

Health Works Commission Minutes
 Wednesday, July 28, 2021
 1:00 p.m.
 via Virtual Zoom Meeting

Call to Order

Chair Demetrius Porche called the meeting of the Health Works Commission (HWC) to order at 1:02 p.m. on July 28, 2021 via virtual Zoom Meeting.

Roll Call

The roll was called by Ms. Cara Landry, Executive Assistant. A quorum was established.

Members Present	Affiliation
Kathy Baldrige	Nurse Practitioners
Dr. Bronwyn Doyle	Nursing Supply & Demand Council*
Dr. Sandra Brown	Southern University System*
Dr. Jim Henderson	University of Louisiana System*
Wes Hataway	Louisiana Nursing Home Association*
Dr. Tina Holland	LAICU*
Rep. Chris Turner	House Committee on Health and Welfare
Mellynn Baker	Louisiana Board of Regents*
Dr. Wendi Palermo	LCTCS*
Dr. Demetrius Porche	LSUHSC – New Orleans*
Dr. Sharon Dunn	LSUHSC-Shreveport*
Dr. Jennifer Wright (designee)	Louisiana State Board of Nursing
Paul Salles	Louisiana Hospital Association*
Dr. Kristi Anderson	Senate Committee on Health and Welfare
Dr. Chaquetta Johnson	Louisiana Department of Health
Members Not Present	Affiliation
Meg Bankston	Governor’s Office
Rep. Patricia Haynes-Smith	Occupational Forecasting Conference

Dr. Ram Paragi	Medical Education Commission
Ragan LeBlanc	Family Physicians*
Kellie Taylor-White	Louisiana Workforce Commission
Lynn Ansardi	Practical Nurse examiners
Jeffery Williams	Louisiana State Medical Society*
Ad-Hoc Member Present	Affiliation
Dr. Lisa Broussard	Simulation Council**

* Member of the Executive Committee

** Ad-Hoc (Non-Voting)

Approval of the February 9, 2021 Minutes

Chair Porche asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2021 meeting. On the motion of Mr. Paul Salles, seconded by Dr. Bronwyn Doyle, the Health Works Commission voted to approve the minutes of February 9, 2021.

Nursing Supply & Demand Council Update

Chair Porche invited Dr. Bronwyn Doyle to provide an update of the recent meeting of the Nursing Supply & Demand Council. Dr. Doyle indicated that the Council reviewed their findings and recommendations from the previous year’s annual report and formed three workgroups to provide guidance and strategies on how to implement the recommendations. These three workgroups include “Diversity of Workforce,” “Practice Environments and Retention” and “Academic-Practice Collaboration.” “Diversity of Workforce” was formed to consider the lack of diversity in the nursing workforce and will put forth recommendations to advance this mission. “Practice Environments and Retention will address turnover in the workforce and ways to increase retention of nurses, especially in light of the stress caused by the pandemic. “Academic-Practice Collaboration” was created based on the idea of collaborating across practice environments and the classroom to study transition into the workforce and, hopefully, establish successful partnerships. A fourth group will be chaired by Dr. Doyle, with a few other Council members, to address Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) tracking and data collection with certification patterns.

Louisiana Center for Nursing Report Update

Chair Porche introduced Dr. Jennifer Wright from the Louisiana State Board of Nursing, representing Dr. Karen Lyon, to review findings from the Center for Nursing, which produced several reports centered on nursing workforce data. Chair Porche opened the floor to any questions for Dr. Wright. Mr. Wes Hataway noted that 2019-20 data showed that there were totals of 52 resignations, 17 retirements, and 13 terminations in faculty positions and asked whether there is an indication of the reasons for these resignations. Dr. Wright responded that the data EW based on renewal information and specific reasons are not collected. Another survey, coming out shortly, will delve into more specifics about the previous faculty survey. Mr. Hataway followed up by asking whether these data seemed atypical, as 52 resignations seem like

a high number. Dr. Wright stated that within the last five years levels of retirement and aging of faculty have been alarming.

Simulation Council Update

Chair Porche introduced Dr. Lisa Broussard, Chair of the Simulation Council, to update the HWC on the efforts of this Council. The Council took time to work on a strategic plan for accomplishing its mission, referencing back to the establishment of the Council in ACT 421, to ensure it can accomplish all it was charged to do. The Simulation Council also discussed disseminating the collaborative simulation statement, to further solidify the mission. Dr. Broussard also noted that Council members participated in lunch and learn sessions to learn about a variety of topics related to simulation as well as discussed possibilities for various project proposals sent to the HWC for consideration.

