

Central Coast's Regional Allied Health Partnership



**Presented on behalf of the
Workforce Collaborative of California's
Central Coast**



**[bw] RESEARCH
PARTNERSHIP**

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INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

In early 2009, the workforce investment boards from Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz and Ventura counties came together to examine the workforce challenges facing the region's allied health community. The initial collaboration between the six county workforce investment boards was based on the initial agreement between Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura County's workforce investment boards to create the Workforce Collaborative of California's Central Coast (WCCCC). These four county organizations invited Santa Cruz and San Benito to participate in this allied health initiative.

This project was administered by the California Workforce Association (CWA) and funded by the California Endowment. These organizations also provided additional resources in terms of regional and statewide allied health workforce research as well as coordinating quarterly meetings with other regional efforts to communicate and learn from one another.

The stakeholders in this initiative include regional healthcare employers, education and training providers and relevant non-profit associations that work with healthcare employers.

Figure 1 Map of the Central Coast Region



The purpose of this project was to better understand the region's need for trained and qualified allied health professionals particularly among those individuals who can meet employers' needs for providing culturally and linguistically appropriate care and to develop an appropriate response to these needs. This project has three primary long-range objectives:

- Consulting with educational institutions and employers to align the capacity and development of training and educational programs to best serve the needs of regional allied health employers;
- Developing a diverse and culturally competent allied health workforce that provides high-paying employment opportunities for all residents, particularly those who are currently under-represented in allied health occupations; and
- Promoting outreach and education that informs potential and current allied health employees about the opportunities that exist with additional training and education.

The stakeholders agreed to these objectives and to the delivery, at the end of the project, of three specific items:

1. A statement of the region for the allied health initiative that describes what the WCCCC (Workforce Collaborative of California's Central Coast) is and what the region is facing as it looks to meet the current and future allied health workforce challenges;
2. An electronic matrix that summarizes current labor market information on the allied health occupations that have been identified in this study; and
3. A regional plan that discusses steps to respond to the current workforce challenges facing allied health employers, education and training providers as well as current and future allied health employees in the Central Coast.

This report will examine the workforce challenges facing allied health employers in the Central Coast, examine the allied health occupations that are the focus of this initiative and lastly, discuss opportunities to develop regional action steps that work to address the challenges that have been identified.

STATEMENT OF THE REGION

**Workforce Collaborative of California's Central Coast (WCCCC)
Allied Health Initiative: Addressing the Long Term Need for Qualified, Culturally
Competent Allied Health Professionals
Statement of the Region (Version 5.3)**

Who We Are

The Workforce Collaborative of California's Central Coast (WCCCC) consists of the Workforce Investment Boards (WIB's) of Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. Officially recognized by the Boards of Supervisors of the four counties, the Collaborative was formed to establish cooperative and mutually beneficial relationships to strengthen workforce and economic development on the Central Coast. Other counties with a close alliance with the WCCCC are Santa Cruz and San Benito. Our goals are (1) to focus on shared priorities in allied health, green-related jobs and hospitality and (2) strategic alignment to leverage opportunities for WIA and non-WIA funding. The members are committed to regional strategies and collaboration, to the demonstration of regional need and focused action plans and to the leveraging of the resources of multiple partners to complement grant-related efforts. The WCCCC has evolved into a learning community that shares information and insights to solve regional workforce problems in a sustainable way.

The Collaborative has a combined population of over two million, with a total landmass of 13,456 square miles and a coastline of approximately 373 miles. The geography and demographics of these counties are similar, and their industry sectors are heavily devoted to agriculture and hospitality. Essential to the continued viability of the economy throughout this region is attention to the environmental impact resulting from increases in population and manufacturing. The collaborative is committed to the preservation of our environment and our limited natural resources as well as the development of our regional workforce in industries like healthcare to support economic development and maintain a high quality of life.

Our Allied Health Challenge

Allied health professions have been defined¹ as a set of occupations with the core tasks of identification, prevention and treatment of diseases and disorders. Allied health occupations typically exclude doctors and nurses. Allied health includes professions such as clinical laboratory scientists, radiological technologists and respiratory therapists among many others.

For purposes of the regional allied health response, the Collaborative has been joined by the WIB's, the allied health employers and other community collaborators from Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties, both of which share with the original WCCCC members similar geographic, economic and demographic characteristics.

¹ Source: COE No. Cal Region - Environmental Scan Careers in AH –No CA Region, 4-2009.

In a time of record unemployment, it seems counterintuitive that projected employment opportunities will remain unmet because a region will not be able to train and educate enough workers to meet the overall needs of employers. Yet, this is exactly the scenario that the allied health workforce faces in the Central Coast.

The healthcare workforce in California's Central Coast includes over 5,800 employers, 75,000 employees and wages that are 14% higher than the regional average in the private sector². This represents over 8% of all regional employment in the private sector and closer to 10% of all private sector wages in the region. California and the region have developed several workforce training programs to educate and prepare the next generation of nurses that will serve the industry, but very little attention or resources have been focused on the allied health occupations that are undersupplied regionally and within the state.

Over the next 10 years, 2010 to 2020, the counties of Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura will need to train and educate 27,000 new allied health workers. Currently, our region only has the capacity to prepare 18,000, leaving a deficit of 9,000³ allied health positions unfilled in our region.

The healthcare industry is facing cultural, legislative and technological changes that will require the healthcare workforce to develop new skills and prepare new workers among populations that are typically under-represented in the healthcare workforce. California has the most ethnically diverse population in the nation, with projections indicating that it will become even more diverse in the coming decade. The Latino population is projected to rise from 32.4% in 2000 to 41.4% in 2020. This statistic underscores the need for our state and region to develop a culturally competent allied health workforce pipeline that will be able to provide quality, appropriate care⁴.

Our region has identified several allied health care occupations that are in high demand and pay high wages. But, because of budget cuts, an insufficient number of accredited educational programs and limited openings within those programs and faculty shortages in our region's universities, community colleges, proprietary schools and adult schools, the creation of new programs may not be possible.

Our goals are (1) to coordinate with educational institutions and employers to align the capacity and development of training and educational programs to best serve the needs of regional allied health employers (2) to develop a diverse and culturally competent allied health workforce that provides high paying employment opportunities for all residents, including those that are currently under-represented in allied health occupations and (3) to communicate and educate potential and current allied health employees about the opportunities that exist with additional training and education for higher paying jobs into the future.

² California Employment Development Department, January 2010.

