



## **Developing the Health Care Workforce**

### **A Report from Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and The Achievable Foundation's 2018 Legislative Breakfast**

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PREPARED BY THE ACHIEVABLE FOUNDATION





## INTRODUCTION

On Friday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, The Achievable Foundation, in partnership with Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas hosted its second annual legislative breakfast focusing on development of the health care workforce in Los Angeles County. The event was hosted by L.A. Care Health Plan, The Greater Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, The Hospital Association of Southern California and the Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County. The event brought together a wide variety of sectors that either educate or employ the health care workforce including community health centers, hospitals, community colleges, local universities, graduate schools, regional centers and other nonprofits. In addition, workforce development agencies, elected official's staff and local government personnel were on hand to be part of the discussion. The individuals in attendance came together to focus on innovative health care workforce partnerships, discuss critical issues facing the workforce and conceptualize policy-based solutions. This report gives an overview of the results of these discussions, including key challenges that were identified to developing this workforce, as well as possible policy-centered solutions.

## OBSERVATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Our participants worked in cross-sector groups to identify issues facing the development of the health care workforce in Los Angeles County. Given the critical shortages of doctors, nurses and other health professionals, participants were asked to discuss the challenges that have contributed to these shortages. Some of the top observations included:



- Those graduating into the field do not have sufficient or appropriate exposure to clinical settings or the populations being served including vulnerable populations including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).
- Many medical training programs do not adequately equip students with the skills needed for real world jobs.
- There is an overall lack of resources in schools at all levels to help train the workforce, and often times the funding structures that do exist are different from one school to the next.
- The cost of medical school and health profession training programs are significant and present a barrier to students completing those programs.
- Many schools do not provide their students enough exposure to medical technology.
- Community health centers lack resources for onboarding and relocation of qualified health professionals.

## CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Our participants were able to bring their significant expertise from across the different sectors they represent to identify some of the more significant challenges that exist in the development of our health care workforce. Through group discussion, our participants identified potential cross-sector solutions to address many of these challenges. The results fit into three many categories and are presented, with solutions, in the table below.



Challenge	Solution
<p><b>Limited, challenging pathways for joining the health care workforce.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create more pipeline programs for younger students starting in elementary school.</li> <li>● Offer professional development in the health care field for students in middle and high school.</li> <li>● Create a cultural shift around medical vocational training to encourage students to enter this field.</li> <li>● Increase the number of internships and externships for high school and college students in the health care field.</li> </ul>
<p><b>High cost of medical programs and limited financial and academic support for students throughout all levels of education.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create more state education-based tax relief programs for students in the health care field.</li> <li>● Offer well-funded and more robust loan forgiveness programs for students in the health care field.</li> <li>● Increase reimbursement rates through public programs like Medi-Cal so that medical staff can receive higher salaries.</li> <li>● Create more government incentives for students seeking their degree in health care related fields.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Students graduating from health care programs lack skills including technological and clinical to operate effectively in their field.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have schools dedicate staff to work with providers to offer more apprenticeships, internships or externships to students in the health care fields, including working with patients with I/DD.</li> <li>● Incentivize medical professionals to teach students on procedures.</li> <li>● Provide more exposure in schools to the technology that trainees will need in their jobs upon graduation.</li> <li>● Integrate soft skills similar to social work and clinical engagement skills into health care education, especially for patients with I/DD.</li> </ul>

## CONCLUSION

Many thanks to our attendees and our sponsors for being a part of this event. While there are significant challenges facing the development of our health care workforce, there are many policy and non-policy approaches that can effectively address some of these barriers. Creating and updating policies around higher education, health care funding, training, and employment can open new pathways that encourage meaningful careers in the health care workforce.

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The Achievable Foundation is a nonprofit whose mission is to provide high quality, integrated health care to individuals with developmental disabilities such as autism and Down syndrome, and other vulnerable populations. The Achievable Health Center is a first-of-its-kind federally qualified health center which opened in 2013 to meet the healthcare needs of these people. Our patients too often suffer needlessly when seeking out care in the community because of facilities not willing to treat them, or doctors unable to see beyond their disability. At Achievable we provide our patients the level of health care they deserve, and we are thus able to dramatically improve the quality of their lives.



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