Review of Act 109 of the 2021 Regular Legislative Session (H.E.R.O. Fund)

Dr. Porche then asked Ms. Baker to give an overview of funding provided in the 2021 Regular Legislative Session, including State General Funds and the H.E.R.O. (Healthcare Employment Reinvestment Opportunity) Fund. Distribution of the H.E.R.O. Fund is subject to legislative appropriation and approval by the Board of Regents and the HWC. The H.E.R.O. Fund can also be extended through a multi-year plan. The various stipulations for the appropriation of funds are: to increase the capacity of nursing and allied health programs, provide incentives that financially support students including financial stipends and tuition forgiveness, and, lastly, provide incentives for nursing and allied health care professionals to practice in underserved areas in Louisiana. The timeline begins with the HWC submitting a plan for fund allocation to the Board of Regents at the beginning of each year, with reporting due by the close of the fiscal year related to the allocation for the H.E.R.O. Fund. It was asked and clarified that this is a multi-year funding timeline and that funds must be fully distributed by 2026. At this time, it is one-time funding of \$5 million from the 2021 Regular Legislative Session. Ms. Baker stated that a reasonable objective for this meeting would be for the HWC to determine budget priorities for two academic years (2021-22 and 2022-23).

Health Works Commission Funding Discussion

Ms. Baker gave a brief historical timeline of HWC and Nurse Capitation funding over the years. After a decrease in funding over the years, the budget allocation from the State General Fund of \$2.5 million in 2019 allowed the Nurse Capitation program to be reinitiated. Ms. Baker presented a pie chart that explained the differentiation in funding. In 2021, \$3.6 million allocated from state general funds has been designated for nurse capitation; these funds must be utilized by the end of the fiscal year. An additional \$5 million from the H.E.R.O. Fund has the potential to be implemented as part of a multi-year plan. Ms. Baker then went over the coming year's Nurse Capitation program, for which applications were submitted from 19 institutions for Fall 2021. In a survey, 21 institutions expressed interest for Spring 2022 and a handful for Summer 2022. The total from Fall 2021, Spring 2022, and Summer 2022 would bring the overall expended amount (if all were funded) to \$3,265,500.00. Ms. Baker outlined additional programs funded by HWC, including Nurse Aide Testing and Louisiana Council of Administrators in Nursing Education (LACANE) grants. The breakdown of the formula for Nurse Capitation students is \$3,500 per student, per semester. The Board of Regents recommends budgeting up to \$3.6 million to be

spent on the Nurse Capitation program, with remaining funds distributed to Nurse Aide testing (\$50,000), LACANE (\$200,000), and the Simulation Council (\$85,000), as in previous years.

Dr. Tina Holland asked whether funding outside of Nurse Capitation would be utilized from the H.E.R.O. Fund. Ms. Baker responded that the focus would be on allocating the State General Fund amount by covering Nurse Capitation and other health care initiatives as the deadline for using these funds is June 2022. Mr. Paul Salles commented that some past recipients had indicated that the amount received (\$3,500 per student) may not be enough to cover the costs of accommodating more students in their facilities. Mr. Salles wanted to explore more funding for institutions accepting Nurse Capitation dollars and asked those who are members of the Nurse Capitation Subcommittee to speak on this. Dr. Doyle responded that the biggest concern is the lack of assurance that funding will be provided by the Legislature for the following academic year. Dr. Palermo added that negotiations were conducted with institutions to have a lower minimum number of students able to participate in the program, with the amount set at \$3,500 per student per semester. Dr. Doyle asked for clarification on whether the estimated funding for Nurse Capitation, LACANE, Simulation Council, and Nurse Aide Testing would come from the \$3.6 million designated from the State General Fund. Ms. Baker responded in the affirmative.

