

SOUTHWESTERN OREGON HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP

Coos Bay, OR



COOPERATION IS KEY TO BUILDING A SKILLED HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE

Formed in 2016, the Southwestern Oregon Healthcare Industry Partnership (SOHIP) is a workforce healthcare partnership comprised of healthcare employers, education and training providers, community-based organizations, and other healthcare stakeholders from Coos, Curry, and Douglas Counties in Southwest Oregon. Launched in collaboration with the Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board, SOHIP addresses regional workforce challenges through a partnership of 25 stakeholders, including 19 healthcare employers.

The Power of Partnership

Healthcare workforce partnerships are dynamic collaborations of regional employers who convene regularly to discuss shared human resources issues, exchange labor market information, and take specific actions to address workforce challenges. While the Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board is the backbone support for SOHIP, the priorities are employer-driven. In fact, upon formation, SOHIP identified the critical employer need for certified medical assistants as one of its original priority calls to action. Through SOHIP, partners are able to establish goals and pool resources to co-invest in solutions. As representatives of a rural area with limited post-secondary training resources, the industry partnership successfully leverages the needs of multiple employers to garner regional commitment to invest in frontline workforce development.

Common Challenge, Shared Solution

The pool of local credentialed allied health professionals was already limited, but then new standards required medical assistants to be nationally credentialed in order to work with electronic health records. To swiftly address this critical employer need, SOHIP partnered with the National Healthcareer Association to launch an exam preparation course to expedite the certification process for incumbent medical assistants. Workers with a year or more of experience were able to sit for the exam without

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

National Medical Assistant Certification Pass Rate:

SOHIP

95%

National Average

75%

additional outside training. The program was partially funded through a state grant and the remainder was absorbed by employers. The success of the first cohort led to new investment at twice the initial investment. With co-investment from the workforce board and SOHIP partners, the program remains free of charge to workers and has so far empowered 229 candidates to pursue clinical medical assistant certification.

Populating the Pipeline

To establish a long-term pipeline for medical assistants, SOHIP created Oregon's first registered healthcare apprenticeship program. With the help of National Healthcareer Association, SOHIP connected with similar apprenticeship courses across the country to learn and incorporate best practices. The program supports incumbent workers and local residents facing financial barriers by linking them with continuing education through employers in need of qualified workers. SOHIP

prides itself on actively seeking to include people from a broad spectrum of the underserved populations, including women, minorities, and veterans. Through a combination of technical instruction and on-the-job training, participants are able to gain skills while earning a paycheck. Participants are paid for 2,000 hands-on training hours and are required to complete 156 hours of individual online coursework. They convene quarterly for an in-person session to reinforce acquired field skills. To date, the program has enrolled 40 apprentices, and the first cohort is expected to become certified in June 2019. An apprenticeship model for surgical technicians is in development, and SOHIP is exploring a similar path for community health workers.

Frontline Success Story

Although Hailey Pruitt had long been interested in becoming a medical assistant, she did not have the resources to attend college. Meeting an apprenticeship coordinator at a career technical education event changed that. She has now been in the apprenticeship program at North Bend Medical Center for six months and is already being requested by providers.



Due to the medical assistant apprenticeship program, Hailey will be able to pursue a long-time professional dream.

"I had been a [certified nursing assistant] in skilled nursing before this," says Hailey, "but I wanted the opportunity to help people earlier in their lifespan. I also found out that reading about something in a book or online does not prepare me as well as providing care in the clinic where I'm practicing my skills and dealing with people." Hailey's enthusiasm is infectious; she has referred several friends and community members to the program, encouraging them to consider the opportunity to earn and learn. After completing her registered apprenticeship, Hailey will be eligible to sit for the Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) exam, a nationally recognized credential.

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 business impact, and building sustainable programs, while Emerging Champions are in earlier stages of investment and working with CareerSTAT leadership to strengthen their programs.

PROGRAM DATA

229 SINCE 2017

Medical Assistant
Certifications



40 SINCE 2018

Medical Assistant
Apprenticeship
Participants

Note from the Executive Director



Jake McClelland
Executive Director
Southwestern Oregon
Workforce Investment Board

Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board Executive Director Jake McClelland emphasizes the value of partnerships in promoting and propelling frontline workers into healthcare career pathways. "As a rural area, we know that one single employer or organization cannot have the same kind of impact as all of us working together," adding

that "doing so has allowed us to increase critical mass and implement programs that otherwise would have never been able to get off the ground." He adds that while the medical assistant apprenticeship program is still underway, SOHIP is already looking to expand its programs to help empower employers and future frontline workers, all with the goal of improving patient care.

SOHIP Statistics

19 healthcare employer partners | 12 registered training partners | 500+ frontline workers impacted

