



**Capital Workforce Partners  
Allied Health Industry Sector Regional Plan**

**2011-2012**



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## **I. Executive Summary**

The Allied Health Sector Industry Business Plan has been developed to serve as a guide in implementing strategies for the Allied Health Industry Sector in North Central Connecticut. The strategies outlined will enhance current initiatives and build new long-term programs to develop a qualified and skilled healthcare workforce.

The Plan takes into consideration current Labor Market Information, surveys and the economic climate. The proposed plan addresses the current workforce needs while also developing strategies to grow a pipeline for the future.

The Plan will reach its vision by pursuing the following goals:

1. Increase worker skills to meet the needs of employers.
2. Ensure training meets the needs of employers by working together with both employer and education partners.
3. Provide onsite education opportunities through the CNA Advancement and other initiatives.
4. Develop sustainable, employer-driven, sector-specific business plan.
5. Expand outreach and awareness efforts to youth, entry-level and dislocated workers for careers in the allied health sector.

Capital Workforce Partners will continue to work in partnership with education institutions, business and industry associations, local and state agencies and partner organizations to strengthen the talent pipeline in the allied health workforce. The focus of its efforts will continue to be frontline workers but will also expand to meet industry needs for highly skilled and trained workers in occupations such as medical coding and health information technology(HIT).

## **II. Background**

### **CWP Initiatives to Date**

Capital Workforce Partners Allied Health Sector Initiative began in 2003 when CWP's Board of Directors identified the healthcare industry cluster as a 'strategic priority,' for North Central Connecticut. CWP convened the Healthcare Workforce Advancement Committee to collect, analyze and act upon information collected through research and employer engagement. The data indicated that Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), comprising roughly half of total employment in nursing and long-term care facilities, could play an important role in talent development in the field.<sup>1</sup>

### **Bridges to Health Careers**

The first project developed under CWP's Allied Health Sector Initiative was the Bridges to Health Careers in 2005 with initial funding for a pilot from the Office for Workforce Competitiveness. The program was designed to provide a 'bridge' for Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) to prepare them for continued study in a more advanced allied health or related field. Twenty-five (25) employed CNAs with a high school diploma or GED were recruited from a variety of sources including those identified through the *CTWorks* One-Stop system and their providers, local community colleges, the 1199 Training and Upgrading Fund, community and faith-based organizations, adult education programs, and state and local human service agencies.

Participants earned partial college credits that provided a bridge to other educational programs. The courses were coupled with adult education classes as needed. Graduates of the program could then move on to several specializations leading on a career ladder pathway with many options including allied health (X-Ray tech), become an LPN or ultimately an RN through additional educational programs. The development of this program led to the CNA Advancement Initiative.

### **The CNA Advancement Initiative**

The CNA Advancement Initiative implemented through funding from grants from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the USDOL, was developed in 2007 using selected program components from the Bridges to Healthcare Careers program.

The Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Advancement Initiative has become a model to provide education to frontline staff and promote culture change within the partnerships developed with long-term care and homecare organizations.

The CNA Advancement model developed includes:

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p.3 (citing Department of Labor, Office of Research data)

- contextualized basic skills instruction, and educational and career supports designed to meet the literacy and numeracy remediation needs of the frontline healthcare workforce;
- seven clinical specialty courses including *Issues of Aging, Dementia and Alzheimer's, Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Rehabilitation, Medical Terminology, and Hospice and Palliative Care* delivered onsite at facilities and in both workplace and work-based settings
- a customized leadership course to enhance self-confidence and self-efficacy, and to support the collaborative model of health care delivery;
- awareness of healthcare career advancement opportunities; and,
- culture change activities to enhance the leadership skills of supervisory staff in healthcare facilities, enabling organizations to benefit from the results of having created a collaborative model of health care delivery.

The CNA Advancement Initiative trained 365 frontline workers and 382 specialty certificates were earned under the initial grants from 2007 through 2011.

Sustainability plans are moving forward that include building out the specialty courses developed under the grant into two college-credit certificate tracks in Long-Term Care and Gerontology, moving the courses from a half of a credit to three credit courses.

#### Long-Term Care Certificate

CWP contracted with Charter Oak State College to expand the curriculum of the six initial clinical specialty courses into a certificate program, offering six courses through online delivery. Many components of the initial program remain intact including onsite mentoring and employer involvement. While CWP paid for the initial cohorts to participate, the three participating long-term care facilities contributed through release time and purchasing of the necessary text books. Moving forward, employers may apply for Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) funds for their employees to participate once the initial funds are exhausted.