Dr. Porche then moved to an overview of the H.E.R.O. Fund. A proposal for the distribution of the H.E.R.O. Fund for Academic Year 2022-23 was presented by Ms. Baker and Dr. Porche. This proposal included Nurse Capitation (\$3.6 million) as well as additional programs, including Allied Health Capitation, Faculty Tuition Forgiveness, the LACANE grant, Simulation Council funding, and Nurse Aide Testing (\$1.4 million). This proposal would use the total allotted amount of \$5 million. Mr. Wes Hataway asked whether funding would be available for Nurse Capitation the following year, as has been the case over the past few years, and whether there are consequences of delegating money from the H.E.R.O. Fund when State General Funds could potentially be available. Ms. Baker responded that the proposal included only available funds but if the preference of the group is to expand (and if money is allocated in the next legislative session) then Allied Health Capitation could have access to this funding. Dr. Doyle responded that having money allocated to Nurse Capitation in the following year from the H.E.R.O. Fund may result in a loss of dollars that would have been allocated through the State General Fund. Ms. Baker stated that this is what she wanted to bring to the Commission for discussion, to ensure these thoughts are considered in budgeting the H.E.R.O. Fund. Mr. Salles asked the Commission members if they should be aggressive in utilizing the funding. He stated that showing that they are spending money wisely and meeting employment demands may ensure that the Legislature will support these initiatives in the coming session. Dr. Holland expressed her concern about the sustainability of aggressive spending, as there is no guarantee that the funding will be provided the following year for class growth, which increases the financial risk to the institutions.

Chair Porche introduced into the conversation the potential expansion of allied health, including respiratory therapists, and noted that this may not occur in the coming semesters as plans for the H.E.R.O. Fund must be developed. Dr. Holland mentioned that the incentive for students to enroll in respiratory therapy and similar fields may not be as strong because the compensation is not always in line with the investment that the student makes in the program. Dr. Sharon Dunn, LSUHSC-S, added that the ability of the H.E.R.O. Fund to provide tuition forgiveness to students who then work with underserved populations may be an incentive and help to fill the need in allied health professions. Dr. Porche added that the third section of the H.E.R.O. Fund does include the incentive piece, which can be utilized for allied health professionals in areas in

which the Commission sees the most need. Dr. Dunn stated that she is in full support of Mr. Salles but added that risk is involved in utilizing all funding available through this approach may be beneficial in the long run. Representative Turner agreed with Mr. Salles that utilizing all of the funds and producing results to feature to the Legislature would demonstrate the value of and need for investment of future funds. Chair Porche stated that for these plans to move forward the Commission must give a strong recommendation to do so and consult with the Commissioner of Higher Education on the logistics of creating the programs outlined in the H.E.R.O. Fund, which should be operational in the near future. Ms. Baker stated that recommendations from the Commission will charge the Board of Regents to develop a plan for implementation of the H.E.R.O. Funds to discuss with HWC in November. Dr. Wendi Palermo, LCTCS, responded that the leap of faith in capitation funding produced results at LCTCS and that Delgado and other community colleges in the state have a vast array of allied health fields that could benefit from capitation funds.

Ms. Baker brought the conversation back to the approval of the \$3.6 million State General Fund amount, which will be utilized in support of Nurse Capitation starting in Fall 2021 as well as provide funding for other health programs such as LACANE, the Simulation Council, and Nurse Aide testing.

On motion of Dr. Sharon Dunn, seconded by Dr. Jim Henderson, the Council moved to approve the \$3.6 million to be spent for Nurse Capitation programs, with the remaining balance to be spent for Nurse Aide testing, the LACANE grant program, and the Simulation Council. A roll call vote was made with no dissent.

The conversation returned to the H.E.R.O. Fund. Ms. Baker clarified that, as the funding is tied to the Appropriations Bill, the BoR does not currently have access to these monies. As a result of this, the H.E.R.O. Fund allocation may not be made as soon as the Commission would prefer. Ms. Baker stated that she hopes BoR will have access to these funds by Spring 2021. She encouraged recommendations for H.E.R.O. Fund allocation to be finalized no sooner than the Spring 2021 semester. Mr. Salles asked for that the proposed recommendation include a statement of the Commission's intentions towards the expansion of allied health. Dr. Doyle asked whether the group intends to plan for the spending of the H.E.R.O. Fund money well before the June 30, 2026, end date and to designate more money into this fund in subsequent years. Dr. Dunn responded that she sees the benefit of spending the money earlier with the intention of more funds being dedicated to health care initiatives in the near future. Dr. Dunn also indicated that if data shows the true need for health professions across the state, this would direct the conversation. Ms. Baker responded that the Board of Regents intends to collect data on health care workforce needs, eventually working towards having a robust data set and analysis for the Commission. Dr. Jennifer Wright added that the Center for Nursing has a forecasting model that breaks down nursing needs by LPN, PRN, and RN according to region. Dr. Wright asked Dr. Doyle, Chair of Nursing Supply & Demand Council, if her Council has addressed retention, noting that many applications are received to the Center for Nursing to transition to multi-state licenses, highlighting the large number of nurses leaving the state of Louisiana.

