



CareerSTAT

**FRONTLINE WORKER  
CHAMPION**





**National Fund**  
for Workforce Solutions



# **BAYSTATE HEALTH**

**SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS**

Baystate Health is a not-for-profit, integrated healthcare system that serves more than 800,000 people across four different hospitals in Western Massachusetts. As one of the largest employers in the region, Baystate plays a crucial role in the economic and social well-being of the communities it serves.



## Boosting the Underemployed

Springfield is a New England city still coping with economic shifts that occurred in the latter half of the last century. With too many community members lacking well-paying jobs, Baystate stepped up to fill the gap, especially for people from historically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Zachary Makol, who grew up just outside Springfield, learned from assisting his grandmother that he had a knack for caregiving. So he jumped at the chance to leave retail and join Baystate in April 2021 as an operations associate/cardiac monitor technician.

"I figured it was a great way to get in the door," says Makol, who had an associate degree in science and health before joining Baystate. "It was a whole different world than retail, dealing with people in pain or who were passing away. But I knew it was where I was meant to be."

After just three months on the job, Makol's supervisor encouraged him to enter a newly created paid apprenticeship program to become a Cardiac Monitor Technician Registered Apprentice. "It felt good to have my manager supporting me and telling me I was good at something," Makol says. After completing 150 hours of related technical instruction and



Baystate Health Workforce Training Event

2,000 hours of on-the-job training, he received a pay raise, a promotion to a monitor technician level II, and added a new skill to his resume.

Makol has since been promoted to level-two certified monitor technician and is looking to join Baystate's licensed practical nurse pathway program. "I want to go further in my career," he says.

Baystate's years-long efforts to improve workforce development started to pay off in the middle of the last decade. In 2016, the organization became a CareerSTAT Emerging Champion. In 2018, Baystate participated in CareerSTAT's Healthcare Workforce Development Academy, which helps organizations institutionalize investments in frontline workers.

These experiences prompted Baystate leaders to better connect workforce goals to broader organizational objectives and values. Baystate infused workforce programming with more operational dollars. It also established a new strategic workforce fund of \$250,000-\$750,000 to provide workers with educational loans, training programs, and connections to regional workforce partners.

## Impact STAT

Retention rates among team members graduating from Baystate-sponsored certification and apprenticeship programs ranged from **75% to 90%**.

## Embracing Pay to Train

“When it comes to building training programs, you can’t be afraid of change,” says Jason Pacheco, Baystate’s director of workforce planning and analytics. “Even if you have a good program that’s working, there may be a better one out there,” he says.



Baystate Health Workforce Training Event

In creating a diverse, engaged, and high-performing workforce, Baystate invests in numerous training programs with structured career pathways and ladders for frontline workers. The strategy aligns with what workers say they most want: opportunities to advance.

Over the last three years, Baystate designed and implemented several training and apprenticeship programs. One is a “pay-to-train” model, which supports frontline workers as they train

for high-demand roles. Of the 114 people who participated in structured training, 52 have earned promotions with more pay, more responsibility, a new job title, or a combination of each. The investments have improved retention rates, with 75% to 90% of program participants staying on the job. In addition, Baystate created multiple tiered positions for medical assistants, which provide employees with more avenues to earn higher salaries as they gain experience and skills.

In 2022, Baystate solidified its commitment to the community by signing the Healthcare Anchor Networks Impact Workforce Agreement. The compact binds Baystate to specific, public goals related to building healthy and equitable local economies through hiring and workforce development programs and policies.

“We are dedicated to hiring people and giving them a shot, even if they have zero work experience,” says Pacheco. “We can best serve our community by creating good jobs and opportunities.”

## Tackling Racism and Bias

For Baystate, creating an equitable, diverse, and inclusive workplace also

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### Jason Pacheco

Director of Workforce Planning and Analytics, Baystate Health



means confronting racism and bias. More the 60 individuals across the organization assess policies and practices with an inclusivity lens and make recommendations for change. These include the option to add pronoun stickers on ID badges and expand eligibility for educational assistance and first-time homebuyer benefits. The assessment also resulted in a recommendation that certain positions remove high school degree and/or GED requirements, which expands opportunities for frontline workers with on-the-job experience rather than formal education.

Baystate also enhanced data and analytics to track progress toward diversity, equity, and inclusion; better understand workforce

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Level-Two Certified Monitor Technician,  
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needs; and more effectively allocate external funding. These disaggregated data are regularly shared with board members, C-suite executives, managers, and via Baystate’s publicly accessible website. Baystate has more than tripled its workforce planning team, established talent acquisition roles dedicated to retention, fostered greater community collaboration, and increased medical staff diversity.



CareerSTAT is a healthcare sector strategy of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions rooted in the power of peer-learning. Through a national network, members share workforce development innovation, best practices, and outcome-based initiatives to support frontline healthcare workers to build skills and careers to achieve family-sustaining wages.

 **CareerSTAT** Frontline Healthcare Worker Champion