#### Gerontology Certificate

The alignment of courses to the Gerontology Certificate Program at Capital Community College (CCC) has also been implemented. Four work-based courses were developed by CCC and a cohort from the Visiting Nurses Association is enrolled. Once the four classes are completed, individuals may transition to the college Gerontology certificate or into another allied health specialty.

#### **Metro Hartford Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (MACH)**

MACH evolved from CWP's Healthcare Workforce Advancement Committee which was created to establish an employer-driven, long-term and sustainable partnership to promote work-based and work-place learning for entry-level employees in the healthcare fields. As part of the Workforce Solutions Collaborative of Metro Hartford, Connecticut's Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) and CWP have formalized healthcare initiatives they have done collaboratively for the past several years into MACH.

## **Connecticut Workforce Investment Strategies in Healthcare (WISH) Workforce Assessment**

In 2010, the CT Employment & Training Commission (CETC), together with the Office for Workforce Competitiveness (OWC), received a State Health Care Workforce Development Planning Grant to:

- 1) Produce a statewide healthcare workforce plan including a short-term action plan and a statewide Healthcare Workforce Scorecard;
- 2) Coordinate and streamline disparate healthcare workforce planning efforts and strengthen regional healthcare workforce planning processes; and
- 3) Identify opportunities to improve data collection and data sharing capacity – in support of the development of uniform data collection across the state on licensed health professionals.

The CETC established a subcommittee, the Health Care Workforce Strategy Group, to serve as the State partnership. The group includes members of the CT Allied Health Workforce Policy Board, a legislatively mandated Board that provides the most comprehensive existing healthcare workforce leadership platform and knowledge base. The planning effort targets the State of CT with regional analysis and input organized here through the State's five Workforce Investment Boards. The planning process examined healthcare workforce areas related to primary care, allied health and behavioral health.

The project used strategic planning methodology endorsed as a best practice by the US Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, most recently in its Regional Innovation Grant (RIG) program. The methodology includes a workforce assessment related to the state's healthcare workforce. The workforce assessment will produce four deliverables: 1) a health workforce demand analysis; 2) a health workforce supply analysis; 3) a resource and program gap analysis; and 4) a recommendations report.

Jobs for the Future (JFF) was engaged to complete the assessment. Information was gathered through key stakeholder focus groups and interviews across the state. Additional interviews were conducted with industry consultants, labor unions, advocates, etc. A series of meetings were held in each workforce investment board region to provide employers, educators and advocates with an opportunity to react to the findings and to offer solutions to address issues related to identifying, training and retaining healthcare workers.

While the final report has not been released, some initial findings as well as recommendations have been released.

### **Overall Employer Feedback**

- Health Information Technology and patient navigation skills will grow in demand in current and new occupations
- Supply/Demand mismatch for Registered Nurses is low, BUT as the economy recovers and the current nursing workforce ages, demand will increase and it is unclear if supply is sufficient to meet future demand
- Current supply/demand mismatch for primary care physicians

- Employer expect difficulties in finding physical and occupational therapists

### **Projected Future Needs**

#### **Hospital Employers**

- primary care physicians (current and future)
- registered nurses
- skilled technicians (radiology, nuclear medicine, X-ray, mammography and MRI)
- sterile processing
- respiratory therapists
- patient navigators/case managers
- health information technologists

#### **Long Term Care Employers**

- CNAs (Recruitment and retention of CNAs is the greatest challenge)
- RNs
- allied health assistants (physical and occupational therapy assistants)

#### **Ambulatory Care Employers (community health centers, doctors' offices, and home health care)**

- primary care physicians (current and future)
- advanced practice RNs
- physician assistants
- medical assistants
- health information technology
- patient navigators/case managers
- home health aides
- personal care assistants

#### **Behavioral Health Employers**

- psychiatrists and psychologists
- masters' level clinicians
- high level managers with requisite certifications and experience
- occupational therapists
- pharmacists
- social workers
- RNs

### **III. Environmental Scan**

#### **Healthcare**

Nationwide the healthcare industry supplies 14.3 million jobs and will generate 3.2 million new jobs during 2008-2018, more than any other industry.<sup>2</sup> In the North Central region, allied health represented the only industry sector that experienced new job growth during the recent recession.

Growth in health care spending, the adoption of new technologies, shifts in health care policy, and major demographic changes will all impact the demand for health care workers in Connecticut over the next several years and beyond. Although the economic downturn has slowed growth in health care spending, most of these workforce trends are long term and will have far-reaching effects.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Trends**

##### **Aging Population**

Connecticut, like the rest of the nation, faces an aging population. There is projected to be a 64% increase in the population 65 or older between 2006 and 2030. This rapidly aging demographic will result in an increased need for healthcare workers, particularly those skilled in gerontology and long-term care. From 2004 to 2009, the number of healthcare and social assistance workers in the region increased by over 9,000. Demand for skilled healthcare workers continues to outpace the growth of the workforce.

