

Annual NC Health Talent Alliance Workforce Survey: Creating a demand-driven health care workforce system

Across North Carolina, we are facing a critical shortage of health care professionals and personnel. In response to this, notable NC public and private organizations and agencies have mobilized to form the [NC Health Talent Alliance](#). The goal of the Health Talent Alliance is simple: Eliminate those shortages and create sustainable statewide talent pipelines that address employers' greatest needs.

Central to how the NC Health Talent Alliance develops and implements solutions is its use of [Talent Pipeline Management®](#) (TPM)—a proven workforce development framework developed by the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation—across all North Carolina regions. Earning the support and partnership of more than two dozen statewide associations and agencies and hundreds of employers, the Talent Pipeline Management® approach leverages employer leadership, data, and supply chain management principles to create demand-driven talent pipelines.

The NC Health Talent Alliance's annual workforce survey is a key entry point to advancing this critical work by quantifying the depth and breadth of our talent challenges. It is the cornerstone of our efforts to develop a demand-driven workforce system tailored to North Carolina health care employers' unique needs. The survey is more than just a tool; it's a strategic guide to making informed investments. By transitioning from a general plea for more talent to a regularly occurring, detailed understanding of specific needs, we can ensure our efforts today shape a stronger healthcare workforce for tomorrow.

The annual workforce survey has been designed with the key components in mind:

Tracking progress over time by annually refreshing baseline figures

Each year, this survey will update essential baseline figures, serving as a compass for regional workforce efforts and initiatives. These figures are critical to evaluating the state's progress longitudinally and over time, helping us understand whether strategies are effective or need adjustment. Survey questions addressing this aspect of this data collection effort will focus on collecting quantitative data around your current, former, and future workforces.

Projecting and quantifying demand

One important component of this survey is reflected in how certain questions are asked, particularly around projecting and quantifying demand. Data collected around this aspect of the survey moves our state away from general calls for more talent from employers to understanding exactly how much talent is needed by a specific date. Updated annually by employers, critical job demand projections will provide employers and educators with key information on how much critical talent regions will require over a two-year term. For example, it is one thing for one employer to need 400 nurses by the end of next year, but a whole other proposition to determine how many nurses all of a region's employers may require within a specific timeframe. Upon being collected, job projection data will be aggregated and anonymized and then used to better align education programming and capacity to better service employer demand with supply.

Balancing demand and supply

Once results from employers are collected, the NC Health Talent Alliance will compare demand data to the talent supply in each region, offering a real-time picture of the workforce shortages in North Carolina. This insight allows health care employers and educators to better target efforts where they are needed most, ensuring a balanced and responsive healthcare system.

Understanding qualitative factors that impact your ability to source and retain talent

The workforce survey will also ask three open-ended questions relating to the largest challenges impacting your ability to recruit and retain talent, as well as potential policies and organizational changes you would view as valuable to maintaining a stronger healthcare workforce.

Acting upon data and findings: The role of regional AHECs and Talent Pipeline Managers

The data we are collecting is actionable. Certified TPM® Regional Managers across regional AHEC service areas will play a pivotal role in organizing regions to act on this data. TPM® Regional Managers are responsible for tracking regional data, collaborating with employers, and working with training providers to improve outcomes. Without this type of regional leadership and support, it is difficult for employers and educators to work collectively on solutions. Utilizing survey data, Talent Pipeline Managers will work alongside groups of employers and educators to leverage the TPM® framework and improve talent pipelines, focusing on areas of highest need and priority as identified by you – the employers.

Assuring data privacy and security

In our commitment to uphold the highest standards of data privacy and security, we assure all participating organizations of the strictest measures in handling their information. Firstly, all data provided will be de-identified. We guarantee confidentiality, as all shared information will be in aggregate form only, with no Personal Health Information (PHI) or data related to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) being requested. The secure storage of this data is a top priority, and it will be safely housed at the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Lastly, our internal personnel adhere to strict privacy protocols, dedicating themselves to the secure and responsible use and storage of your information, ensuring its safety at every step.

Coordinating and streamlining responses

We understand that for providers managing numerous facilities across North Carolina, coordinating your participation in our survey can be a complex task. To streamline this process and minimize potential complications, we have found that arranging one-on-one meetings with larger stakeholders is the most efficient approach. This personalized interaction ensures a more seamless data collection process, saving valuable time and effort for all parties involved. Specifically, if you are associated with Cone Health or UNC Health (owned entities), please note that there is no need for you to respond to this communication. We are already in direct contact with your organizations to gather the necessary information. However, if you operate more than three facilities, are not affiliated with the entities mentioned above, and believe that one-on-one engagement would be beneficial, we encourage you to reach out to Emily McCartha, PhD, Research Project Manager for the UNC Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research at mccartha@ad.unc.edu. Emily will assist you in coordinating these efforts, ensuring that your participation is as straightforward and effective as possible.

Conclusion

Ultimately, this annual workforce survey is a foundational element of shaping a responsive, future-proof healthcare workforce in North Carolina. By participating in this workforce survey, employers will lay the foundation for direct benefits to their organizations and the state's broader healthcare workforce system.