³ Figures are based on data provided in "Help Wanted Report: Will Californians Miss Out on a Billion Dollar Growth Industry" by Fenton Communications and the California Wellness Foundation.

⁴ California Hospital Association/Cal Endowment Allied Health: The Hidden Health Care Workforce, July 2009.

CENTRAL COAST'S ALLIED HEALTH WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

In a time of record unemployment, it seems counterintuitive that employment opportunities remain unmet because a region is not able to train and educate enough workers to meet the overall needs of employers; yet this is exactly the scenario that employers of allied health occupations face in California's Central Coast.

The challenge facing the region's allied health workforce became clearer in a recent survey⁵ of healthcare employers most likely to hire allied health occupations. The survey results revealed that **in the Central Coast, over half (56 percent) of allied health employers were having at least some difficulty replacing workers with qualified applicants from outside their organization.** These results occur in a time when overall unemployment is at record high levels in the region and most employers face an excess of qualified applicants.

Allied health professions have been defined as a set of occupations with the core tasks of identification, prevention and treatment of diseases and disorders. The definition for allied health occupations typically excludes doctors and nurses and includes occupations such as:

- **Clinical Laboratory Scientists (CLS's);**
- **Medical Laboratory Technicians (MLT's);**
- **Radiological Technologists;**
- **Respiratory Therapists; and**
- **Medical Records & Health Information Technicians.**

OUTLOOK FOR THE REGION'S ALLIED HEALTH EMPLOYERS

As the economy recovers and the unemployment rate recedes from its historical highs, allied health employers will likely see their workforce challenges become even more significant for a number of reasons:

- An increase in retirements from many of the baby boomers who may have delayed retirement but can only do so for a limited period of time. Experts on aging expect healthcare to face unprecedented strains on their system due to a wave of retirements in the next decade;
- A decline in the education and training capacity for allied health occupations as educational institutions see their overall budget cut substantially; and

⁵ San Francisco Bay Center of Excellence and BW Research Survey of Allied Health Employers, March 2010. Overall firm-level results were taken from the five counties in the Central Coast Region - Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.

- An overall decline in the number of qualified workers looking for employment, as employers in other industries begin to start hiring and reducing the overall number of job seekers in the region.

DEVELOPING A CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY SKILLED WORKFORCE

Healthcare employers also face a more specific challenge - that of addressing the need for a trained and educated workforce that can serve the growing cultural and linguistic diversity of the population of the region. A recent study⁶ explored how the nation's hospitals met the challenges of serving a culturally and linguistically diverse population. Some of the key findings from that study included:

- Nine out of 10 hospitals reported financial stresses in relation to serving diverse populations;
- Hospitals were likely to report difficulty recruiting qualified staff with the desired cultural or linguistic competency; and
- Providing appropriate language services was something that hospitals recognized as important to patient safety, but most hospitals did not have ongoing training for staff on how to access language services.

The individual feedback from regional employers was consistent with the national findings - that healthcare employers face considerable challenges maintaining a workforce that is able to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate care. One of the biggest challenges for allied health employers could also be one of the region's brightest opportunities for training and developing residents for higher paying employment with strong growth potential. This will require recruiting allied health professionals who are bilingual and provide culturally appropriate care while also attaining new technical skills and abilities to be productive in the different allied health positions.

Regional educational institutions are also facing substantial challenges as the demand for adult education and training has increased, while overall funding for organizations like community colleges and other vocational training facilities has been considerably cut. Training and developing qualified allied health professionals is particularly challenging because the cost of education and training for these positions are typically more expensive than training for other industries because of the need for training on expensive equipment and the scarcity of quality instructors. This economic reality requires that any recommendations coming out of the regional partnership must focus on opportunities that do not add significant financial burdens to the educational institutions in the region.

Over the next 10 years the workforce challenges facing the healthcare industry and allied health occupations provide an opportunity for a new generation of allied health professionals to be developed and find meaningful, high-paying employment in allied health professions.

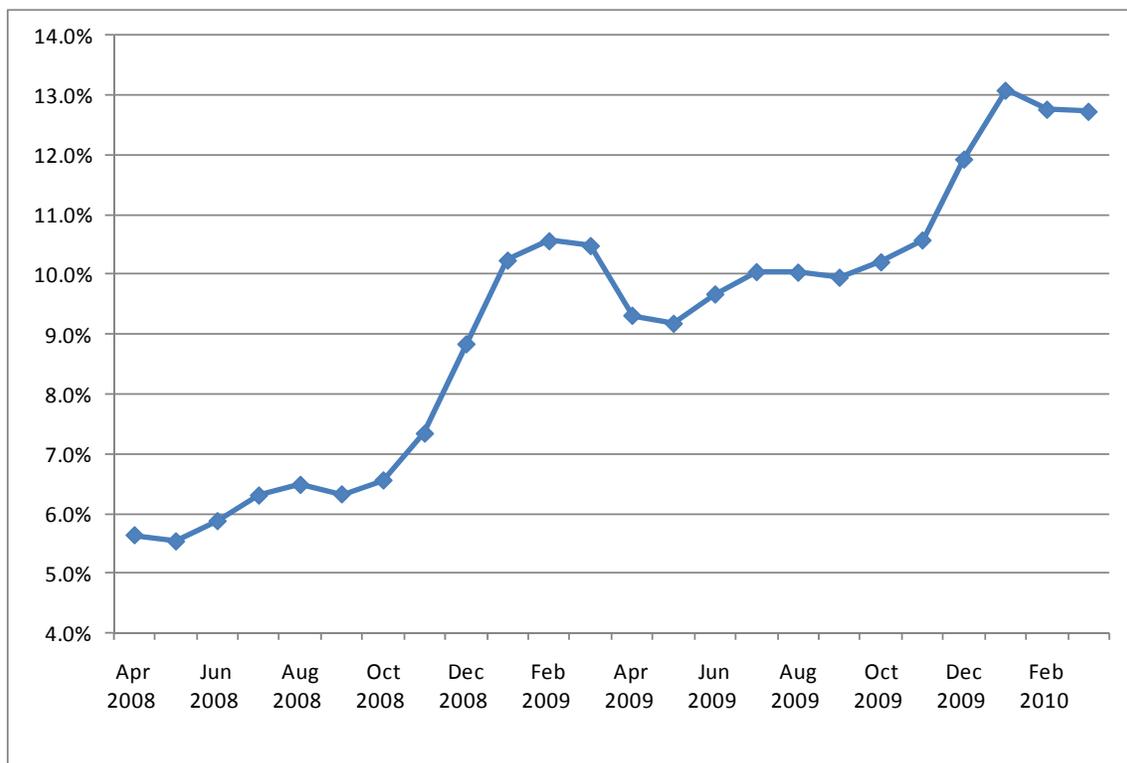
⁶ Source: Exploring Cultural and Linguistic Services in the Nation's Hospitals: A Report of Findings. Amy Wilson-Stronks and Erica Galvez. The California Endowment, 2007