##### **Healthcare Reform**

Healthcare reform brings a new set of challenges for employers. These challenges include the critical need for training in healthcare information technology and medical coding, patient-centered care and an overall mandate to cut operating budgets to coincide with Medicare spending guidelines to bring down the cost of healthcare.

##### **Money Follows the Person**

In addition to the aging population and changes in the national landscape with healthcare reform, Connecticut has adopted Money Follows the Person legislation which will also greatly affect the healthcare workforce in the North Central Region. Money Follows the Person moves patients traditionally assigned to long-term healthcare facilities back into their homes and communities. The approach is intended to be more cost-effective for taxpayers and is expected to lead to improved quality of life for elders and people with physical and developmental disabilities and mental illness.<sup>4</sup> As people will be making their own care plans, the need for qualified and trained Patient Care Assistants (PCA) will be essential. Currently, there are no regulations or required training for these in-demand occupations.

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<sup>2</sup> Career Guide to Industries, 2010-2011. Healthcare. [www.bls.gov/oco/cg/cgs035.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oco/cg/cgs035.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Connecticut Health Care Workforce Assessment, June 2011 prepared for the CT Office of Workforce Competitiveness and the CT Employment and Training Commission by Jobs for the Future

<sup>4</sup> CT Community Care Inc, [http://www.ctcommunitycare.org/Content/Money\\_Follows\\_the\\_Person\\_MFP\\_.asp](http://www.ctcommunitycare.org/Content/Money_Follows_the_Person_MFP_.asp)

### Legislation/Regulation

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act signed into law by President Obama in 2010 is bringing many changes to the delivery of healthcare services and to the businesses and workforce providing those services.

### Medical Coding

One of the major changes is the national mandatory conversion to ICD 10 from ICD 9 at hospitals and medical centers. The International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems 10th Revision (ICD-10) is a coding of diseases, signs and symptoms, abnormal findings, complaints, social circumstances and external causes of injury or diseases, as classified by the World Health Organization (WHO). The code set allows more than 14,400 different codes and permits the tracking of many new diagnoses. Using optional sub-classifications, the codes can be expanded to over 16,000 codes. Using codes that are meant to be reported in a separate data field, the level of detail that is reported by ICD can be further increased, using a simplified multi-axial approach. It is important to note that the World Health Organization adopted ICD 10 in 1990 and the United States is just now making the switch and is the only industrialized country still using the old version.

### Health Information Technology

The American Recovering and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) and the Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA) both include significant opportunities for the improvement in the exchange of health information. Title XIII of ARRA allocated \$19.3 billion toward health IT. As the current State Designated Entity, CT Department of Health is the awardee of \$7.29 million in ARRA Funding through a four-year Cooperative Agreement with the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology for the purpose of planning for and establishing a secure and operational statewide policy, governance, technical infrastructure and business practices needed to support the delivery of services.<sup>5</sup>

Of the \$19.3 billion allocated nationally, 118 million was budgeted to train 10,500 Electronic Health Record Technicians per year through 2012 and according to the Office of the National Coordinator for HIT, an additional 50,000 HIT positions will be hired by 2015, representing a 50% increase in the current HIT workforce.

There are many career paths into HIT including healthcare administration, IT, insurance, business and operations are all good foundations for a career in Health Information Technology. According to Daniel Barchi, Chief Information Officer at the Yale School of Medicine and Medical Center, who recently hired 100 HIT Technicians, "hospitals are willing to train if you have some IT/healthcare experience and a good attitude as current labor pool is too small to find people."

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<sup>5</sup> Allied Health Workforce Policy Board, 2011 Annual Legislative Report, January 2011

The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) funded the *Education to Maximize Usefulness of Electronic Information Records Initiative* to develop and deliver curriculum for this newly emerging and fast growing occupation.

Tidewater Community college (VA) is the lead for the Northeast-Mid Atlantic region of the HHS grants awarded to train HIT workforce. Capital Community College is Connecticut's only participant in this project. Curriculum for the project was developed by a university consortium led by Columbia University  
[http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit\\_hhs\\_gov\\_home/1204](http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit_hhs_gov_home/1204)

The intensive six-month training is targeted on those who already have an Associate's degree or higher preferably a Bachelor's degree. In the development and initial implementation phase, employer feedback indicated a need for strong entrance criteria coupled with healthcare experience or IT knowledge. Once the course is complete, the student can sit for a national competency exam. Participants can choose to be tested on one or more in a series of six competencies.

