health aides. This ensured there was a workforce who knew they were interested in the career and were committed to work for the nursing home. Two-thirds of the participants

were home health aides who developed the skills and education to grow from that \$10 per hour position to a CNA position, which is part of the union workforce with benefits and a starting salary of \$17 per hour.

The program is a win for all. The nursing homes provide their staff with new skills and education so the aides can better relate to and care for their patients, thereby improving the nursing homes' patient satisfaction and outcomes. It also helps health aides increase their pay



and benefits and provide a pathway to a long-term career. This program reduces turnover and overtime costs while improving staff communication, teamwork and morale.

## Community Health Workers

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Another component of the workforce plan was to establish the CHW role, a key title in helping direct patients to the right care within the community and reduce reliance on the emergency department (ED) as a place for primary care. As of July 2018, four cohorts of students completed the CHW training. Two cohorts completed the extended program model, which was seven months long and incorporated a three-credit anthropology course to better understand people within the broader community. The third cohort completed the accelerated program model, which was for students who had at least 60 college credits already. In total, more than 32 students have completed CHW training with a 100% pass rate. A fourth innovative program involved training residents of city housing facilities to serve as on-site resources and links to other community health care resources. The CHW staff is instrumental in helping patients access the proper community-based health care and thus stem the inappropriate use of the ED as well as helping to connect patients with the right care in Staten Island's co-located Primary Care and Behavioral Health Care Centers.



## Certified Peer Recovery Advocates

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Finally, SI PPS determined through the survey that current training was insufficient to address the opioid

crisis. SI PPS designed a certified peer recovery advocate (CPRA) program to train and empower community members to provide total person care. The CRPAs use their lived experiences and recovery to provide empathy and pathways to recovery for patients they counsel. Instead of patients being released from the ED after treatment for their symptoms, they are now connected with the newly trained CPRAs. These advocates connect individuals with substance use disorder (SUD) to treatment programs and a community of people who are recovering from SUD. To date, there have been more than 90 trained CPRAs, who have a 92% pass rate for their certification courses, which are certified by the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Providers of New York State.

SI PPS hospitals in 2019 have seen a 45% decrease in total overdoses, 35% decrease in fatal overdoses, and 49% decrease in Naloxone saves compared to 2018, and the team believes the CPRA apprenticeship program contributed to these improved outcomes.

## Impact

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Health care apprenticeships are a relatively new concept in the United States, so data is not robust. However, the global retention rate (between 87%-93%) indicates that those who go through an apprenticeship program will stay at least three years and are more likely to remain loyal to their organizations. The available U.S. Department of Labor data show that 91% of apprentices that complete an apprenticeship are still employed nine months later.

Although this program has only been through one

iteration, it is deemed a success because all the employees are still employed with SI PPS. The CNA apprentice program applies the same approach taken for physicians and nurses, that well-trained staff require a sustained orientation to the patients they serve. The program is a mix of classroom and on the job learning. Each apprentice has a mentor, an incumbent employee, and students spend the morning with their mentor and the afternoon in the classroom at the College of Staten Island. Of the nine students in the first CNA class, eight passed both parts of the state certification exam on the first try, and the ninth passed one part and is retaking the second. In New York, this apprenticeship program is currently one of the best examples of the state's return on investment for workforce development.

The workplace learning programs support participants' entry and advancement in health care jobs, offer existing staff the ability to learn new skills and earn college credits toward a degree, and help incumbent staff adapt to new job demands. From the organization's perspective, these programs build hiring pipelines for recruitment needs, promote collaboration, allow for a platform to continually review, assess and modify skills training to keep the programs meaningful, and enhance collaboration among organized labor, employers and higher education to build community relationships to ensure there is staff to fill current and new job needs.

## Lessons Learned

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Partner feedback illustrated the need to reexamine both how SI PPS recruits and trains health care staff. It also requires a more responsive and frequent examination of the skills needed by both new hires and incumbent staff. With the rapid changes in health care processes, movement toward value-based pay

and the resulting reliance on teamwork and team-based outcomes, skills and needs shift and employers must be aware and respond in a timely manner. Job descriptions and their resulting recruitment efforts must be current to avoid hiring staff with outdated skills based upon outdated skills assumptions. Hiring and training for the right skills improves retention.

SI PPS staff used their workforce's expertise to design the curriculum and training. SI PPS also is building a vendor training library for new hires and current employees.

SI PPS recommends starting with a needs assessment to determine where the gaps are in the organization, and then developing and piloting short-term training. Organizations can then scale the program further based on their specific workforce needs and the results of the pilot.

## Future Goals

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SI PPS is expanding the program from nine to 40 slots for the next round of CNA trainees, and a new licensed practical nurse apprentice program, covering five of their 10 nursing homes, will be two separate classes due to high demand. They also are aiming to revise the hiring practices in their organization to better retain staff. In addition, SI PPS plans to monitor the efficacy of apprenticeships in the United States to enhance the international data research.

## Contact

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