THE CENTRAL COAST ECONOMY

As a region, the six-county collaborative represents approximately 2.2 million people, with a total labor force of 1.19 million⁷ people. Overall unemployment in the region is consistent with California's unemployment rate, with over 150,000 unemployed in the region, almost twice the total employment in the region's healthcare industry (78,000). It is also important to note that regionally, approximately one in five residents 25 years or older, has less than a high school diploma. These figures reveal the size and some of the overall challenges facing unemployed and underemployed workers in the Central Coast.

The region has not been immune to the economic downturn that has engulfed the nation and the world. Over the last 24 months, the unemployment rate has more than doubled as shown in the figure below. While most economists believe the unemployment picture will not get worse, it is not likely to get considerably better in the near future. Even in this unhealthy economic environment, overall employment in healthcare has been steady and has actually increased in the last 24 months.

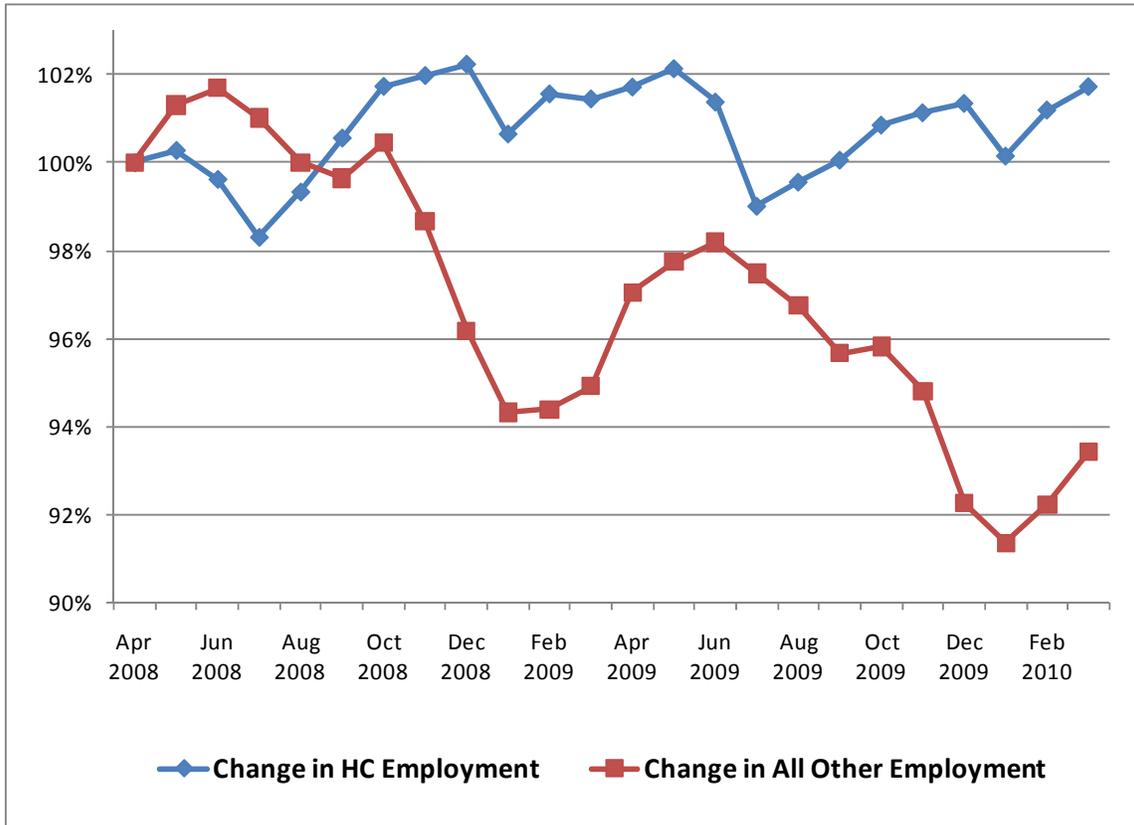
Figure 2 Unemployment in the Central Coast



⁷ Source, California Employment Development Department April 2010.

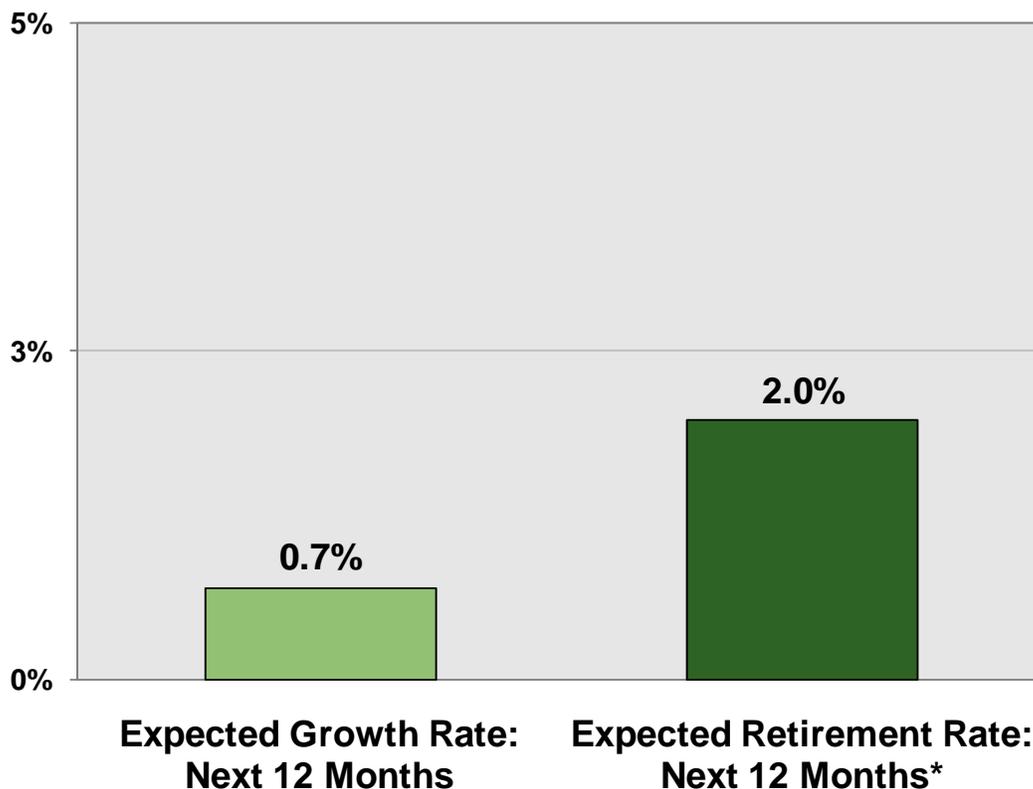
While healthcare represents a little more than five percent of the total employment in the region, it is clearly one of the few employers in the region that has actually increased employment over the last 12 months. The figure below reveals the overall level of industry employment in healthcare for the Central Coast in comparison to overall employment in all other industries.

Figure 3 Change in Employment in the Central Coast



While the total number of new healthcare jobs in the region is considerably stronger than the number of new jobs in the region in all other industries, new job growth provides only a fraction of the total opportunities in healthcare and with allied health occupations. The recent survey results of healthcare employers in the Central Coast⁸, shows that allied health employers expect 2.8 retirements for every one job in total new growth for the next 12 months. This means that replacement jobs will outnumber new jobs among allied health employers by almost 3 to 1.

Figure 4 Expected Growth and Retirement Rate for Central Coast Allied Health Employers



The regional opportunities for workforce development in the Central Coast's healthcare industry are strong, in a regional labor market that has seen few growth industries over the last 24 months. Overall growth in the healthcare industry has remained positive, with even more opportunities becoming available due to expected retirements. The next section of the report examines the specific allied health occupations with the strongest immediate demand.

⁸ San Francisco Bay Center of Excellence and BW Research Survey of Allied Health Employers, March 2010. Overall firm-level results were taken from the five counties in the Central Coast Region - Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.

ALLIED HEALTH OCCUPATIONS OF INTEREST

Unlike a more traditional industry analysis that defines occupational opportunities within a given industry or set of connected industries, this project established a set of occupations that defined what would be considered in terms of action steps for the regional action plan. These occupations were identified and agreed upon by regional stakeholders, including healthcare educators, employers and workforce development specialists.

Regional stakeholders used the following criteria to identify and agree upon the list of allied health occupations:

1. Require a four-year degree or less for appropriate entry-level training or certification;
2. Have a relatively large number of individuals currently employed or expected to be employed in the future;
3. Are most likely to be undersupplied in the future;
4. Are emerging or facing significant changes among employers required skill sets; and
5. Develop skill-sets that provide a foundation for sustainable career pathways.

While the criteria were not strictly enforced for each occupation that made the list, they helped stakeholders come to some consensus on the occupations that were most relevant. The complete list is shown on the following page.

After the occupations were identified, additional research was gathered on each of the occupations to get a better understanding of regional demand for the occupation and the training and educational capacity within the region to produce qualified applicants for each occupation.

For more detailed information on each of the occupations, please see the occupational matrix for the Central Coast Allied Health Initiative. This matrix combines regional and county-specific labor market data and education and training information on each of the occupations listed on the following page.

Table 1 Allied Health Occupations of Interest for the Central Coast

| |
|--|
| 1. Allied Health Therapists |
| a. Respiratory Therapists, Certified Respiratory Therapists (CRT) |
| b. Assistant Physical Therapist |
| c. Assistant Occupational Therapist |
| d. Assistant Speech Therapist / Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) |
| 2. Clinical Lab Scientist (CLS) / Medical Laboratory Technologist |
| 3. Dental Hygienist |
| 4. Dietitians and Nutritionists |
| 5. Director of Informatics (emerging) |
| 6. Healthcare Interpreter |
| 7. Imaging Technology Specialists |
| a. Radiological Technologists (including MRI & mammographers) |
| b. Radiological Technicians (including X-ray technicians) |
| c. Nuclear Medicine Technologists |
| d. Diagnostic Medical Sonographers |
| 8. Medical Assistants |
| 9. Medical or Clinical Laboratory Technician (MLT) |
| 10. Medical Records and Health Information Technicians |
| a. Certified Coder |
| b. Medical Records Clerks |
| c. Health Information Administrators |
| 11. Pharmacy Technician |
| 12. Psychiatric Technician |

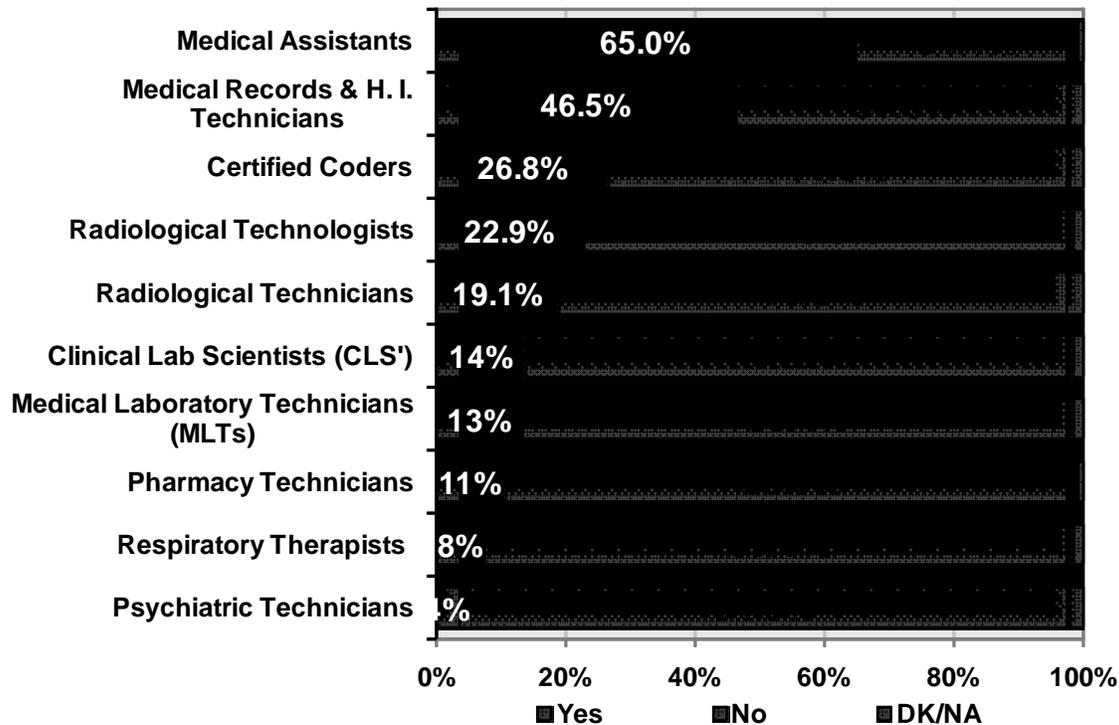
OCCUPATIONAL ASSESSMENT

The occupational assessment below is based on the allied health employer survey that was recently completed in March of 2010⁹. The survey did not include all of the occupations that were identified for the initiative, but did include those that secondary research indicated would be the most likely to be undersupplied.

Before examining employers demand for different occupations, it is important to understand the size of these positions within the greater healthcare industry. The figure below provides the percentage of firms surveyed that employed the different occupations that were examined.

While employers have indicated substantial difficulty finding qualified applicants for certain positions, as the survey results further on demonstrate, most allied health occupations are still relatively specialized and do not represent large overall numbers of employment like registered nurses or licensed vocational nurses.

Figure 5 Percentage of Employers that Hire Each of the Allied Health Occupations



⁹ San Francisco Bay Center of Excellence and BW Research survey of Allied Health Employers, March 2010. Overall firm level results were taken from the five counties in the Central Coast region, Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.

Below is the overall occupational assessment, which reveals the reported difficulty employers are facing finding qualified applicants, the replacement and net growth rates for the next 12 months and employers' relative educational expectations for each occupation.

In total, 10 allied health occupations were examined and were placed in one of three categories. Red-level occupations were the occupations most likely to be undersupplied now and in the immediate future.

Table 2 Red Level Occupations: Most Likely to Be Undersupplied

| Red Level Occupations: Most Likely to be Undersupplied Now or in the Immediate Future | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| | Difficulty Hiring | Replacements | Net Growth | Educational Standards |
| Clinical Lab Scientists (CLS's) | 57% | 10.4% | 10.2% | High |
| Certified Coders | 54% | 9.2% | 2.1% | Medium |
| Rad. Techs (require more than 2-year deg.) | 59% | 7.0% | 9.7% | High |
| Respiratory Therapists | 59% | 4.7% | 4.5% | Medium |

The orange-level occupations provide strong evidence of being undersupplied in the future. From a third to a half of employers typically registered at least some difficulty finding qualified applicants. Many of the yellow-level occupations had high growth expectations or at least a relatively high number of replacements expected in the near future.

Table 3 Orange Level Occupations: Likely to Be Undersupplied

| Orange Level Occupations: Strong Evidence They will be Undersupplied in the Future | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| | Difficulty Hiring | Replacements | Net Growth | Educational Standards |
| Medical Laboratory Technicians (MLT's) | 48% | 6.8% | 8.3% | Medium |
| Medical Assistants | 43% | 6.6% | 4.2% | Low to Medium |
| Medical Records & Health Info. Techs. | 35% | 10.0% | -1.1% | Low |
| Rad. Techs (require a 2 year degree or less) | 49% | 4.1% | 2.3% | Medium |

Of the 10 occupations examined in the survey, allied health employers had the least difficulty finding and recruiting qualified applicants for the yellow-level occupations. These occupations still have combined growth and replacement rates over 10 percent and anywhere from a quarter to a third of employers had at least some difficulty finding qualified applicants.

Table 4 Yellow Level Occupations: Some Evidence of Being Undersupplied

| Yellow Level Occupations: Some Evidence They will be Undersupplied in the Future | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| | Difficulty Hiring | Replacements | Net Growth | Educational Standards |
| Psychiatric Technicians | 32% | 9.2% | 5.2% | Medium |
| Pharmacy Technicians | 27% | 6.1% | 5.3% | Medium |

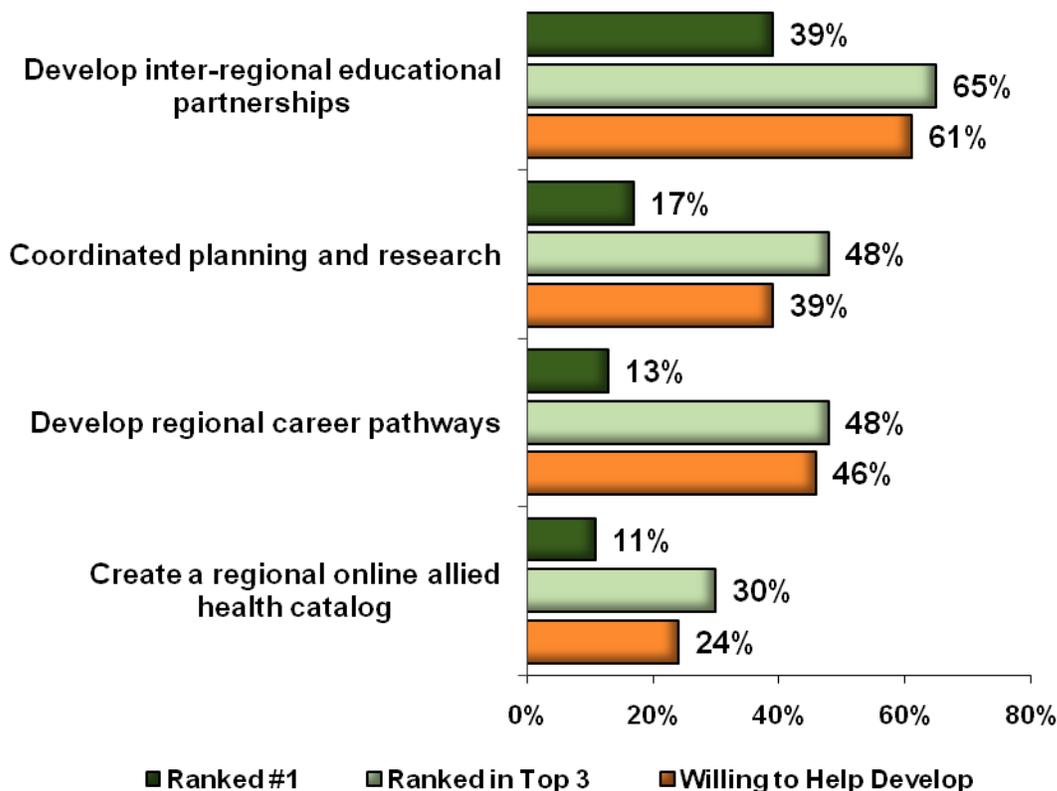
ACTION STEPS FOR THE WCCCC

After examining the economic and workforce trends impacting allied health occupations as well as agreeing on the occupations that should be the focus of this initiative, stakeholders were asked to identify and evaluate different action steps that would provide regional solutions to the allied health workforce challenges that have been identified.

Regional stakeholders were asked in county advisory meetings and as part of an online survey to identify what action steps should be the top priority for this initiative and which they would be willing to work on.

As shown in the figure below, allied health stakeholders placed a high priority on developing inter-regional educational partnerships. This was consistently the top action step identified by county and type of stakeholder (employer, educator, workforce specialist¹⁰). Stakeholders also placed a high priority on coordinating planning and research and developing regional career pathways. For a more detailed examination of stakeholders responses to the action steps survey, please see Appendix A.

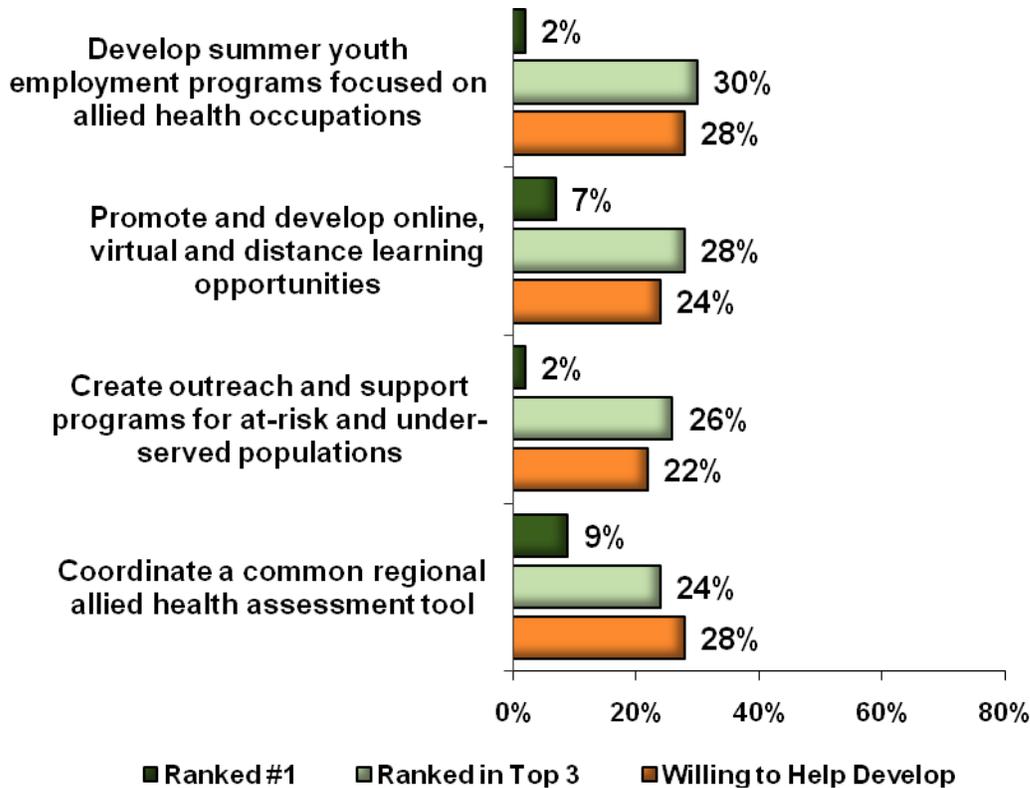
Figure 6 Top Tier Action Steps



¹⁰ Workforce Specialist is defined as an individual that works for one of the regional Workforce Investment Boards on Allied Health and/or Healthcare related issues.

The results below reveal other action steps that were discussed and considered by stakeholders. These action steps did not receive as high a priority among stakeholders in general. However, about one-quarter of stakeholders still indicated they would be willing to help develop these regional programs or services.

Figure 7 Second Tier Action Steps



The following action steps for the WCCCC Allied Health Initiative represent those ideas that stakeholders have indicated they are most interested in working on and believe will have the most benefit for the region..

Educational Partnerships

The economic downturn has created increased demand for educational services while also diminishing the budget for many of the educational institutions that serve the public. Allied health employers represent one of the few bright spots in our economy where most occupations are expected to have continuous growth. The challenge is ensuring that the capacity for training and education is maintained for allied health, even while educational budgets are diminishing.

Educational partnerships are perceived as one of the most cost-effective ways to maximize the ability of the region to develop an adequate capacity for allied health training and education programs.

Regional Career Pathways

Regional career pathways that are agreed upon by both employers and educators provide a valuable tool to communicate with current and potential allied health employees, the career opportunities that exist today and in the future with additional training and education. These career pathways will be developed to effectively communicate with a diverse population and components could be specifically developed for specific sub-populations, including Spanish-speaking residents, individuals who are currently working in other industries, or at-risk youth.

Coordinated Planning & Research

Shared research and planning provides a critical foundation for regional decision making. This initiative has worked in conjunction with the Centers of Excellence and BW Research to provide current survey results as well as informational tools, like the occupational matrix, to begin to find agreement on priorities for regional solutions. The Centers of Excellence are currently working to provide a more detailed view of the allied health workforce needs in California's Central Coast. These research findings will be used to further the objectives of the initiative, particularly as they relate to aligning the needs of employers with the programs that are being offered or considered by educational and training institutions as well as the training and educational programs offered by the regional workforce investment boards.

Summer Youth Employment Focused on Allied Health

This action step would connect and coordinate the counties that are implementing a summer youth employment program or have year round youth programs focused on allied health occupations and allied health employers. This action could include both summer employment as well as outreach to youth about the employment opportunities and career pathways that exist in our allied health occupations.

REGIONAL ACTION PLAN: PROPOSED REGIONAL MODELS, PROGRAMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

After examining the priorities of stakeholders and examining best practices, models and regional programs that met these priorities, three potential models were identified for further consideration. These models strive to align the needs of employers with a more efficient use of education and training resources, provide a stronger support network for students that can provide culturally and linguistically appropriate care, and develop shared resources that encourage regional partners to build off of the successful programs of one another.