Capital Community College's HIT certificate program is currently non-credit but the administration is working to move it into an academic credit program along with an articulation into a 4-year degree program currently being developed at Charter Oak State College. Currently there are no four-year institutions in Connecticut offering a degree in Health Information Technology.

## **Demand**

Data from the Connecticut Department of Labor (CT DOL) indicates that the total estimate of employment for health-related occupations, including doctors and dentists, for 2008 was 158,130, while the employment level for 2018 is expected to be 180,560, a 14.2% increase for the ten-year period. The allied health occupation with the highest employment level is registered nurses (RNs) with 36,720 jobs in 2008, and a projected 42,050 jobs for 2018 (14.5% increase). The CT DOL projects that the state will need to average 533 new registered nurses each year through 2018 to fill expected job openings.

Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) vacancy rate information from 25 of its hospitals demonstrates growing need for registered nurses, medical technologists, pharmacists, physical therapists, medical record coders and surgical technologists. While the current recession has driven vacancy rates downward due to delayed retirements, part-time employees taking on additional hours, and employees returning to work due to job loss of a spouse, it is important to consider this effect and continue to address longer-term indicators. The confluence of the aging workforce, increasing health demand of the aging population, and improvement of the economy will drive substantial and rapid increases in vacancy rates, particularly for registered nurses. Though the 4.1% vacancy rate for RNs is not at the level reached in the past decade, it represents 442 open positions at 25 Connecticut hospitals.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Allied Health Workforce Policy Board, 2011 Annual Legislative Report, January 2011

The tables on the following pages show the annual openings in allied health in our region and at the state level. Openings for in-demand healthcare occupations in Connecticut account for approximately 2% of the national job openings.<sup>7</sup>

**Annual Openings for Middle Skill Allied Health Jobs in North Central Region 2008-2018<sup>8</sup>**

Occupation	Openings
Registered Nurses	354
Nurses Aides, Orderlies and Attendants	160
Home Health Aides	109
Personal and Home Care Aides	104
Licensed Practical Nurses	102
Medical Assistants	68
Rehabilitation Counselors	59
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Counselors	39
Medical and Public Health Social Workers	30
Physical Therapists	30
Mental Health Counselors	28
Substance Abuse and Behavioral Disorder Counselors	19
Respiratory Therapists	15
Physical Therapy Assistants	8
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	2

<sup>7</sup> Connecticut Health Care Workforce Assessment, June 2011 prepared for the CT Office of Workforce Competitiveness and the CT Employment and Training Commission by Jobs for the Future

<sup>8</sup> CT Department of Labor, CWEALF document – April 2011

**Occupational Demand Measures  
CT Healthcare Occupations by Projected Openings<sup>9</sup>**

Occupational Group/Occupational Title	2008 Employment	2018	Annual Openings 2008-2018	Growth	Replacement	% due to Replacement	Total Postings
Registered Nurses	36,715	42,049	1,1174	533	641	55%	8,668
Home Health Aides	13,600	18,248	600	465	135	23%	383
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, Attendants	25,835	27,767	450	193	257	57%	647
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	8,969	9,531	337	56	281	83%	738
Medical Assistants	6,241	7,533	185	113	72	39%	712
Pharmacy Technicians	3,303	3,936	146	63	83	57%	156
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	3,011	3,501	110	49	61	55%	
Physical Therapists	3,727	4,377	110	65	45	41%	2,728
Radiologic Technologists Technicians	2,966	3,364	83	40	43	52%	296
Pharmacists	2,729	2,939	82	21	61	74%	596
Medical and Clinical Lab Technologists	2,700	2,981	79	28	51	65%	418
Physicians and Surgeons	2,793	3,042	74	25	49	66%	707
Physician Assistants	1,592	1,961	66	37	29	44%	704
Occupational Therapists	1,734	1,985	57	25	32	56%	1,612
Medical and Clinical Lab Technicians	1,910	2,041	49	13	36	73%	898
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	1,603	1,741	47	14	33	70%	413
Speech-Language Pathologists	1,482	1,656	44	17	27	61%	662
Surgical Technicians	1,041	1,224	44	18	26	59%	202
Psychiatric Aides	1,675	1,935	43	26	17	40%	
Psychiatric Technicians	1,390	1,438	40	5	35	88%	231
Respiratory Therapists	1,140	1,333	40	19	21	53%	
Internists, General	1,238	1,359	34	12	22	65%	
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	1,071	1,208	30	14	16	53%	180
Dieticians and Nutritionists	796	794	27	0	27	100%	219

