

TO: Program Planning and Development

DATE: 10/28/05

FROM: WIB Staff

For Action

For Information

For Discussion

SUBJECT: Frontline Workforce Development

PROPOSED MOTION(S): For Information Only

DISCUSSION: On September 22, 2005, Workforce Investment Board (WIB) staff attended the Robert Wood Johnson (RWJ) Foundation Frontline Workforce Development: Promoting Partnerships and Emerging Practices in Health and Healthcare Conference. The frontline workforce encompasses five areas: Mental Health/Substance Abuse, Clinical/Technical, Public Health, Community/Social Assistance and Support (see Attachment A). These positions are considered a vulnerable population due to the high number of aging workers and the 2003 median annual wage being \$27, 856. Frontline workers also have a high level of direct impact on direct patient care, and play a major role in the quality and cost of care and services although possessing minimal opportunities to direct and enhance their own career paths. The frontline workforce is generally underrepresented.

Frontline workforce growth projections show that 75% of frontline occupations are growing faster than the average relative to all occupations through 2012. These frontline occupations have high rates of turnover/vacancy, poor visibility and recognition as well as low wages and access to benefits. Emerging technologies will require expansion of skill sets. According to RWJ, these skill sets can be accumulated by having entry routes, certification opportunities, career ladders and professional certification leading up to “employer provided education” to effectively support frontline workers.

RWJ envisions a win-win model by 1) employees receiving promotions, wage increases and career development 2) employers receive higher skilled employees, increased retention and productivity gains and 3) the community wins by having access to jobs with career plans and higher wages. RWJ proposes providing “work-based learning” training on release time (paid by employers) for frontline workers who would otherwise be unable to advance their skills and careers. Work-based learning recognizes the educational value of experience in practice, which is entirely relevant and responsive to the changing healthcare needs while being rigorous enough to be validated by educational institutions.

ATTACHMENT(S): Healthcare Frontline Occupations

Attachment A: Healthcare Frontline Occupations

Mental Health/Substance Abuse

Counseling (Mental, Substance Abuse, Behavioral)
Psych Technician/Aide
Social Worker (Mental/Substance Abuse)

Public Health

Health Educator
Occupational Health
Social Worker (Medical/Public Health)

Clinical/Technical

EMT/Paramedic
Clinical/Medical Lab Technician
Medical Record
Medical Transcriptionist

Support

Medical Assistant
Pharmacy Aide
Human Services Assistant

Community/Social Assistance

Social & Human Services Assistant
Community & Social Service Specialist
Social Worker (Child/Family/School)

Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation