**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Sector Strategies Virtual Business Engagement Academy**

**Opening Session: Model Industry Sector Meeting with Business Leaders**

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GARY GONZALEZ: So I'm actually going to turn things over now to Diane Walton. She's from region six in San Francisco at the Department of Labor. Diane, take it away.

DIANE WALTON: Hey. Thanks, Gary. Welcome, everybody. We're about to engage in a week-long adventure around sector strategies. The name of this accumulation of learning is Sector Strategies Virtual Business Engagement Academy and there's a reason for every word but we won't tell you yet.

The thing is we at the department – lots of people have known it for a long time, and we at the department now are true believers that, if we can get people to truly put business at the center of what you do get that skill of really listening and solving their needs, then we really are creating opportunities for the people who we care so much about.

And that's what this is for, this academy, to pick up all that people have been doing over the past couple years. People have grown, their experiences are so vast now, and so we want to take advantage of all the learning and just keep moving people along.

We have lots of fancy graphics. So any time anybody needs a graphic to throw up anywhere, we can do it for you. This one is just another representation of how much the businesses in the middle has made a difference for different groups. And also, of course, as we go into the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, whole new realms of partnership for us, and again, so wise to organize them around our business partner.

The week is organized into an opening, oddly enough, three sessions in the middle, and then a closing. We've learned a lot from our education partners over the past couple years, but today they're going to be a session with business leaders that – the healthcare. They are so cool and just how they talk about having come to grips with who we are and what we have – what we bring to the table is pretty fun.

And then the follow-up sessions in the middle are very specific pieces about how you take the first step, how you build your team, how different industries take different approaches. So how we get through the week depends on you also. So there are ways to ask questions and be very demand – (inaudible) – these conversations going. You're going to see some of that going on today.

Others of you have done it differently. We want to know all those things so that everybody has the best options possible. The intermediary role has been a little bit illusive for some. So we're going to clarify that, and then connecting local and regional partnerships to statewide sector strategies.

All the states had to say what their sector plans were and some rolled them up and some rolled them down. The onslaught of sector strategies needs to be connected and so we've heard that loud and clear and we're going to do some work on that.

There's a poll that's up that's asking you how involved you've been in facilitating employer meetings for an industry sector. So you could start voting.

MR. GONZALEZ: And to participate in this poll we will mouse over to left-click the radio option to the left of the selection. So again, the question reads, how involved have you been in facilitating employer meetings for an industry sector?

First option is, I have not yet had the opportunity. The second option is, I have helped prepare for employer meetings. The third option is, I have held led between one and five meetings with the same set of employers in a sector.

And the last option is, I have led six or more meetings with the same set of employers in a sector over multiple years. You can mouse over and left-click the radio option to the left of the selection. Diane, back to you.

MS. WALTON: So as you can see, there's a spread but a lot of people haven't done it yet and that's so exciting for us to be able to help you take your next step. And all along the way that's what we're about this week is just helping you take those next steps and making sure that they're as successful as possible.

So today rolls out with Eric Seleznow leading off. I would say our lead-off batter, but I'm in San Francisco and we're not talking baseball this week. And then a mock industry partnership and then we'll close it up. But I want to say that this gentleman is a leader inside and outside ETA. You've seen him maybe in apprenticeship meetings, maybe in your state. I don't know. You run into him everywhere.

That's my experience, but he's a guy who has kind of a public policy sonar. If you don't know, he has a 3-D sense of where things are and how policies need to unroll and who can connect to who for what benefit. It's an astonishing gift that he brings, and he also brings a remarkable generosity. I can say these things because I'm not in the same room with him.

So he's like the smartest guy in the room who – but he wants you to know what he knows, and he's so committed to bringing you to have everything you need to know to do what you want to do that he cares enough to make it happen and he's here today and away he goes.

ERIC SELEZNOW: Not sure who you were talking about, Diane, but thank you very much. This is Eric Seleznow, deputy assistant secretary of your U.S. DOL Employment and Training Administration. Thanks for joining us today. I'm fighting a bit of a cold here. So while Diane likes to liken me to Superman, I do get colds, and so thank you all very much for joining today.

Good afternoon or good morning, and thanks for making the time to be here today. So if you can beware – bear with me for a few minutes, I just want to sort of set the stage and background for you all. First of all, as we were sitting here waiting for this to come on, I see the names of the people in the field who are joining us today, hundreds of folks from all over the country. I see national organizations.

I see workforce development boards, community college folks, community-based organizations, grantees, non-grantees. Really is quite a breadth of participants in this today, and it really make – warms my heart to see all those folks from across the system joining us because this is not just a WIOA issue. It is not just an apprenticeship issue. It's not just a youth issue or adult issue.

It really – employer engagement and sector strategies work or industry partnership work really crosses all those things, and you need certainly in your areas, in your regions, in your local areas in your regions, and perhaps in your states also, you need many of those people around the table with you as you engage employers. So I'm thrilled.

This is sort of the secret sauce; right, this employer engagement sectors things is the secret sauce here, and we've had hundreds, I'm told – Diane tells me thousands of you have participated in our sector work over the last three, three and a half years. Some of you are probably grantees who are doing this work.

I saw by the poll we have some very experienced people who are joining us today and then folks who are just getting started. So hopefully you'll learn from others in your network as well, but this is great. And I will tell you what sectors work is not employer engagement work is not.

It's not coffee and donuts at an advisory board that meets twice a year. It is deep employer engagement. It goes on over a lengthy period of time. One thing you should be warned, if you're new to this world of sector partnerships or sector strategies, is it takes a while to get the group cohesive around and trusting of everybody. Your group should be made up of multiple employers from the same industry sector.

Sectoral work and sector strategies are two different things. I think all of us over the last 15 years in workforce development and education and training have been doing sectoral work. Question is can you go from sectoral work to doing real sector strategies? Do you have a strategy with the business industries in your region more than coffee and donuts a couple times a year; right?

You all know what I'm talking about, but if you're really doing this sort of work, it's much more deeper engagement with a small group of employers that hopefully grows over time. That trust is built. You're listening. You're probing. You're convening. You're asking questions with your partners around the table, and you're providing employers exactly what they tell you they need in terms of skills, credentials, knowledge, and ability.