<sup>9</sup> CT Department of Labor, CWEALF document – April 2011

**Average Healthcare Employment, Share of All Employment  
Current Employment Data<sup>10</sup>**

WIA Regions										
Sector	Southwest		North Central		Northwest		Eastern		South Central	
<b>All Industries</b>	344,923		<b>525,132</b>		202,761		168,36		325,095	
Ambulatory Health Care Services	16,868	4.9%	<b>24,464</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	12,444	6.1%	6,481	3.8%	18,931	5.8%
Nursing and Residential Care	9,678	2.8%	<b>19,448</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	10,615	5.2%	6,403	3.8%	15,076	4.6%
Hospitals	10,797	3.1%	<b>17,936</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	8,169	4.0%	8,169	4%	13,566	4.2%
<b>Total Healthcare less Social Assistance</b>	37,343	10.8%	<b>61,848</b>	<b>11.8%</b>	31,228	15.4%	18,633	11.1%	47,573	14.6%

The table above shows where those in the allied healthcare workforce in our region and state are employed, with the largest number working in ambulatory healthcare services (doctors' offices, radiology centers, blood labs, etc.).

<sup>10</sup> US Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics

## **Regional Employer Demand**

During focus groups held by MACH and the state-wide WISH planning grant, employers identified opportunities for hiring Medical Coders, Personal Care Assistants, Home Health Aides, Certified Nursing Assistants, Medical Assistants, Physical Therapy assistants, and Registered Nurses at the regional and state-wide level.

Employers also expressed the need to train their current workforce and the need to fill the gap between traditional school-based training with their needs through possible internships and OJT opportunities.

## **Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)**

Employers identified the need for incumbent worker training in:

- Specialization training for nurses and paraprofessionals leading to certification wherever possible
- Soft-skill development particularly related to patient communication and work ethic
- Leadership training
- Career counseling and planning

Due to the changes that will take place in Medicaid and Medicare under the Healthcare Reform Act around reimbursement coupled with the changing needs of patients, employers expressed the need to rethink front line worker training.

## **Internship and/or OJT Opportunities**

Employers also expressed the need to extend academic training to include more internship and on-the-job training opportunities which builds proficiency in specialty areas and readiness for work environment and expectations.

## **Labor Market Overview**

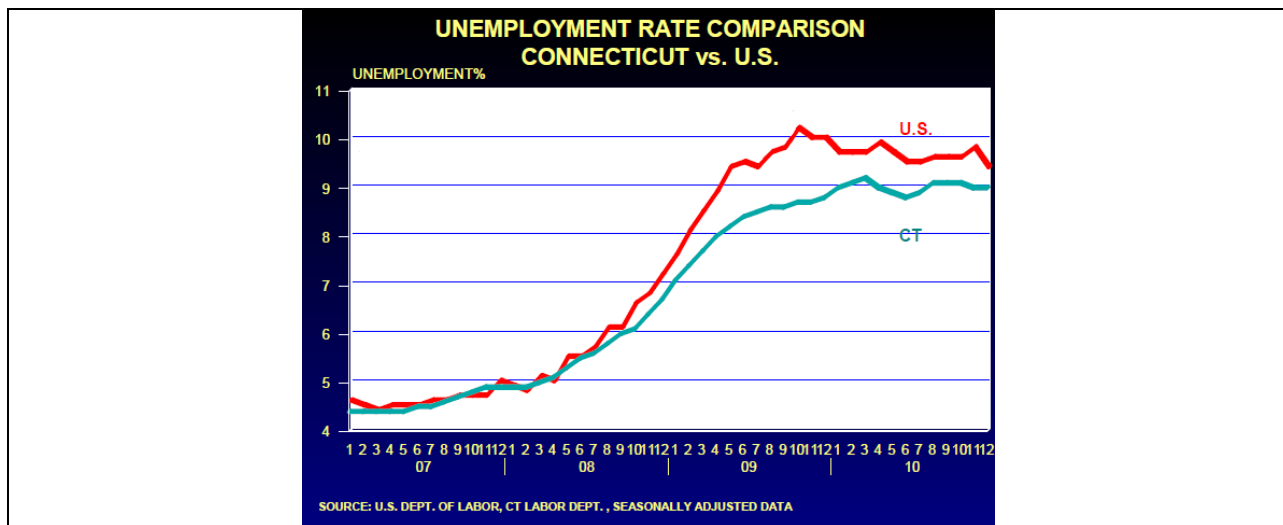
The Labor Market Overview provides an economic backdrop of the current economic environment, and highlights the challenges facing the nation and region.

