



**Daniel Bustillo, Executive Director, Healthcare Career Advancement Program (H-CAP),  
Written Testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Education and Labor,  
Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Investment  
Hearing on the topic:  
Reauthorizing the National Apprenticeship Act: Strengthening and Growing Apprenticeships for the  
21<sup>st</sup> Century  
March 4, 2020**

Chair Davis, Ranking Member Smucker, and other Members of the Subcommittee, I'm pleased and grateful to have the opportunity to testify before you this morning as you consider reauthorization of the National Apprenticeship Act.

My name is Daniel Bustillo, I serve as Executive Director of the Healthcare Career Advancement Program, commonly known as H-CAP, Vice-President of an affiliated organization of labor/management workforce intermediaries, the H-CAP Education Association, and as Director of the National Center for Healthcare Apprenticeships.

H-CAP is a national labor/management cooperation organization of SEIU union locals and employers in healthcare that promotes innovation and quality in healthcare career education. These industry partnerships exist across 16 states plus Washington, DC, encompassing more than 1,000 employers and 550,000 workers across every setting of healthcare – from home care, to skilled nursing facilities, to clinics and hospitals – training tens of thousands of healthcare workers a year through collectively bargained education benefits administered by multi-employer Taft-Hartley trusts established in accordance with Section 186(c) of the Labor Management Relations Act of 1947.

These trusts are financed with contributions from employers pursuant to various collective bargaining agreements between SEIU union locals and healthcare employers, with H-CAP and industry partner organizations having long-standing track records of developing and implementing high-quality training and education programs for incumbent healthcare workers that support their career pathway aspirations while simultaneously meeting employer workforce needs – a win for all. The success of these programs and the benefits to workers would not be possible without the investments made by unions and participating employers, which allow workers to have a direct voice in these programs and ownership over their own futures. Training partnership models like these are built on the model that trade unions have used for years.

H-CAP and our industry partnerships work at the intersection of where employer and worker interest in training aligns and assist to advance worker skill attainment in accordance with that identified need. A major focus is moving front line workers through career pathways to higher wage occupations, building bridges, where needed, to increase equity in the healthcare workforce. Sometimes the focus is on new skills for the existing workforce to adjust to new job demands, delivery system redesign and increased

patient acuity. In other cases, training might invest in communication, leadership and teamwork skills to improve the quality of care.

This work puts us at the forefront of innovation in healthcare workforce education. Further, the work addresses the long-term interest of workers while simultaneously supporting employer desire for a well trained workforce to provide the highest quality care – training and skills are transferrable and put workers on a career pathway toward higher wage positions and/or provide cutting edge knowledge to enhance care given to patients with diabetes, dementia, and more. Programs are designed to assist the industry with healthcare delivery system transformation and include, but are not limited to:

- Skills enhancement and continuing education
- English as a Second Language
- High School Completion for adult learners
- College preparation
- Allied Health Certificates and Degree Programs

### **REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP in HEALTHCARE:**

This is all occurring in an industry undergoing continued occupational growth and delivery system transformation. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics employment of healthcare occupations is projected to increase by 14 percent through 2028. Moreover, of the 30 fastest growing occupations, 18 are in healthcare and related occupations, with the fastest growth occurring in the occupations of home health aides and personal care aides, with approximately 1.2 million new positions for home caregivers expected by 2028.<sup>1</sup> Other sector wide factors are also accelerating the need for continued innovation in the creation and implementation of non-traditional, high-quality training programs and rigorous workforce planning to ensure the healthcare workforce and delivery system of the present and future. These include:

- New technologies impacting all sectors of the healthcare industry: while the best evidence we have indicates that the near term risk for mass job displacement in healthcare due to the impact of technology is relatively low, there will be a need for new skills and better systems of training for new and incumbent healthcare workers
- Delivery system change, an aging workforce and the move to increased home and community-based care, which are leading to greater demand for certain occupations and projected occupational shortages
- Increased demand for healthcare services from an aging population and people with chronic conditions
- Increased difficulty faced by healthcare workers in accessing programs that support career mobility
- Continued occupational segregation, with workers of color overrepresented in entry-level occupations and underrepresented in higher-wage occupations

This industry context mandates new ways of thinking in the support of the healthcare workforce and our systems of training. Despite the fact that the healthcare industry has a long history of work-based learning models, modern healthcare has not traditionally been an industry in which Registered

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/home-health-aides-and-personal-care-aides.htm>

Apprenticeships are used with any frequency. While H-CAP and our affiliated partners administer many high-quality training and education programs, Registered Apprenticeships are the gold standard of workforce development strategies, a tried and true model of workforce development, with a demonstrated history of rigorous training programs for quality jobs, such as that practiced by our colleagues in the building trades. But, despite the fact that the healthcare industry has a long history of work-based or apprenticeship like learning models, our industry had never adopted the formal Registered Apprenticeship model with any real frequency.