And boy, we have seen sector partnerships start out as a simple sort of strategic plan move into really in-depth industry and sector partnerships and do a heck of a lot more than just do training for entry-level jobs. So – but it's a great place to start organizing, convening.

There's a few tricks to it. I hope that the next few days will share some of those tricks for that deep engagement. I think probably the biggest thing that you all need to do, and when I was a local workforce guy, this was the hardest thing for me to learn, was to listen to the employers. I would be in rooms with employers and I would have people around the room and we would tell the employers what they need to do.

If you want to tell employers what they need to do, don't do a sector strategy. Go do something else. But if you're willing to convene employers with the right people in the room and listen, you'll be surprised at what you hear over time and the trust you build with them over time.

So the final rules of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is out. Whether you're launching a career pathway program, an industry sector, an apprenticeship, these are all part of a continuum of services that we do, a continuum of sort of program options. And really sectors work is more of a philosophy; right? It's a philosophy about engaging employers.

You all – not every single program you run necessarily is going to be an in-depth sector strategy, but for many of you what you're trying to do, depending upon what the needs in your community, you'll want to do at least one or two. And later on today you're going to hear from the healthcare community, which is a great place to start, all the fastest growing industry, fastest growing occupations over the next 10, 20 years in this country. So there's great opportunity and already great examples around the country. Many of you know that.

So when you look at – everything should be industry-driven; right? Career pathways, the sector strategy, the industry partnership, apprenticeship programs, they're all part of a continuum. And I would encourage you, all the same work that you do in developing sectors and career pathways, again, finding out what industry needs, crafting programs to give them what they need, getting the right training providers who understand exactly what the employer needs, finding the pipeline of workers to properly assess and put in those programs are all part of the same strategy.

And whether it's a partnership with the local industry or you want to go for a registered apprenticeship program, you just lean a little bit more to the right. You want to do career pathways, it's slightly different strategy, but all of them are – have to start with engagement of the employers, earning their trust, finding out what they need, and delivering that to them. I think you'll see great results for performance, and whether you're at a college or community-based organization or workforce board, you all need to be working together at communities to get that done.

So I could tell everybody what to do, but I don't want to do that. I think one of the most important things for you, especially folks who are new to this, is a lot of discovery that you'll go through. There's a lot of mistakes you'll probably make. Hopefully throughout the next three days you'll get an understanding of what helps, how to engage employers, and how to make the most effective use of your time so you're not spinning your wheels.

Look. The last four years, certainly since Secretary Perez has been secretary and I bring you greetings from Secretary Perez and Portia Wu, the assistant secretary at ETA, we're all out in the field; right? We're visiting colleges, visiting community organizations, visiting jail workforce programs, visiting sector partnerships all around the country.

And what we have seen the last three or four years is the notion of the president's vision for job-driven workforce strategy, and this admin- – look. If not now to do this work, when? The last four years in this country's been incredible for the workforce system, and the president's job-driven principles talk about – there's seven things in the job-driven principles, but the first two or the first one is engaging with local employers and doing this in regional partnerships. Diane spoke a little bit about state plan and how states have to do this.

You can try to do it around the state sector strategy and some states have but I think the work will happen locally or regionally. And so you really need to think about labor sheds and employers in a certain area that you can do that. It's sort of harder when you do it across state, but some states have done a great job setting it up.

I think most states who are successful, the work happens regionally. But certainly the job-driven training philosophy that talks about employers in the center and regional partnerships and having the right stakeholders around the table to listen – I'm going to say that again – listen to employers, not have a meeting with employers and tell them what they need to do.

The other – three historic things have happened I think over the last few years. One was the federal strategy for job-driven training where all federal programs are aligned. So whether you're work with HHS or SNAP programs, supplemental nutrition food stamp programs, WIOA, jail reentry, high-tech STEM programs, whatever, employers are at the middle. Regional partnerships are central to that.

The other historic activity that's happened is the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; right? It's not – it's more than given permissions for sectors and career pathways and apprenticeship work. It's really encouraged it, and all these strategies you'll be learning the next couple of days will certainly bring all of those three strategies into focus.

And I think the third historic thing that has come up from a policy-wise here in D.C. out to the field is the focus on learn-and-earn models, on work-based learning, on apprenticeships. And what employers tell us every day and they tell this to the president and the vice president, Secretary Perez, and, gee, even me and I'm sure many of you, they want to grow their own workers. They're not always getting still to this day what they need, lack of knowledge skills and soft skills, and they want to often grow their own.

And so I think employers are far more open to participating in these sorts of approaches and initiatives from our system. We have to be smart. We have to be targeting. We have to have integrity, and we have to earn the trust of the business community to the workforce. I know we can do it. Many of you out there already do. So thanks for that.

So you're about to be joined by a fabulous panel of healthcare professionals. Excuse me. And I'm going to wrap this up right now. Have a great week. Keep coming back the next couple days. Keep coming back at work, and I'm going to turn it over right now to some very capable people, Rick Maher, president and CEO of Maher & Maher and Joe Barela, the division manager/director of the Arapahoe/Douglas Works workforce in – outside of – in Colorado. So, gentlemen, take it away.

RICK MAHER: Thanks, Eric. Joe, are you with us? This is Rick Maher. So let me dive in and pick it up for Joe and see if we can move this forward. We're pressed for time, and we want to do the best job we can to get you kicked off here today.

On the next slide I think we'll see an overview of what we're trying to get done in the next few days.

JOE BARELA: Rick?

MR. MAHER: OK. You there, Joe?

MR. BARELA: Yeah. I'm sorry. I was muted. So thank you.

MR. MAHER: OK. Go ahead and pick it up.

MR. BARELA: OK. Sorry about that, folks, but I just wanted to first thank Eric for his expertise, his excitement, and most importantly his encouragement to all of us to move forward with sector initiatives and regional planning with key industries in our local areas and in our regions. So, Eric, thank you for that.

I am going to try to set the assumptions of where we are in a mock sector initiative in the healthcare industry, and so on the slide there you'll notice that we are a group that has met two or three times before and we've really done some critical work on bringing together business and industries that have like concerns and issues with talent acquisition.

And we've come to build trust. We're beginning to see synergy and the need for systems to work collectively rather than individually to try to solve some of their talent attraction, talent retention needs. So at this point, again, this is probably our third meeting. We've talked about some of the key struggles that they're having, successes they're having.

We have some labor market information that we've distributed to them, and we're going to continue to drill down and vet that data so that we can move forward with some key indicators that will continue to drive the work of this group. And so with that hopefully today's meeting will be where we want to validate data we've collected and move forward. So, Rick, I'm going to turn it over to you to make some introductions.

MR. MAHER: Thanks, Joe. And before we get into introducing our panel, let me explain that this would be our meeting agenda. And again, Joe and I will be popping in and out of character here, and some things you should know. We've met a couple times prior to meeting today is the scenario we're working with, and we now have an agenda for today's meeting.

And again, a meeting like this might run multiple hours. It might run a full day or more. We're going to kind of condense this conversation to 20 or 30 minutes and then drive our conversations over the series of workshops and webinars planned over the next three days.

For today's meeting our agenda is going to start with welcome and introductions, and I'll introduce you to our panel here in just a minute. We would have progressed through old business. So prior to today, again, we've met a couple times. We identified the key players and partners to our industry partnership.

We've planned to align our resources around common goals and visions in the areas that employers drive us that they need help on. We've agreed we're going to do this work together across a series of our partners, and we've made an attempt to try to understand, as Joe said, the data that's given to you again and available by download here, both in terms of what our data analysts are telling us and more importantly validating that with our employers.

And so after having run through our old business, we'll talk to the – what we call the discovery session of the agenda, which is what we're going to model for you here in a moment where we're going to engage with these employers at a personal level, get to know them a little bit, and understand – have them really dive deep to help us understand industry data.

And as Eric said very appropriately at the front end of this, we're going to listen, actively listen. This is what I call a brochure-free zone; right? And following that discussion – again, we're going to compact it today. It would take a lot longer in real world – we'll – Joe and I will attempt to synthesize the key learnings of what has happened over the course of our conversation and then decide on next steps to move forward after today.

So without further ado, if I could, let me move us to introductions of this panel. As I do that, let me remind the folks in the room, you're free to ask your questions as well through the chat room. Now, Joe and I will be running questions we've prepared, but we'll try to keep an eye on questions you have either for the panel – if we can grab them and use them in the time we have, we will – or questions you have for either of us about how to run a meeting like this which we intend to have some Q&A on following this session. So again, if you have a question, feel free to chop it into the chat room. And with that said, let me go ahead and introduce you to our employer panelists today.

As I do that, Gary's going to go ahead and drop these folks' videos in so you can see them as well as hear them as we go into this conversation. So the panel we've assembled – and thank you all so much for your time and talent today – are a group of expert panelists from the healthcare sector from around the country. We've got first Robert "Bob" Wise. Bob, you can wave so we know who you are on camera. He's the chief executive officer of Hunterdon Healthcare. He's also a business member of the New Jersey State Workforce Board and served as the chair of the board's New Jersey Healthcare Workforce Council since its inception in 2010. Bob, thanks so much for being with us today.

ROBERT WISE: Glad to be here.

MR. MAHER: Joining Bob we have Ms. Jackie Beard. Jackie is a systems director and talent – for talent acquisition and workforce development at Norton Healthcare. She's a founding member and co-chair of the Health Careers Collaborative of Greater Louisville. Also serves as a board member for the Family Scholar House and a cabinet member of the mayor's 21st Century Workforce and Talent Initiative. Jackie, thanks so much for your for being with us today.

JACKIE BEARD: Sure.

MR. MAHER: And then lastly, the two folks paired together here, we've got Mary "MJ" Ryan. MJ is the director of workforce development for Partners HealthCare. She's been in the healthcare field for 30 years. She provides technical assistance, the hospital-based workforce initiatives, and creates and supports collaboration with key partners, including community colleges, CBOs, others involved in skill development and job readiness training. And thanks, MJ, for being with us.

And finally but last, as they say, but certainly not least, is Oz Mandejar. Oz is the senior vice president of mission and advocacy for Spaulding Rehabilitation Network. He's – prior to joining Partners HealthCare in 2001, Oz was the New England region recruitment program for the Social Security's Administration and worked as an HR executive in a number of different industries, including manufacturing, hospitality, and finance.

So, folks, again, I welcome you today. We thank you so much for your time and talent. We know there's a lot of different places you could be, and with that let's get this mock conversation started, Joe. I'm going to turn it back to you to begin our discussion with our panel.

MR. BARELA: Thanks, Rick, and welcome, panel. I'm glad you could join and you continue to join us on this important work. I'm going to send this question to Bob, and I hope we have time for all of you to answer it. But, Bob, when we last met, we asked you what kept you up at night in regards to talent attraction and retention. What do you see as broad healthcare industry trends driving the short- and long-term demands in your region or in our region?

MR. WISE: Well, thanks for the first question to be answered today. It appears that with the dramatic changes taking place in healthcare, that our organization, like so many others, is attempting to reeducate a very diverse workforce into a model that is itself changing. That makes it very difficult for educators to understand the requirements for pedagogy in order to be able to be relevant to the delivery system that we're trying to create.

At the same time we have to maintain the operation of the old model of healthcare, thus creating a conflict of resources and demands for change while at the same time being expected the delivery of healthcare to be at a level of performance that meets very high standards today. That truly is a challenge for healthcare that we find most daunting and confusing not only to the consumer but to those in the healthcare delivery system itself.

MR. BARELA: Thanks, Bob. That's great information to know that you're within an industry that evolves so quickly and you're still working with new pipeline workers as well as incumbent workers that have to adapt to the new delivery service model that you have and education needs to be relevant to that. So thank you.

MJ and Oz, could you answer that question for us, please?

MARY JANE RYAN: Hi. Thank you. I would – I think I'd add to that that with the high competition for talent, we're looking for a lot of high-level individuals as we increase access to healthcare for all. We're looking to stretch the already low and highly stressed primary care physicians, and we need to enhance services with bridge roles such as nurse practitioners and physician's assistants which are hard to get and is competition with local urgent care centers and the doc-in-the-box operations with CVSs and the Walgreens of the world.

So there's a high level of competition for that really high-level talent which is hard to get through, especially in a workforce development system. Additionally, in all roles, clinical and non-clinical, there's a really high focus on performance and quality improvement, lien systems. Everyone needs to be technologically savvy. We need to work with electronic medical records.

So people that have been in the system for a long time are either being outdated and moved out or into other roles or – and the new people coming in need to not only be – (inaudible) – with healthcare but technology and business concepts as well. So that's a challenge to prepare people for all of that.

OSWALD MANDEJAR: And I'll just support what Bob and MJ said. I think that really covers it, for the most part.

MR. BARELA: Thanks, Oz. Jackie, would you like to answer the question, what keeps you up at night, and what are the industry trends in looking at your short- and long-term demands?

MS. BEARD: Well, it's great to hear that my fellow partners here feel the same thing about not sleeping at night on some of the same key areas. I would add to that that some of our workforce demographics or retirements that we're starting to see in the healthcare arena are certainly impacting our needs in definitely the short-term.

And most of us have a workforce forecasting tool making sure that we are accurately forecasting and what we might be missing, the license requirements that are coming at us, what are changing. Unfortunately, in the healthcare environment it's not usually a situation where we can have a workforce ready in three weeks, six weeks, even six months.

So we really have to be proactive in making sure that we have those folks ready in order to support those patients community that we serve.

MR. BARELA: Thank you. I think in looking at what industry forecasting, it leads me to my next question in looking at what are the three things we should focus on around occupation and key skill needs within the healthcare industry. So, MJ, would you take that question first, please?

MARY JANE RYAN: I would start with the fact that the market – as Bob said earlier, the market's changing so quickly and the demand for the skills that people need and the types of roles and just, as Jackie said, the certifications and licenses keep changing.

So I think that if education focused on a core set of competencies, which are very similar for us – many allied health physicians, including nursing and others, if we focused on core competencies being built into curriculum, then people could make specific decisions and be flexible at the end when the market is more apparent and the need is more clear so that people have a general core healthcare competency, including technology, critical thinking, customer service skills, basic healthcare, understanding the healthcare system, and then at the end they could focus on a specialty area that would be able to be built upon as needs change.

MR. BARELA: Thanks, MJ. Hey, Bob, would you agree with the core competencies that MJ mentioned that would cross curriculums?

MR. WISE: Well, I certainly do agree. The changes taking place in the delivery system are requiring a great deal of flexibility within what used to be rather strict professions. I think on the other hand we can't ignore the resistance from within that new practices challenge them to be adapting to.

A recent book released by Ken Kaufman, a famous consultant we have in healthcare, pointed out that nurse practitioners have been what he calls a cornerstone of attempts to change the healthcare delivery system and yet have been met with resistance from physicians and regulators in attempting to work up to the level of their license and beyond in order to accommodate some of the deficiencies or the gaps in healthcare delivery in parts of the country.

So I do think we need to be careful about pointing the fingers outside our delivery system and recognize that there has to be acceptance from within as well.

MR. BARELA: Jackie, would you like to add in? You're nodding your head, I believe.

MS. BEARD: Yes. I would totally agree with that. We had actually looked at our workforce forecasting tool. We knew that there was going to be a shortage of primary care physicians, and so we started a model about three years ago to actually in house start a DNP program where we took RNs and actually had them in house looking at becoming a DNP in order to support the primary care physicians in our immediate care centers.

And to that effect, a three-year program really accelerating that model and about year two and a half people started saying, what? Where are they coming? Where are they going to go, and who's going to take those? And they don't have any experience. So I think there is one of those kind of catch 22s that in the healthcare arena we do tend to want experience, but we've become more understanding that growing your own and looking at new graduates is definitely the way that we're going to need to look at our market going forward and the workforce.

So while, yes, speed is definitely an arena that we need to do better at, sometimes when we grow our own and build it, they don't always come or accept what we're willing to have for them.

MR. BARELA: Thank you, Jackie. Oz, can you help us in looking at around occupations and key skill needs? Are there specific critical occupations within your health system that you say are our top priority?

MR. MANDEJAR: So it's a very good question. I would say that with my colleague here, MJ, she can pipe in because she sees the overarching. What I would say is certainly the ability to juggle and multitask customer service skills, the ability to interact with a very diverse population I think is very much of the foundation. We can teach a lot of the skills.

In fact, at times we prefer to do that because you do come from training programs that aren't necessarily matching the programs that we have. So the skillsets are varied, but I think customer service as well as the ability to work in very diverse environments and in a very dynamic environment as well. And self-starters, sort of I think that also speaks to the volume of work that we have and the fact that we don't have layers of supervision. So you have to be very much self-motivated.

I do want to add one more thing to the last question, and that is healthcare also has an image right now that we're very complex and we're very layered, and we have to start changing that image ourselves so we're much more out in the community and really engaging the workforce of the future. If you cut through some of the application process, sometimes it tends to become a challenge. So we also have some work to do on our end.

MR. BARELA: Thank you. MJ?

MS. RYAN: I agree with Oz, and I think that it's – people are being forced more and more to work in teams and the skills that are required to work in teams and that could be somebody from the medical assistant level right up through the physician, the surgeon, and all the specialists they have to work with. They have to be able to be heard, and you have – there's training on both ends required for that.

There's the high-level nurses and doctors who have to accept and respect the individuals that they normally would – at one point would have been just generally ordering around. But now, they all work in a team and they're expected to delivery care in a coordinated way.

So that's an important skill. We recently started a certificate program in basic healthcare fundamentals to help frontline workers in our community health centers to be able to do just that, to learn how to communicate, to gain the confidence and competence to work in a high-level team, to understand some of the surveys and statistics and graphic representations and metrics that they're expected to understand these days.

So it's beyond just picking up the phone and scheduling patients now. People have to work as a multi-disciplinary team and understand what that means.