## **Unemployment**

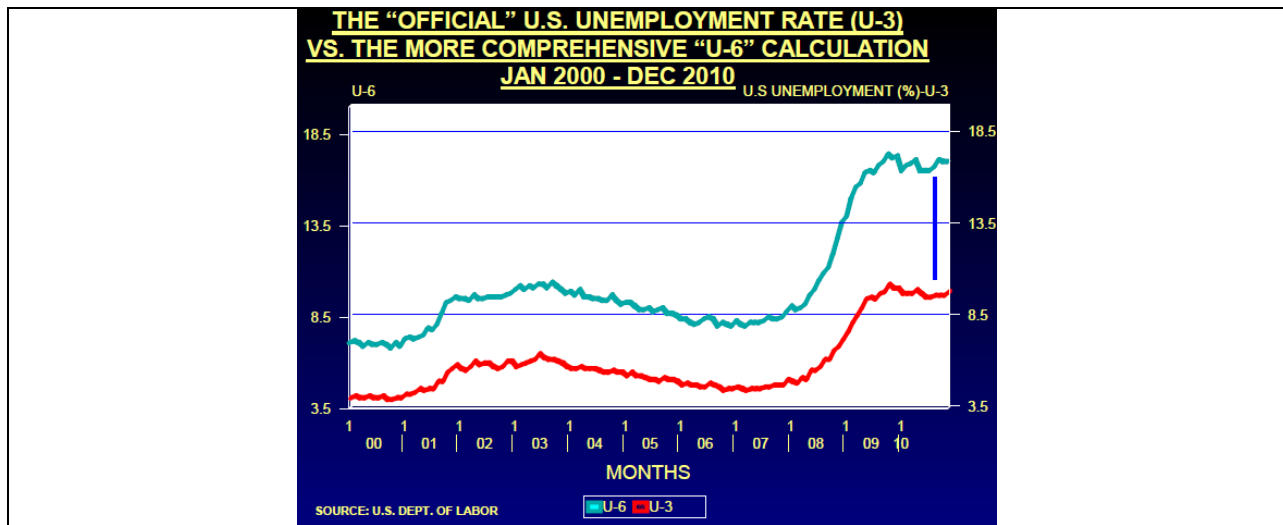
The US unemployment rate fell from 9.8% in November 2010 to 8.8% in April 2011 as the number of unemployed persons decreased by 556,000 to 14.5 million. Job growth is slowly returning but the unemployment rate remains high.

## **U.S. and Connecticut**

- The U.S. unemployment rate hit a 26-year high in October 2009 at 10.2% (seasonally adjusted). As of December 2010, the U.S. unemployment rate was 9.4%; Connecticut's unemployment rate was 9.0%.



- The rates in the graph below show the official unemployment rates. U-3 is the official unemployment rate. A broader measure of unemployment (U-6) includes two important groups that the official rate does not: “discouraged” workers and workers forced into part-time work seeking full time jobs. When this group is included, the unemployment rate rises by an additional seven percentage points.

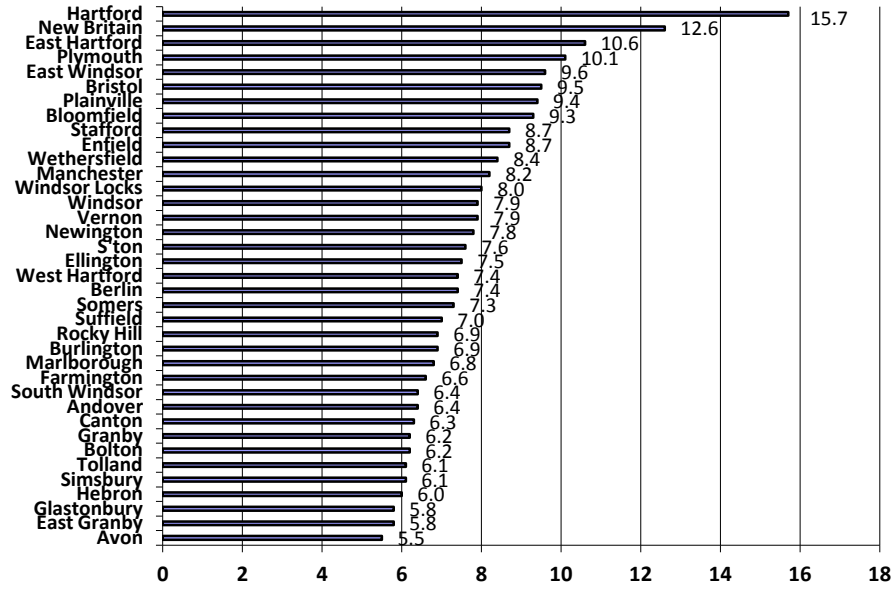


### North Central Region Unemployment

- The unemployment rate as of May 2011 was 9.3% (not seasonally adjusted), which is down from January (9.8%)
- In May 2011, Hartford had unemployment rates below 10% - (9.1%) dropping substantially from previous months.
- Of the 49,000 unemployed workers, the top five municipalities of Hartford, New Britain, Bristol, Manchester and East Hartford accounted for about 45% of the region’s total.
- As noted in the graph below, the region’s unemployment rate is steadily decreasing.

# North Central Region Unemployment %

December 2010



## **IV. Resource Mapping**

### **Public Investments in Allied Health**

A substantial portion of grant funding awarded under ARRA was targeted to initiatives that developed career pathways in healthcare with an emphasis on nursing and allied health occupations.

### **H1-B**

2011-12 USDOL discretionary funding initiatives including H-1B also target a large portion of available funds to those projects focused on healthcare with an emphasis on nursing and health information technology. Capital Workforce Partners submitted a proposal with the Springfield, MA Regional Employment Board to provide occupational skills training and On-the-Job training opportunities for individuals seeking careers in registered nursing, medical coding and health information technology.

<b>State Level Initiatives</b>	
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Initiatives</b>
<p><b><u>WISH</u></b> In 2010, the CT Employment &amp; Training Commission (CETC), together with OWC, received a State Health Care Workforce Development Planning Grant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide Workforce Assessment and recommendations</li> <li>• Regional and statewide focus groups</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>CT Allied Health Workforce Policy Board</u></b> a legislatively mandated Board that provides a comprehensive healthcare workforce leadership platform and knowledge base</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies</li> <li>• Information</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Initiatives</b>	
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Initiatives</b>
<p><b><u>Capital Workforce Partners</u></b> CWP has designated green as one of three Business Sector Initiatives with the goal of enhancing and developing a workforce which is equipped with the necessary skills to enter and advance in green and sustainable energy occupations.</p>	<p><b><u>Focus: Allied Health</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CNA Advancement Initiative</li> <li>• IWT</li> <li>• Co-convener of MACH</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Workforce Solutions</u></b> The Workforce Solutions Collaborative of Metro Hartford provides direct financial support to workforce partnerships in health care, manufacturing, and energy/utilities. Each workforce partnership provides career advancement services to lower-skilled adults and assists employers in addressing their needs for workers with mid-level skills</p>	<p><b><u>Focus: Allied Health</u></b> Awarded MACH (co-convener by CWEALF and CWP) funds to research employer needs and workforce opportunities for entry level healthcare workers. Areas of focus include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patient Care Assistants</li> <li>• Medical coding</li> <li>• Expansion of Long-Term Care courses</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>MACH</u></b> Co-convener by CWP and CWEALF, MACH was created to establish an employer-driven, long-term and sustainable partnership to promote work-based and work-place learning for entry-level employees in the healthcare fields.</p>	<p><b><u>Focus: Allied Health</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patient Care Assistants</li> <li>• Medical coding</li> <li>• Expansion of Long-Term Care courses</li> </ul>

## **V. Action Plan**

### **Mission**

CWP's Allied Health sector mission is to support building a skilled workforce in hospitals, community-based care, and facility-based care while addressing front line workforce challenges of skill development, retention, and advancement.

### **Need**

Allied Health continues to be the top industry sector for growth and faces a multitude of issues including an aging population and workforce and healthcare reform and demands for skilled health care workers continue to outpace the growth of the workforce. Registered nurses and entry-level direct patient care workers continue to be the most in demand.

CWP will implement a series of strategies to understand the actual demand in our region. Employers will be engaged in an ongoing dialogue to continually assess their workforce needs. These strategies will include:

- Employer outreach session through our role as co-convenor of Metro Hartford Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (MACH)
- Targeted surveys through one-on-one meetings with employers
- Review of recent Employer surveys/focus groups
  - MACH
  - CWEALF and Jobs for the Future through statewide WISH planning grant

### **Allied Health Industry Sector Goals**

1. Increase worker skills to meet the needs of employers.
2. Ensure training meets the needs of employers by working together with both employer and education partners.
3. Provide onsite education opportunities through the CNA Advancement and other initiatives.
4. Develop sustainable, employer-driven, sector-specific business plan.
5. Expand outreach and awareness efforts to youth, entry-level and dislocated workers for careers in the allied health sector.