Thus, in 2016, H-CAP, created a national collaboration to build targeted workforce solutions through Registered Apprenticeship that effectively address healthcare industry challenges while improving job quality and developing pipelines/career advancement opportunities for healthcare workers. Since September 2016, we have also been serving as a national industry intermediary contractor with the U.S. Department of Labor Working providing technical assistance, subject matter expertise, shareable resources, and capacity building infrastructure to support the development of Registered Apprenticeship in healthcare across the nation.

Since launching our first cohort of apprentices in November 2016, H-CAP has supported the registration of over 1,500 apprentices across 8 states with multiple employers. Of these apprentices, 82% are women and a majority (60%) are people of color.

The occupations registered with the U.S. Department of Labor and state departments of labor through H-CAP support are varied and targeted to high-growth, in-demand occupations, with demonstrable progressions for apprentices. In all, 13 occupations, with two more pending, have been registered nationally over the past three plus years. All of these programs other than Community Health Worker are competency-based.

#### **Nationally Registered Occupations:**

- Advanced Home Health with Specialties
- Ambulatory Coder
- Assistant Case Manager
- Associate Teacher (pending)
- Central Sterile Processing Technician
- Certified Nurse Aide
- Community Health Worker
- Emergency Medical Technician
- Hospital Coder
- Interventional Radiologist
- Licensed Practical Nurse
- Medical Assistant
- Optical Dispensing Technician (pending)
- Surgical Technologist
- Support and Retention Coordinator I and II (Home Care Supervisor)

#### **ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS:**

These Registered Apprenticeship programs are developed to industry specification, with direct input from employers, unions, and workers to create competency-based programs that not only meet current

industry occupational need but are built with an eye towards supporting the healthcare workforce of the future. The move towards competency-based Registered Apprenticeship programs has been particularly valuable in the healthcare industry, where we have a large number of highly experienced incumbent workers seeking opportunities for career progression. The employers associated with those apprenticeships are also varied, encompassing large, small and mid-size firms. They include Kaiser Permanente in California and Washington state, Northwell Health, Mount Sinai Health System and BronxCare in New York, Care New England in Rhode Island, Steward Health Care in Massachusetts, and many others.

As an intermediary organization and national contractor, H-CAP leverages the direct support, participation and expertise of healthcare unions and employers – who play a key role in the inception, design and implementation of programs – to create sustainable Registered Apprenticeship infrastructure. We connect these Registered Apprenticeship programs to the public workforce system, educational providers, community-based organizations, and more, aggregating demand across a region. We work to embed college credits in our Registered Apprenticeship programs, facilitating more rapid career progression, and connect apprentices with the wraparound and supportive services, such as child-care and transportation, that are so critical to the success of adult learners and working adults.

We have developed positive working relationships with many State Apprenticeship Agencies and the Office of Apprenticeship at the national level, to help provide them with more detailed expertise on the healthcare sector, to assist in removing the administrative burden from interested stakeholders and to help remove any potential hurdles that might adoption.

Even though nearly 80 percent of healthcare workers are women, we continue to strive to ensure accessibility for women and workers of color, and amongst other strategies, have created a variety of tools and resources on Equal Employment Opportunity regulations. As evidenced by the demographics of the apprentices H-CAP has supported, our equity-based Registered Apprenticeship strategy has been highly successful. We have also begun work to make Registered Apprenticeship programs in healthcare more accessible to people with disabilities and youth – both in high school and out of school.

In short, Registered Apprenticeships continue to expand throughout the U.S. healthcare industry without sacrificing standards or quality and have assisted to meet critical industry need by:

- Increasing the supply of skilled healthcare workers to support a changing healthcare delivery system
- Creating a pipeline that brings women, people of color, immigrants, and experienced low-wage workers into an accessible advancement program
- Building internal training capacity and creating opportunity to focus on competency: highly flexible and customizable
- Allowing for non-traditional approaches to workforce education with real career pathways
- Reducing turnover and related costs

More specifically, Registered Apprenticeships provide a variety of direct benefits to employers, workers and patients:

- For employers, Registered Apprenticeships help fill a labor market gap for hard to fill and high turnover positions, augmenting classroom instruction through hands-on learning guided by a

mentor, providing new competencies that mitigate the need for a transition to practice. Through this combination of formal classroom instruction with mentored on-the-job training and a structured learning pathway, Registered Apprenticeships provide a high-quality learning opportunity not replicated in other workforce development strategies and fill in the gaps where classroom instruction alone oftentimes does not fully prepare students.

- For workers, Registered Apprenticeships provide the ability to earn while they learn, allowing apprentices to master new skills while continuing to support their families, with built in wage progressions, as they demonstrate increased competency. Workers are fully prepared for jobs in their chosen field, along with labor market mobility, enabling apprentices who complete the program to obtain employment throughout an industry.
- For patients, Registered Apprenticeships provide the knowledge that they are receiving the highest quality care from a well-trained, highly competent caregiver.

