

DARTMOUTH-HITCHCOCK

Lebanon, NH



HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: REMOVING BARRIERS, CREATING ACCESS, AND BUILDING SKILLS

Dartmouth-Hitchcock is a nonprofit academic health system serving communities in northern New England. Dartmouth-Hitchcock provides access to more than 1,200 primary care doctors and specialists in almost every area of medicine, delivering care at its flagship hospital Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, New Hampshire's only academic medical center. The Dartmouth-Hitchcock system includes a National Cancer Institute-recognized comprehensive cancer center, the state's only children's hospital, four affiliated hospitals, a visiting nurse and hospice organization, and ambulatory clinics in 24 New Hampshire and Vermont communities. Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center was named one of the 100 Great Hospitals in America by Becker's Hospital Review (2016) and the #1 Hospital in New Hampshire by U.S. News & World Report (2018).

Building Infrastructure to Address Workforce Shortages

Like many employers, Dartmouth-Hitchcock faces a significant talent gap, and its workforce development programs are an essential business strategy to address the growing regional workforce gaps. Dartmouth-Hitchcock routinely fills about 10% of its approximately 10,000-member regional workforce annually, and many of the openings are frontline and entry-level positions. With a low unemployment rate, an aging workforce and population, and rural location on the border of New Hampshire and Vermont, Dartmouth-Hitchcock knew it was necessary to build and invest in an infrastructure to upskill workers and attract and retain talented residents.

Leadership realized a team dedicated to frontline workforce strategy is critical to program sustainability and prioritization and established a workforce development department in 2013 to address workforce shortages. Since then, the department has grown to a seven-member team and has established the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Workforce Readiness Institute as a licensed career school with the NH Department of Education. The Workforce Readiness Institute has trained and hired more than 350 people through nine distinct programs. An additional 78 people participated in programs that engage youth and people with intellectual disabilities to develop the job skills needed to succeed in the workforce. The focus on workforce sustainability allows programs to grow, meet evolving needs, and build and maintain numerous local and regional partnerships.

An Earn-While-You-Learn Strategy

Structured work-based learning practices can promote skill mastery and expand talent pipelines. Some Workforce Readiness Institute programs leverage an "earn-while-you-learn" registered apprenticeship structure through the U.S. Department of Labor. For example, Dartmouth-Hitchcock uses a registered apprenticeship model to prepare employees for career entry and advancement as a medical coder, medical assistant, pharmacy technician, and surgical technician. All Dartmouth-Hitchcock Workforce Readiness Institute programs are designed with these core principles:

- > expand access through intensive, position-specific training and education for high-demand jobs,
- > accelerate learning by eliminating financial barriers to education,
- > support continued growth and post-secondary education, and
- > result in well-paying, full-time employment with growth opportunities.

Dartmouth-Hitchcock Workforce Readiness Institute

Program	Participants
Medical Coders	13
Phlebotomists	3
Medical Assistant	157
Pharmacy Technicians	45
Certified Surgical Technologists	28
Clinical Service Representatives	30
Licensed Nurse Assistants	64
Ophthalmic Assistants	15
TOTAL	355

Recruiting from the Community

Local recruitment is a core element of Dartmouth-Hitchcock's programs, which give candidates who want to live and work in New Hampshire or Vermont the opportunity to learn and meaningfully contribute in their local communities. Most programs are open to the public and advertised heavily within the community through social media, print media, radio, local transit ads, unemployment check mailers, flyers, and word of mouth. Additionally, Dartmouth-Hitchcock invests in several youth programs with high school, vocational, and community programs to attract and engage young people in health care careers. In addition to filling important roles, these programs provide opportunities for individuals and economic stimulus for the local community. Thus far, 90% of program participants obtained a portable, national or industry recognized credential, and at the time of permanent hire, participants earn two to three times the New Hampshire minimum wage and receive full benefits.



Apprentice Spotlight

Before joining the medical assistant apprenticeship program, Elissa Perlo worked as a fashion catalog designer and a plant specialist at a garden center, among other jobs. She was ready for a change and sought a career that was challenging, fast-paced, and meaningful. Healthcare was an option, but she didn't know how to get her foot in the door at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. Now, through an apprenticeship, Elissa works closely alongside a team of other talented doctors, residents, medical students, and nurses. Between her mentors, instructors, and classmates, she has all the support she needs to continue learning and advancing her career. She is even considering applying to a physician assistant program or to medical school. "This program has changed my life," she said. "It's given me financial independence, confidence, and a sense of purpose."

BUSINESS IMPACT

In 2016, research done in partnership with the U.S. Department of Commerce measured the return on investment related to the medical assistant apprenticeship program and found:



- increased appointments booked,
- increased preventative care (e.g., colonoscopies, mammograms)



- reduced overtime expenses,
- reduced physician turnover,
- decreased prescription refill response time

The end result of the study was an almost 40% rate of return on investment compared to the cost of doing nothing.

NOTE FROM THE CEO



To address our workforce challenges, Dartmouth-Hitchcock is delivering programs and registered apprenticeships through our Workforce Readiness Institute that empower us to think creatively about how to identify, attract and to train new sources of talent. It is our belief that these programs are an investment in our Dartmouth-Hitchcock family, as well as in our community.

- Joanne Conroy, MD
President and CEO Dartmouth-Hitchcock

Number of Employees: 9638

Number of Frontline Workers: 2936



The Frontline Healthcare Worker Champion Peer Recognition Program:

CareerSTAT's Frontline Healthcare Worker Champion program recognizes healthcare organizations investing in the skills and career of their frontline workers. Organizations are designated as Champions and Emerging Champions. Champions meet all of CareerSTAT's recognition criteria, including making skill and career development accessible, offering programs at a significant scale, measuring program business impact, and building sustainable programs, while Emerging Champions are in earlier stages of investment and working with CareerSTAT leaderships to strengthen their programs. Learn more at www.NationalFund.org/CareerSTAT.