## Initiatives

Initiative	Action Steps	Outcomes
1. Increase employee skills to meet the needs of employers.	i. Partner with stakeholders to target and identify core competencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue work with MACH and other stakeholders in developing and implementing training programs that meet employers' needs.</li> </ul>
2. Work with employers and educators to ensure training meets employer needs.	i. Working with key stakeholders, identify and close gaps and in current course/curriculum offerings in Health Information Technology and Medical Coding. ii. Enhance certificate programs targeted medical specialties, e.g., gerontology and Long Term Care Certificate iii. With educational institutions, expand credit-bearing course offerings. iv. Continue to work closely with HR providers in region to keep pulse on employer needs. v. Begin exploring avenues to facilitate nursing residencies through OJT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work in partnership with MACH in developing implementing a comprehensive medical coding training that meets employers' needs.</li> <li>• Develop and facilitate internship/OJT opportunities for 20 participants in coding.</li> <li>• Provide 50,000 in IWT funds to meet employer needs at all levels.</li> <li>• Work with Capital Community College with HIT program</li> <li>• Continue discussion with Mental Health Educators and Employers to begin development of career pathways in behavioral health</li> <li>• Continue discussion with hospitals and educational partners in creating a nurse residency program for recent graduates and leverage OJT funds if possible</li> </ul>

Initiative	Action Steps	Outcomes
<p>3. Ensure employers' needs are addressed for better trained CNAs and other front line workers, and provide onsite education opportunities through the CNA Advancement initiative.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Build internships to enhance work and learn opportunities.</li> <li>ii. Continue with LTC cohort in completion of LTC certificate with Charter Oak College</li> <li>iii. Begin 2<sup>nd</sup> cohort for LTC certificate program in January, 2012</li> <li>iv. Engage Employer focus groups with educational partner Charter Oak State College to develop four specialized courses for the LTC certificate program through MACH</li> <li>v. Continue implementation of Gerontology credit courses and help transition students to the Gerontology certificate or other allied health certificate program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Award \$50,000 in IWT to meet employer needs for entry level and front line workers as well as mid-range employees.</li> <li>• Development of four specialized LTC courses through Charter Oak State College through MACH funding</li> </ul>
<p>4. Develop sustainable, employer-driven, sector-specific business plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Develop environmental scan to identify opportunities where CWP can play a substantive role.</li> <li>vi. Identify key actions/programs to support workforce development, incumbent worker training, career pathways, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business plan revisited and updated.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Outreach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Work closely with CWP communications to update current developments and activities on CWP website</li> <li>ii. Continue with use of Educational Coach, Allied Health Career Orientations at Hartford and New Britain CT Works locations</li> <li>ii. Work with youth providers in providing allied health career exploration options to participants</li> <li>v. Work with Youth staff in securing healthcare worksites for summer youth employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CWP website refreshed.</li> <li>• ITAs for allied health will increase by ??% (or give a number)</li> <li>• ____ youth will be placed in allied health job sites for SYLEP</li> </ul>

### **Training Funds**

CWP will utilize Workforce Solutions funds for the expansion of the LTC Certificate specialty courses and has committed up to 20 OJT slots for medical coding students,

### **Incumbent Worker Training**

CWP will allocate a portion of their Incumbent Worker Training funds to the allied health industry sector. These funds will be awarded on a competitive basis and applications will have a scoring system which may include:

- Company size
- Number of employees (priority may be given to newer/small businesses)
- Type of training
- Impact of training
- Employer participation in other industry sector initiatives such as OJT, internships, job shadowing, mentoring and summer youth employment sites.

CWP will continue to seek additional funding for allied health sector initiatives and may allocate additional resources to this targeted industry sector.

## **VI. Partners**

The organizations listed below are key partners CWP's allied health plan and stakeholders in the region's allied healthcare workforce.

### **Educational Partners**

- Capital Community College
- Manchester Community College
- Asnuntuck Community College
- Tunxis Community College
- Charter Oak State College
- Goodwin College
- Central CT University
- Public School systems
- Capital Region Education Council (CREC)

### **Employers and Employer Associations**

- Hartford Hospital
- Eastern Connecticut Healthcare Network (ECHN)
- UCONN Medical Center
- St. Francis Hospital
- Visiting Nurses Association (VNA)
- Southington Care Center
- Hebrew Home
- Jerome Home
- Riverside Health & Rehabilitation
- iCare
- The Orchards
- CT Hospital Association

### **Organizations/Government Agencies/Other**

- Metro Hartford Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (MACH)
- Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)
- CT Allied Workforce Policy Board
- CT Department of Labor
- 1199 Training Fund