MR. MAHER: So, guys, hi. Joe, this is Rick. Let me just pop in with a question, and thanks so much. I mean, the information you're giving us is amazing. You started to define some of the core competencies, critical thinking, working in teams, high tech, and some of the occupations. I have a question as we try to drill this down a little bit.

Which occupations – I mean, knowing off as partners we around the table here are trying to come together to help make a difference for this sector, which occupations are you having the toughest time filling that you think we might be able to help with and why? Can you guys take a crack at that one?

MR. WISE: Well, I'll speak to my organization here which has recognized the importance of medical homes as the fundamental center core of relationships with the consumer. We're finding it more and more difficult, even as much as we educate residents in our program here, to retain them because of the attractiveness of offerings for higher-paid salaries across the country.

And I think that as the federal government sees the importance of medical homes and team care in those settings, that it will really be a challenge to create new medical homes in new settings based upon the existing shortages.

MS. BEARD: From our perspective, we're always going to be looking at nurses. I think across the board we're looking at nurses. Three years ago we had nurse – a lot of nurses, and then you go through kind of a cycle where you have a lot and then you don't have a lot. So I think we're always going to have the core competency of nurses no matter what the acuity of the care is that we're providing in our hospital or whether it be in a physician office, whether it be tele-medicine.

No matter what the delivery of care model is, that's still going to be an opportunity for an RN to use their skillset out there. And let's be honest. As we look across the skillset of those folks in the healthcare environment, healthcare we hear all the time is actually a calling. People do have a choice in the careers that they're going to look at. So whether it be healthcare or something else, whether it be IT or manufacturing, they still have a choice.

So we want people that want to help people. We want in healthcare that actually have a calling to be in healthcare because healthcare is truly a career. So when you look at healthcare, it is about stackable credentials. It is about lifelong learning. It's about continuing to grow and learn and layer on the skills that you already have. So that's what's going to be different in the healthcare environment versus another type of job, per se, that you have. Healthcare truly is a career for folks.

MR. MAHER: And, Jackie, I won't ask you to name the now, but in subsequent sessions we might ask you to help us define those credentials and perhaps third-party credentials that you think are important or licenses that people can obtain as part of our work to get to a pathway maybe. So again, if not now, maybe at some point in the future.

Guys, I know we're running long, and I – Joe may want a recap question. I have one more, and then we'll try to get to a point where we can get you guys on to your next meeting. I know several of you have to leave. How can we as partners, as intermediary organizations, and the public broader system forge a stronger partnership with you as employers in this critical sector? What is it that you need from us as we work down this road together today and in future meetings?

MR. MANDEJAR: If I may, this is Oz Mandejar. Thank you very much for the question. So private-public partnerships I think are key. We can't do it by ourselves, and we certainly need your support. And Eric said it very well earlier on. It takes a bit of work and building a relationship. One of the things that I think is fundamentally at the core of that is really understanding the industry, doing some research up front, and then making those calls.

And being invited to either one of the, whether it's the employer or the Department of Education or the agency. In Massachusetts we tend to work very closely with our agencies, and in particular we've had some very strong relationships with workforce development initiatives for those with – out with disabilities. And it's worked well because we've broken down some of those barriers. I would say that our time is a little bit different than government's time.

So we're fast and furious and we don't always react the way that the supporting agency may understand. So as much as we can start speaking the same language I think could be very helpful. We're very interested. I think everyone around this call is interested in working with the support system, whether it's education or VR services, that will help us tap a pool of candidates that often do not get a seat at the table. So that's just one way.

I would just say that the other is that we have – there's – in every hospital is a hotel within the hospital. So it's not just about clinical care, though that's the prime reason. There are many, many other areas within the hospital system that folks can be guided in terms of career development.

MR. WISE: I was privileged to have been chair of a state employment and training commission healthcare taskforce that ended up with as many as 35 cross-profession interested leaders, including Department of Labor where we met on a quarterly basis to analyze the shortages and education and then healthcare needs in the state of New Jersey.

It was a very successful coming together of experts who aligned their priorities and identified shortages in personnel that was able to begin a process of educating the educators about what was needed at the beginning of the pipeline to be able to serve those at the end. I think more of that kind of a model would be very useful across the country.

MR. MAHER: Thanks for that. That's very interesting, and our eyes – our ears are wide open to that. Thanks so much for that. Anybody else want to chime in and then, Joe, I'll turn it back to you to just close us out.

MS. BEARD: Yeah.

MS. RYAN: If I could just jump in for one second, I wanted to also mirror what Bob said. And I've also been involved in a lot of sector partnerships in this area, and it's really about forming the trust and the relationships and gaining the respect on both sides, the education side and the employer side. And anyone that can convene that effectively and create that trust can create a lot of action.

MS. BEARD: Yeah. And I would – the last thing that I would say is that healthcare has a lot of acronyms. A lot of different organizations have acronyms, but if you don't start, you're never going to get there. So you just have to actually roll up your sleeves, understand what the business is, and even within healthcare, sometimes the same acronym means different things within the same hospital system. So don't be afraid. Ask a lot of questions. We'd love to share information with folks, and just being collaborative.

As MJ said, we want the help. We need the help, and we can't do it alone. That's why we're forming independent collaboratives with other employers, which is really unheard of to join with your competitors for talent because it doesn't make sense for either educators or government to one-off these initiatives when we can do it together and scale them.

MS. RYAN: Absolutely.

MR. MAHER: Joe, any final questions for the panel?

MR. BARELA: Well, and I just want to kind of think – have you think about – I know we lost Oz, but if you really again were trying to drill down to really focus – and I heard from Jackie that the nursing, nursing, nursing, nursing. Besides nursing, what other critical occupations would you say as an industry that you would like to focus on?

MS. BEARD: For us, I would love to see, honestly, the entry level because that's where our next leaders are going to come from. As our demographics and the folks continue to retire out of healthcare, we're going to need to grow our own. So the folks that are in entry level now will be moving into higher level roles.

So I would like to see us focus more on the entry-level positions that we have, whether it be a medical assistant, a patient care. And unfortunately, we all call them different – we have different titles for some of these positions, whether it be those that help people when they go to the doctor's office, an immediate care center, or they're helping at the registration desk. These are – this is the future of healthcare. They just don't know it yet.

MR. BARELA: Thank you.

MS. RYAN: And if I could add to that, if you don't mind, I would add to that people that are specialists in behavioral health, we're all dealing with – (inaudible) – crisis. We're dealing with a lot of expectations around behavioral health and a lot of shortages in that area. Second medical assistants and a standardized way to look at them, train them, and credential them so that we actually know what medical assistant means.

The same thing with community health workers and patient navigators. So to define those roles better, to better – I'm not looking for credential – (inaudible) – because we've had that problem in other specialties but so that we know what we're getting so we have a standard educational process and expectation for those roles.

MR. BARELA: Thank you, MJ. Bob?

MR. WISE: And – (inaudible) – underestimate the importance of information technology in all professions as it ties together through unified charts, through streaming of information to consumers in appropriate ways, even the competition that we have with IBM Watson which has so much knowledge base to make diagnostic decisions.

I think we have to keep up with that through our employers' involvement in the learning process. Using IT is an effective tool across the spectrum of healthcare providers.

MR. BARELA: Thanks, Bob. And I believe someone else needs to leave now, but I think some of you can stay with us. I do want to summarize kind of what I heard and then set next steps.

I think Rick will do, but really looking at the industry and saying, for us to be partners, we need to build – the partnerships build trust and build a relationship where there's a mutual understanding of the industry need, a common comprehension of what the systems look like, not only at the micro level but at the macro level, and then getting really down to what do we collectively bring to the table and what can we recruit as far as those critical occupations.

And then those critical occupations, I think I wrote a couple notes, and, Rick, you may have others. But definitely a focus on the nursing and critical specific nursing occupations within the healthcare system, medical assistants. We need to get down into what are the credentials and job descriptions that we can all live with as the education pipeline turns out candidates. Patient care, customer service representatives, and then I think I already mentioned medical assistants, but I think those are some critical occupations I think we can begin to work with as we move forward.

So I want to thank you for your time. You will be getting a summary of the meeting today, and then next steps will be coming out for the agenda. But it's so important that your voice be heard at the table and so that we can make our next step to see who we need to bring from the region to help solve these issues for you. Rick, anything else?

MR. MAHER: No. Just want to echo your comments to the panel. Thank you so much, guys, for your time and talent. Obviously, what we've done today, Joe and I here working with this panel, is in a very, very, very short cryptic way really modeled the kinds of conversation that we're hoping to have with industry experts. And, panel, your time and talent today is so important to help us do that. So much appreciated.

And then if we could now – what I'd like to do is turn to a couple points, and before we wrap and turn back to Diane here, what I'd like to do is maybe just reflect as facilitators, Joe and I, a little bit about the style that we tried to model. And again I stress in 20 minutes, 30 minutes with these experts, we're really just giving those of you who haven't done it before a flavor of what this kind of a meeting would look like and the way the conversation would go. So I'd like to spend a few minutes helping us understand what we're doing here and then get to your questions about the process.

OK. Understand what it is you guys – what questions you have of the way the meeting is organized and wants – and would work, and then we'll ramp up and synthesize, if you will, what we learned from the panel so that future segments in this academy can build on it in ongoing sessions after today.

So, Joe, I'm sorry. What am I hearing?

MR. BARELA: OK. I understand Eric Seleznow is still with us and wants to make some observations. Eric, are you with us?

MR. SELEZNOW: Yeah, Rick. I am. Thanks a lot. Hey, I'll just take a minute.

MR. BARELA: Sure.

MR. SELEZNOW: So very interesting conversation. Certainly in 20 minutes you got a lot of information. I mean, I would follow up on Bob's point at the end where he said, I was on a commission and we focused on shortages; right? So my next meeting I'm going to drill down a little bit more on, OK. The data doesn't tell necessarily what your shortages are.

Let's talk about very specifically, Bob, what shortages are you talking about in your area, your region, not only in your hospital or healthcare system, the others in the area? And then let's see. Jackie, man, lobbed us a softball, low-hanging fruit; right? Our entry level positions, we need a lot of nurse –

MR. BARELA: Oh, I loved it.

MR. SELEZNOW: Everybody needs nurses; right? But this was really about entry-level. There was some talk about skills and credentials. So I would really follow up on the subsequent meeting about, all right. Let's drill down what all – do all of you have in common on entry-level positions? Is it pharmacy technicians, radiological tech, surg techs, lobotomists. What is that?

Now, you're really getting in some progress here as you're drilling down on what the occupations are needed. So you started at the big picture, and you started drilling down and drilling down. I think the next meeting's going to be really successful. Thanks a lot.

MR. MAHER: No. Thank you for staying around. I'm so pleased that you were able to give your feedback, and as you might imagine, you can't take the practitioner out of the deputy assistant secretary. You're obviously still in the mix, Eric.

MR. SELEZNOW: Thanks, Rick.

MR. MAHER: When I heard that, the entry-level, my ears perked too. That's our opportunity to serve the target populations in this law. So, I mean, really, really amazing stuff there in a really short amount of time. As a facilitator – and you just heard from deputy assistant secretary who played this role as a practitioner – the kinds of things that Joe and I want you to chime in here and then, if folks have questions of any of us – if Eric's going to hang around, that's great.

The kinds of things that I try to bring to discussions like this, for what they're worth, and when I think about the absence of the role of a facilitator in this meeting, to me, I want to ask open-ended questions. And you heard Joe do that. You don't want to ask questions that elicit yes or no responses. You want folks to really be able to start broad and, as Eric said, then start to narrow them down.

So the first question we asked, what keeps you up at night, one might imagine could have gone in a lot of different directions, but notice how quickly the conversation returned right to labor because the cost and availability of skilled labor is what keeps these folks up at night. And once you ask those open-ended questions, for me it's all about listening. I think I said earlier these meetings are brochure-free zones; right? We should not be talking about ourselves.

When I see partners bringing in copies of their brochures to meetings, it's a big red mark for me. I want this to be active listening. Ask open-ended questions, listen, and then, as you just heard Eric Seleznow do, the role of the facilitator at the end is to synthesize what we've heard and then maybe ask a question to make sure that we're actively hearing what the panel has said. So for me it's ask open-ended questions, listen, listen, listen, and synthesize. And those are, I think, the big three I would offer as tips for folks that are thinking about how to facilitate a meeting like this.

Let me turn it back to Joe. Any thoughts – additional thoughts on your preparation or your mindset for facilitating these kinds of conversations?

MR. BARELA: Thanks, Rick, and agree totally with what you said. I think the only thing that I would add is that you have to remember who's at the table. And these are industry leaders, and when they leave the room, they may be competitors. They may be friendly. They may be aggressive competitors.

And so making them feel comfortable, making sure that they're heard, what they say is valued, I think any time you get an answer in a regular meeting, I would go back and try to get concurrence or agreement on some of the key indicators. Like when I asked, what are the things – what are the occupations that you're really struggling to fill, and go around the room and say, is that your experience?

Are you experiencing the same thing? Is it different? And then try to get some agreement in common ground and move forward on where, as a collective group, you want to focus your energies on. So, I mean, I would always give people a safe place to agree and disagree and maybe see things in a different light outside of their corporate environment.

I think when I – I think Jackie mentioned that they created an internal training program for their frontline staff. I saw eyes go up and say, what? And so sharing some of that internal intelligence that they have when – because they don't or may not meet collectively as a group also gives them reason to come back to share best practices, to learn what other systems are doing.

So I think it's always important to be aware of that and help it move the group forward collectively.

MR. MAHER: Awesome, Joe. And I note that there's a question or two popping up here and I want to try to get to them in the next few minutes and then, Joe, we'll synthesize and turn this back to Diane by just 10 minutes after the hour.

MR. BARELA: OK.

MR. MAHER: But one person is asking here – makes a comment about workforce and economic development always being so protective of gaining access to employers, and they make a reference that in certain industries – and this one I think they mentioned is advanced manufacturing – they – people just don't play nice in the sandbox.

And from our perspective, do we differentiate how we handle things by sector? Joe, do you have any thoughts on that? And as I turn it to Joe to reflect on that question, let me invite again any questions about the process and or say that you guys want to chime in with now, come right in through the chat window.

Joe, any thoughts on that issue of folks being overly protective and not wanting to play nice in the sandbox, whether it changes sector to sector?

MR. BARELA: I think it might change sector to sector, depending on the work. But I do think most workforce development boards now are very invested in making sure that workforce intelligence is available to both the dual customer base of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act, so both the jobseeker as well as business and industry. That should be available, and hopefully as we make progress, that it's available not only in tangible copies but online so that people can access that.

Now, if you're asking specifically for who's the HR director or hiring authority within the system, economic development may look at that a little bit differently than workforce. I think workforce is a little bit more giving of that information and can share it, but again, we have to see them as a customer and so making sure that the ask and the intention is not putting undue burden on that employer.

So I would have to get some more specifics before I would suggest any overview on that, from my end at least, Rick.

MR. MAHER: Well, and that's cool. In fact, the questioner really tees me up to promote core session number two, which is tomorrow. So please go back and check the academy agenda. Core session number two directly deals with different approaches for different sectors. So for whoever asked that question and for anyone else who cares, that's the place to be tomorrow, core session number two.

And now, this question on process which I want to drill down on, Joe. Somebody asked, "How do you prepare partners for brochure-free zones" – I should have copy written that one, I guess – "without turning other resource partners off?" And let me just take my crack and, Joe, I'll let you chime in.

I got to tell you, I joke about this all the time. For those of you who know me, I always say to people, I'm from Jersey. So you're going to have to excuse me at the front end, but I'm pretty direct about it, if I were running a meeting. If you're coming in with a brochure and you start to tell me what you could do for somebody in that meeting, I'm going to ask you to stop, and I'm going to tell people before we ever begin, come with your ears on and your mouth closed because this is about the employers.

This whole process is not just employer-centric but ultimately employer-led. And if we come into these early meetings with brochures telling employers everything we could do for them, we are going to lose them before we start. So I will apologize in advance, if required, but I'm pretty direct about it.

Joe, any thoughts? Probably knowing you, you're a little bit more diplomatic than I. So maybe you should answer this.

MR. BARELA: Probably not. Again, it gets back to Eric. At this stage in what we're trying to present to you with the mock meeting is these are employers getting together in the initial meetings before bringing other partners to solve this talent – acquisition talent pipeline issue. So it's really, again, keep your mouth shut, listen, ask questions that lead to more information, and build on that information.

And you really want to – before you decide who comes in next, the people at the table need to decide here's what we're going to focus on and here's what we need rather than give me what you have off the shelf. And I think that's some I learned many, many years ago from Scott Sheely and I think he might be on in the next couple days in Pennsylvania.

MR. MAHER: He is.

MR. BARELA: When you listen to employers and you find out what they need, then bring the training providers' education to the table so that they can hear, this is what I want. I don't want something that's packaged off the shelf. And so that's when you really give validity to your employers saying, we're going to make a difference and we'll make a change, because now they're designing curriculum, credentialing for what I need. And so I think that the listening part is so critical.

MR. MAHER: And that's a good one, Joe. And then I see somebody has chimed in here, and I love it, a comment. "As to the brochure-free zone, tell people in advance they should only bring pencil and paper to the meeting." And that's a much more diplomatic way of getting things done than I – I just learned something there. So thanks for that one.

Another quick question someone asks as to process for the academy, "Will the other core sessions also be recorded?" And the answer to that is yes.

And then there was one other here, and it's jumping around on me. Hold on one second. I just wanted to get – aw, this one. Any suggestions – and then to queue up Diane, we're going to come back to you in just a few minutes, Diane.

"Any suggestions regarding preventing employer fatigue? This can influence playing nice because folks are tired of getting called to meetings."

So the first thing I would say on that and then, Joe, I'll turn to you and I think Eric Seleznow in his opening comments alluded to this when he talked about the fact that pathways, sectors, apprenticeship initiatives, these are all employer-led. We need to listen to employers.

My feeling is, if all the partners are together and listening, pencil and paper only, if you will, at the beginning, in a healthy industry partnership, the one we saw modeled here today, then we only have to call on employers a succinct number of times because we're all in the room. Those folks that are interested in pathways programs are in the room. Those folks that are engaged in apprenticeship are in the room.

So we don't need to call and ask the employers the same questions multiple times for multiple different engagements. The industry partnership is the place where data is vetted and validated and where we learn about needs. So I think a properly formed and functional industry partnership is the answer to employer fatigue, frankly.

Joe, any comments on that before we synthesize this and turn it back to Diane?

MR. BARELA: I would just add that just remember who's at the table. And so in these initial employer meetings, I'm anticipating these are higher level senior VP of HR for that system or industry business.

And as you move forward and make progress, don't be afraid to assign some of the work to taskforce or subject matter experts that they will identify within their systems. So when you start designing programs or looking at curriculum, maybe they have someone that specializes in that in the healthcare industry. And so bring your core employer panel to group as needed. I would say is it monthly? Is it quarterly?

And then decide who is actually going to do the operationalization of this and just feed those reports up to the big group because I did hear from the panel today is that you have to be relevant and business and industry moves fast and I think there was a reference to government maybe moving slower than them. And so keep that in mind. Is it relevant for them? Are they meeting their needs?

I would listen for and try to be responsive to some low-hanging fruit on how you're responsive to those businesses that are coming to the table so that they see some successes right away and then start engaging in more. Say, hey, this is successful. Can I invest more time, more staff, and even more resources to help with this partnership?

MR. MAHER: Great. And, Joe, as we've got just a couple and a half minutes left before we stay on schedule and move it back to our leader, Diane Walton, we were tasked I think with coming out with three, four kind of occupational focuses and maybe some high-level things that we heard from industry.

So I'm going to take a crack at it, Joe, and then you can add to it, subtract from it, and we'll pass this back to Diane. So I agree with you, and by the way, thanks because you kind of transitioned us to this.

In terms of the big issues that I heard – this is me now – I heard that core competencies included things that might not have been expected – I don't know – tech and IT, critical thinking skills, business acumen skills. Then I heard things like, please, guys, know our industry. Get to know my industry. Help understand my language, and they, like us, suffer from too many acronyms but they express the willingness to get to a common language we could understand. They did say we work on a different time speed, if you will, than you guys, and we need you to – there's no better way to say it.

We need to get faster and more nimble, and we're going to have to figure that out. And I know it isn't always easy, but most of us have heard it enough that it should sink in. And I also heard that comment from Oz about coming together to work on forecasting demand. And as Eric indicated, some of the next steps he had, one of the next steps I heard was, you're going to have to help us do that because we're making public investments and we need to know where the return is. So those are the big things I heard.

And the occupations that I think I heard, Joe, are I heard things like – especially as Eric pointed out, that entry level, I heard medical assistants. I heard patient navigators. Of course I heard nurses, and I did also hear behavioral health.

So Joe, let me let you add to that and close us up and kick it back to Diane when you're done. Thank you, Joe, so much. That was fun and informative and appreciate your time and talent too in that.

MR. BARELA: Oh, thank you, Rick. Likewise.

I agree with everything you said. I thought it was really interesting. I think you mentioned it a little bit in the pre-handout that we gave to the panelists and the group is the shift from what people think healthcare is, being a hospital system transitioning into more of a retail delivery system. He mentioned that the healthcare system is moving out into Target and your grocery store and whatever.

So when we look at industry and challenges, make sure we're looking at the entire system, not what traditionally it has been. I think that was a key point. I think whosever conducting or, if it's not a facilitator like you or I, Rick, that we have the industry intelligence expert in the room so that they can take questions specific to what's in front of them as far as data.

I think that's always very helpful so that everyone has a clear understanding of the data in the region so that they can vet the data and most accurate data. I think we're right on in summarizing that. Again, trying to get to agreement as what is the low-hanging fruit, and is there consensus, if not agreement, on where we should put some strategy and operational resources to being relevant to that business and industry from the get-go.

So with that, thank you, everyone. I'm going to turn it over to Diane.

MS. WALTON: Thanks, everybody. The sort of magic interplay of context and content seems to have worked, which is always a thrill. I do want to say that that was Idaho. That was Brent Tollman (sp) helping Jersey, Rick Maher, with a different way to be more graceful about how to go brochure-free.

MR. MAHER: I can learn something from them, Diane. Note – I noted that one. Thank you. I liked it.

MS. WALTON: Hats off to Idaho.

Just a little bit about the sessions that are coming up. All going to be great. All going to be hugely helpful to you in your work as you go ahead, we hope. Tomorrow in the morning we have one session that will speak to several of the questions we didn't get to today, the how do – who has the juice to bring in the employers? What's the right way to do that? We have a couple people who will talk about those settings.

Later in the day we're going to have the industry-specific session with that sector differentiation. And Scott Sheely, yes, Joe, is on that panel. He's famous for being able to discern which play to make in which setting. So I think – as I look through the questions, I think over the next couple days you're going to get more and more answers. We will try to – again, to provide that interplay between content and then – and how you bring it home. So ask us questions about either one. We love them.

On Wednesday we have a session in the morning that's going to really drill down into talent development, and then we have a closing session that's on Wednesday, later in the day. And so – and there's seats still available there. On the other ones you're going to have to make new friends because I think they're all filled up. But check around your offices and check with these guys at Maher & Maher, and we'll try to figure out how to get you into what you need to be in.

But there are still some seats in the future of business engagement and sectors, which is a big title but there's also some really, really certified smart people, although the slide isn't perfect, who are going to be helping us with this.

Siemens U.S.A, Eric Spiegel, they've been doing some extraordinary work with us, with the Department of Labor, helping us understand sort of the same thing we've been talking through all day. How exactly does that relationship play out in different communities and different levels in the corporate structure? He'll be fascinating. Byron Zuidema's going to facilitate it and, as well as being really smart, he's really funny.

And then Martin Simon from the Governor's Association and Ron Painter from the National Association of Workforce Boards trying to get in just a couple more angles to make sure that everybody has what they need before they walk away. So do sign up for Wednesday afternoon, and keep coming back. We're here to help you.

So thanks, all, and with that a good night.

MR. GONZALEZ: All right. Thanks, Diane.

(END)