Ms. Baker brought the conversation back to the intentions of the \$5 million H.E.R.O. Fund and acknowledged that the Commission's recommendations included continuing Nurse Capitation with potential expansion into allied health and continued funding to programs such as LACANE and Nurse Aide testing as well as tuition forgiveness and incentives for nurse retention.

Public Comments

The discussion then transitioned to public comments. Ms. Cara Landry invited Dr. Cynthia Bienemy to make the first public comment. Dr. Bienemy highlighted the workgroups established in the Nursing Supply and Demand Council under HWC. She suggested that the Commission look to these workgroups, which are comprised of knowledgeable individuals, when asking for recommendations for future funding to address issues such as retention and faculty demand. Dr. Bienemy reiterated that the H.E.R.O. Fund mentions the capacity of faculty positions, stating that tuition reimbursement has not brought new faculty, but the stipend mentioned early in the discussion could be a way of attracting and retaining new faculty. Dr. Broussard supported Dr. Bienemy's statement that the stipends distributed by the Board of Regents in the past were significant in helping students to graduate ready to step into a teaching role. Ms. Landry then called on Dr. Danielle Vauclin, who asked concerning Nurse Capitation whether the Commission is looking at the increase from 2019 or the most recent cohort to determine capitation numbers. Ms. Baker responded that this is an institutional and system decision but noted that the Board of Regents is not tracking individual students, but rather increases in seats available that could be filled. Dr. Vauclin then noted, in reference to the minimum number of eight students for an institution to participate in capitation, that Fletcher Technical Community College's LPN program could only increase its capacity by four as there is a drop-off in enrollment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Landry then asked Mr. Harold Gaspard, Delgado Community College, to make his comment. Mr. Gaspard mentioned the need in large hospitals in the New Orleans area for graduated nurses and stated that the barrier to the increasing class size is the need for faculty that his institution cannot afford to hire, as well as the growing need for other allied health professions. Ms. Landry then called Mr. Mark Berger, LA Nursing Home Association, who mentioned that the shortage of nurses drove support for the bill.

Public comments continued with Dr. Michelle Dennis, BRCC, who asked whether, if allied health was included in future capitation funds, this program could be used to expand existing allied health programs and add new programs as well. Dr. Porche responded that the forecasting of allied health needs, once complete, will inform the Commission on allied health needs and priorities as to where funds should be allocated will be set based on this information. Dr. Jim Henderson highlighted the expansion of promising allied health programs at community colleges and hoped that allied health capitation funds will be available to them in the future. Ms. Carey Lawson, LSUE, spoke about the campus's work to draft more proposals to expand allied health programs while connecting with local workforce boards to make the most of the funding received. Ms. Landry called on Ms. Christie Marceaux, NTCC, who spoke about the increased demand in Surgical Tech, MLT, and Respiratory Therapy and the need for expansion in faculty to accommodate it. One member who wished not to speak, Dr. Lisa Hawthorne, stated that "to grow the number of nursing students that can be educated, it takes faculty. I would like to see those faculty/staff of nursing education programs receive some incentive to help them pay their existing cost of student loans that allow them to currently teach. Would there be an option to do a stipend to anyone involved in the education of a student per semester?" Dr. Porche responded that stipends are primarily handled through LACANE, with the funds that are allocated to this organization. Ms. Christi Marceaux had a question related to the approved numbers from institutions for the 2021-22 nurse capitation, asking for a description of the process by which the Nurse Capitation will commence after this approval. Ms. Baker responded that there would be one-on-one conversations with the institutions to resolve any questions and that notifications letters will be sent soon to confirm the numbers submitted by each institution.

Dr. Porche asked for a motion to provide a general outline of H.E.R.O. Fund allocations at the October Board of Regents meeting for its approval. Dr. Henderson moved approval, seconded by Dr. Tina Holland. A roll call vote was made with no dissent.

Organizational Announcements & Next Steps

No organizational announcements or next steps were offered.

Adjournment

With no further comments or discussion, on the motion of Dr. Doyle, seconded by Dr. Dunn, the meeting was adjourned at 2:58 p.m.