### **CONSIDERATIONS:**

We are heartened by the continued interest in codifying and supporting the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship, as a high-quality training mechanism that provides rigorous instruction, much needed supportive services to apprentices and good jobs to workers, while assisting employers with their workforce planning needs.

The U.S. invests just .1 percent of GDP on active labor market policies, less than any other industrialized country except for Mexico. Australia invests twenty-four times that amount, and Ireland invests forty-eight times that amount. At the same time, the U.S. has the largest economy in the world and more than 160 million workers in the workforce.<sup>2</sup> Investments in high-quality Registered Apprenticeships are a critical step in addressing broader workforce challenges and authorizing those appropriations through a National Apprenticeship Act reauthorization would provide workers and businesses with sustainable resources to prepare for the future.

Based on our experience, we offer a few items for consideration:

- Industry partnerships and intermediary organizations help expand the capacity of industry, educational providers and human service organizations to meet worker need and employer demand. By coordinating alignment amongst employers, unions, workforce systems, educational providers, etc., aggregating demand across a region, and ensuring apprentices receive needed supportive services, these partnerships are critical to expanding Registered Apprenticeship in our country and should be supported.
  - While Registered Apprenticeship investments have been significant in recent years, they are dwarfed by the amount invested in workforce development, higher education, and safety net programming broadly. A lack of alignment between Registered Apprenticeship investments and these other systems is a missed opportunity to leverage these investments to support the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship.
  - Industry partnerships are essential for long-term growth and competitiveness. Strong industry partnerships provide critical information to workforce partners and coordinate between employers, unions, workforce systems, educational providers, human service

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/national-initiatives/body/CIAW-Invest-in-AW.pdf>

- systems, and more to create equitable programs across a region. These partnerships create stronger alignment between industry and education, improving the overall effectiveness and performance of education, workforce, and human service systems.
- The PARTNERS Act, introduced by Representatives Bonamici, Ferguson, Davis and Guthrie, would support robust, locally-based, industry-driven partnerships – including labor/management partnerships like those in the H-CAP network – to ensure workers have access to and succeed in Registered Apprenticeship programs.
- Supportive services, such as child-care, transportation and housing assistance, help ensure equity and apprentice success, which benefits workers and employers.
    - Parents make up a third of the workforce and more than two thirds of low-income participants in job-training programs have children under the age of six. For many parents, child-care responsibilities make accessing training and employment impossible. Mothers of young children, for example, participate in the workforce at significantly lower levels than other parents because the disproportionate burden of childcare falls to these women.<sup>3</sup>
    - Access to affordable child-care can be the key to workers’ success in job training programs. Access to a child-care subsidy “increases the likelihood that a single mother enrolls in courses at a school or university by 13 percentage points and participates in a job training program by 8 percentage points,” according to one university study. In another survey, 48 percent of low-income participants in job training programs who received child-care said they would have been unable to complete their training program without access to the support.<sup>4</sup>
    - Workers without relevant industry experience often need pre-employment or pre-apprenticeship training programs. But, training alone is often not sufficient to ensure success. Pre-apprenticeship programs that provide both training and access to child-care can offer an important on-ramp to a Registered Apprenticeship pathway for a broad range of workers. Once in an apprenticeship, child-care continues to be an important support for ensuring participant success.
  - Worksite changes and new technologies in the healthcare sector will mean workers need more access to on-the-job learning opportunities like Registered Apprenticeship.
    - As mentioned above, while the best evidence we have indicates that the near-term risk for mass displacement in healthcare is relatively low, technological change will result in job redesign. With this in mind, expanding access to high-quality Registered Apprenticeship programs that promote career mobility and provide the necessary knowledge for quality patient care is imperative.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications/file/Broadening-the-Apprenticeship-Pipeline\\_web.pdf](https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications/file/Broadening-the-Apprenticeship-Pipeline_web.pdf) (author calculation based on <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/famee.t05.htm>); Adams, Spaulding and Heller, Bridging the Gap, Urban Institute [https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/52756/2000226-bridging-the-gap-executive-summary\\_1.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/52756/2000226-bridging-the-gap-executive-summary_1.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> USDA, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E & T) Best Practices Study: Final Report <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/ops/SNAPeandTBestPractices.pdf>; Institute for Women’s Policy Research, Getting to the Finish Line: The Availability and Impact of Support Services in the Workforce Development System. <https://tinyurl.com/yd78nmgz>

- Positive strides have already been made, but continued efforts to support transparency and efficiency in the registration process, along with more longitudinal data collection and analysis, would lead to greater uptake.

We look forward to the future, and the continued expansion of a high-quality Registered Apprenticeship system, that supports innovation through an efficient registration process without sacrificing quality. This expansion of Registered Apprenticeship opportunities in healthcare and other non-traditional industries is an important objective and a true benefit to workers, communities, employers, and industries.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to your questions.