The Central Model:

This is a specific model for a training partnership between educators and employers within the region and, if needed, for training and educational institutions that border the region.

This model would identify an educational hub institution for each of the allied health occupations of need. The hub institution would be responsible for developing and administering distance and online training for all of the non-clinical education and training requirements associated with the occupational training program. The hub institution would develop formal agreements with educational institutions and employers within each county to provide clinical supervision for the clinical training that would occur within each county.

This model would allow educational institutions in the region to specialize in allied health occupations, potentially increasing our regional capacity to produce needed, qualified applicants. This model would also allow the region to better utilize clinical supervision from employers, thereby reducing the need for additional equipment at the colleges and other training providers.

For example, some of the potential resources that could be explored for the development of red-level and orange-level occupations include:

- California State University, Channel Islands and San Jose State University (CLS)
- Ventura College (Certified Coder, Examination Preparation)
- Foothill College (Respiratory Therapist)
- Moorpark College (Certified Coder & Radiological Technologist)
- De Anza College (MLT and a feeder into CLS programs)
- Clinica De Salud (Medical Assistants and other allied health position as well as working with and recruiting under-represented populations)

- Santa Barbara City College (Radiological Technician & Healthcare Interpreter)
- Santa Monica City College (MLT and Feeder into CLS)
- College of the Canyons (MLT & Radiological Technician).

The Pre-Apprenticeship Program:

This is a specific program to support and advise entry-level students who are preparing for allied health occupations. This program would be similar to bridge programs that have been introduced in the community college system.

This program would identify students who are beginning their coursework for allied health occupations. This program would provide case management through the workforce investment boards to locate as-needed financial resources, academic tutoring, and career advice on the challenges and opportunities of different allied health occupations. Targeted students could include individuals with the capacity to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate care for under-represented populations among healthcare employees.

This program would increase student retention in the allied health training programs by supporting those students who are more likely to not make it through the program. It would also advise students early-on of the different opportunities and challenges associated with allied health occupational employment and ensure they are moving to a career pathway that is consistent with their interests.

Common Regional Tools:

Several stakeholders have stated the need for a coordinated agreement between regional educators, employers and workforce developers to identify and utilize common tools in communicating, educating and training current and potential allied health employees.

This potential agreement would create a standardized approach for regional educators, employers and other relevant stakeholders to communicate employment opportunities and training and education protocols to current and potential allied health employees. These common tools could include;

- **Allied Health Occupational Career Pathways**, this common tool would identify the primary career pathways for the allied health occupations of need and identify the training and experiential requirements to advance along that pathway.
- **Regional coordinated communication of employer needs and changing skill requirements**, this common tool would require regional stakeholders to coordinate on the information they receive from employers to support regional

planning and consistent outreach on occupational opportunities and the new skills that are required to succeed in these allied health occupations.

- **Standardized foundational allied health coursework**, this common tool would find agreement around the initial class or two taught for allied health occupations that would expose students to the opportunities and challenges associated with the different career pathways and allow them to move into the appropriate career pathway after the course is completed.

This agreement would strengthen the outreach and communication efforts of stakeholders as they present consistent information on career pathways and occupational opportunities. It would also increase educational efficiency as students who move within the region are able to use their previous training and/or coursework to finish training or begin new programs that build off previous programs. These common tools would also provide additional flexibility for those students that begin in one program and move into another.

CONCLUSION

The Collaborative began its efforts to fulfill the grant with three ambitious priorities:

- Consulting with educational institutions and employers to align the capacity and development of training and educational programs to best serve the needs of regional allied health employers;
- Developing a diverse and culturally competent allied health workforce that provides high-paying employment opportunities, particularly for those currently under-represented in allied health occupations; and
- Promoting outreach and education that informs potential and current allied health employees about the opportunities that exist with additional training and education.

In support of these objectives the Collaborative identified three deliverables, which include:

- A statement of the region;
- An electronic matrix summarizing current labor market information on allied health occupations; and
- A set of proposed regional actions to respond to current workforce challenges.

Given the agreement among stakeholders on these objectives, the natural next steps are determining how to put into action the ideas and initial plans that came out of this collaboration. Individual partners of the collaborative may develop pilot components of the regional action plan while the collaborative as a whole will need to continue a dialogue with regional educational leaders to create agreement among multiple regional education and training entities. Ultimately, an implementation strategy will need to be developed and agreed upon between multiple system partners including relevant education and training organizations and leading allied health employers. To create this implementation strategy, the collaborative must continue to lead the communication, planning and coordination effort among the region's allied health stakeholders.

The WCCCC should continue its focus within the parameters of the three key priorities identified above to devise specific strategies that will enable stakeholders to implement the action steps and do so in a way that will benefit the region as a whole.

- Partnerships need to be established for the research, development and implementation of curriculum, between regional educators and employers. Coordination of these efforts among educators and employers within the region will need to overcome the diminishing budgets facing community colleges and other regional educational and training institutions.

- Pre-Apprenticeship Programs are worth pursuing as a means of support and advising entry-level students who can speak more than one language, provide culturally competent care and who are preparing for an allied health occupation.
- A “Central Model” could be a useful tool for coordinating training partnerships between educators and employers within and outside the region. This model identifies an educational hub institution responsible for developing and administering distance/online training and designates both local educators and employers as supervisors and administrators in the clinical training. One such institution might be identified for each of the under-supplied allied health occupations. This model would allow educational institutions to specialize in occupations and perhaps also reduce the need for additional equipment purchases by the training providers.
- To promote the challenging goal of a culturally competent workforce, the WCCCC should investigate and catalog the current best practices which have been found to exist in some of the region’s adult schools and nursing programs. These regional best practices should be adapted and expanded to allied health programs serving at-risk and under-served populations.

APPENDIX A: TOPLINES OF STAKEHOLDER SURVEY



WCCCC
Allied Health Initiative
April 2010

Stakeholder Survey – Interest in Action Steps

Forty-Six (46) Stakeholders Completed a Survey

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Introduction:

The Workforce Collaborative of California's Central Coast (WCCCC) has focused its attention on the Allied Health workforce. We are looking for feedback from Allied Health stakeholders to develop an action plan that is responsive to the needs of our regional healthcare employers and provides clear direction for those organizations looking to train and educate the Allied Health workforce.

If you have any questions or comments about the survey, please contact Josh Williams, the project manager for the Allied Health Initiative for the WCCCC at jwilliams@bwresearch.com or (760) 730-9329.

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Traditional Rounding Rules Applied - Percentages Rounded to the Nearest Whole Number

The Allied Health Initiative has identified eight action steps that it is considering as the focus for its Allied Health workforce regional action plan.

1. Please review each of the action items below and rank the top three that you believe would be most beneficial in developing a qualified Allied Health workforce for the region.

Sorted by the percentage that ranked each action step in the top three

| Ranked in Top 3 | Ranked as #1 | Ranked as #2 | Ranked as #3 | Action Step |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---|
| 65% | 39% | 17% | 9% | Develop inter-regional educational partnerships between educational institutions within the region as well as partnerships with surrounding regions that expand access to Allied Health training programs. |
| 48% | 17% | 9% | 22% | Coordinated planning and research to identify current, expected, and potential demand and capacity for Allied Health occupations. This planning and research would also support the development and maintenance of regional indicators and/or metrics to measure the cost and/or difficulty employers are having finding qualified applicants. |
| 48% | 13% | 17% | 17% | Develop regional career pathways for incumbent workers and individuals looking to move into Allied Health that will identify occupational opportunities with their related educational and training requirements for advancement within Allied Health and the Healthcare arena. |
| 30% | 11% | 11% | 9% | Create a regional online Allied Health catalog to communicate the employment opportunities in the Central Coast along with the educational programs that are available for these occupations. |
| 30% | 2% | 7% | 22% | Develop summer youth employment programs focused on Allied Health occupations as well as outreach to youth about the employment opportunities and career pathways that exist with Allied Health occupations. |
| 28% | 7% | 20% | 2% | Promote and develop online, virtual, and distance learning opportunities that are carefully paired with appropriate hands-on experience. |
| 26% | 2% | 11% | 13% | Creation of outreach and support programs in Allied Health for veterans and youth , as well as at-risk youth, disabled, immigrants, bilingual speakers, the aging population, and the unemployed and underemployed. |
| 24% | 9% | 9% | 7% | Coordinate a common regional Allied Health assessment tool to better coordinate recruiting with the training and educational opportunities within the region. |

2. For the same eight action steps described in the previous question, please indicate the action steps in which you would be willing to help develop for the region. This involvement would only require that you review and provide feedback on some materials that are being developed for the Initiative and if needed, participate in a conference call.

Sorted by the percentage willing to help develop each action step

| Willing to Help Develop | Action Step |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 61% | Develop inter-regional educational partnerships between educational institutions within the region as well as partnerships with surrounding regions that expand access to Allied Health training programs. |
| 46% | Develop regional career pathways for incumbent workers and individuals looking to move into Allied Health that will identify occupational opportunities with their related educational and training requirements for advancement within Allied Health and the Healthcare arena. |
| 39% | Coordinated planning and research to identify current, expected, and potential demand and capacity for Allied Health occupations. This planning and research would also support the development and maintenance of regional indicators and/or metrics to measure the cost and/or difficulty employers are having finding qualified applicants. |
| 28% | Develop summer youth employment programs focused on Allied Health occupations as well as outreach to youth about the employment opportunities and career pathways that exist with Allied Health occupations. |
| 28% | Coordinate a common regional Allied Health assessment tool to better coordinate recruiting with the training and educational opportunities within the region. |
| 24% | Promote and develop online, virtual, and distance learning opportunities that are carefully paired with appropriate hands-on experience. |
| 24% | Create a regional online Allied Health catalog to communicate the employment opportunities in the Central Coast along with the educational programs that are available for these occupations. |
| 22% | Creation of outreach and support programs in Allied Health for veterans and youth , as well as at-risk youth, disabled, immigrants, bilingual speakers, the aging population, and the unemployed and underemployed. |

Questions 1 and 2 presented together and sorted by the percentage that ranked each action step in the top three

| Ranked in Top 3 | Willing to Help Develop | Action Item |
|-----------------|-------------------------|---|
| 65% | 61% | Develop inter-regional educational partnerships between educational institutions within the region as well as partnerships with surrounding regions that expand access to Allied Health training programs. |
| 48% | 46% | Develop regional career pathways for incumbent workers and individuals looking to move into Allied Health that will identify occupational opportunities with their related educational and training requirements for advancement within Allied Health and the Healthcare arena. |
| 48% | 39% | Coordinated planning and research to identify current, expected, and potential demand and capacity for Allied Health occupations. This planning and research would also support the development and maintenance of regional indicators and/or metrics to measure the cost and/or difficulty employers are having finding qualified applicants. |
| 30% | 28% | Develop summer youth employment programs focused on Allied Health occupations as well as outreach to youth about the employment opportunities and career pathways that exist with Allied Health occupations. |
| 30% | 24% | Create a regional online Allied Health catalog to communicate the employment opportunities in the Central Coast along with the educational programs that are available for these occupations. |
| 28% | 24% | Promote and develop online, virtual, and distance learning opportunities that are carefully paired with appropriate hands-on experience. |
| 26% | 22% | Creation of outreach and support programs in Allied Health for veterans and youth, as well as at-risk youth, disabled, immigrants, bilingual speakers, the aging population, and the unemployed and underemployed. |
| 24% | 28% | Coordinate a common regional Allied Health assessment tool to better coordinate recruiting with the training and educational opportunities within the region. |

3. Briefly describe any action steps, that have not already been presented, that you feel the WCCC Allied Health Initiative should be considering to improve the region’s ability to produce qualified Allied Health workers.

| Suggestions / Comments (5 respondents) |
|---|
| Convene a meeting of potential partners |
| Creating a web-based repository for best practices in workforce development throughout the region covered by the coalition. |
| Develop actual training or providing career education to people who are looking for employment opportunities. |
| Once research has confirmed employment needs for future, educational institutions should be at the table to indicate whether they will be part of the training vehicle or not. |
| There seem to be so many contacts and committees and subcommittees. I find it very confusing. Either better organization of resources or better communication of how it is organized if already believed to be effective. |
| To work toward an enhanced collaborative effort between the private vocational training institutions in the area and the community colleges and universities. |
| Where do we get the funding? |

Thank you for completing the survey. Please take a moment and provide us with your contact information so we can include you in the information that is developed through the regional Allied Health Initiative.

- A. First and Last Name _____
- B. Firm or Organization You Represent _____
- C. Position with Firm or Organization _____
- D. Contact Email _____
- E. Contact Phone _____

**Those are all the questions I have.
Thank you very much for your time.**