



## Health Town Hall: Body, Mind, Spirit Opening Plenary August 5, 2020

### Building the Health Workforce New Mexico Needs

August 5, 2020

Tracey Bryan

Welcome to all of you. Thank you for being a part of this Town Hall. Having a culturally relevant workforce driving the health care of New Mexico is absolutely critical. I'm really honored to share with you not just the work that is happening here in Doña Ana County, which is where [The Bridge of Southern New Mexico](#) is, but also I wanted to give you a statewide perspective on what COVID-19 has done to our healthcare workforce. To give you a sense of where we are, what's happened is the strangest thing ever, to be in the middle of a pandemic that's having a negative impact in our healthcare workforce.

I should explain The Bridge of Southern New Mexico is a collaborative that predates the Stanford study that basically said if a community looks at a community challenge and seeks to solve that challenge by bringing their collective resources to the table to do it, they will be successful. Well, that's what The Bridge always has been about. We sought to solve a high school graduation crisis in our county which at the time was under 50%. Today we have the highest graduation rates in the state. It's the same premise as this statewide town halls. If you bring the collective wisdom of New Mexico together to address a challenge, along with the people who can mobilize resources or policy to effect change, you will be successful. That's why I'm very honored and privileged to be a member of the New Mexico First Board of Directors, because I do believe that in in so many ways. These statewide town halls create and call upon the collective wisdom of new Mexicans in order to solve the challenges that we as a state face.

Now I will go to where we are now with the most recent data I have from the Department of Workforce Solutions. I am the chair of the State Workforce Board. I'm very honored to serve in that role, but even more so, stewarding it wisely and with commitment because of how traumatic the economic consequences of the pandemic have really been for our state.

I wanted to show you current unemployment rates by industry (Figure 1). It's not a surprise that the accommodation and food services and retail employees are the ones that have been really heavily affected. But if you look at the third most impacted, it is the healthcare and social assistance sector. At first, we started hearing about hospitals laying off workforce. Then people couldn't get elective procedures, then. Even now there is trepidation about going to get regular care, and there's also a concern about what will happen when normal preventative care is not being done.

Figure 1 Unemployment by Industry July 2020



Figure 2 Healthcare and Social Assistance Sector

6211	Offices of Physicians
6212	Offices of Dentists
6213	Offices of Other Health Practitioners
6214	Outpatient Care Centers
6215	Medical and Diagnostic Laboratories
6216	Home Health Care Services
6219	Other Ambulatory Health Care Services
6221	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
6222	Psychiatric and Substance Abuse Hospitals
6223	Specialty (except Psychiatric and Substance Abuse) Hospitals
6231	Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)
6232	Residential Intellectual and Developmental Disability, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Facilities
6233	Continuing Care Retirement Communities and Assisted Living Facilities for the Elderly
6239	Other Residential Care Facilities
6241	Individual and Family Services
6242	Community Food and Housing, and Emergency and Other Relief Services
6243	Vocational Rehabilitation Services
6244	Child Day Care Services

If you look at the healthcare and social assistance sector, you will see that it is the full breadth of health care (Figure 2). I wanted you to see that this sector it is mostly healthcare, but it also has other areas, like vocational rehab and childcare. Many of our childcare providers are not operating right now. As the state eventually goes back to work, that's going to be a real challenge for workers who don't have the ability to care for their children.



We know that healthcare is big in New Mexico. This is directly from the Department of Workforce solutions website: 17% of all jobs in New Mexico are in healthcare. Today there are over 5000 jobs available in the healthcare industry in New Mexico. It's just about aligning people to opportunity. It's what workforce always has been about. And that's the work that we've been involved with The Bridge of Southern New Mexico. We started out to solve a graduation rate challenge. Our second goal was always about building a skilled and ready workforce. And so when we started looking at what's happening with workforce development, we brought our whole community together, anyone in the workforce talent development continuum, to see what was happening here.

What we ended up doing is identifying best practices recommendations, including those from the Mexico First Statewide Town Hall information from [WHEN? LINK?](#), to inform a comprehensive approach to workforce development. And the reason that I'm here to talk to you about health care is because healthcare is one of our economic drivers. And I will tell you, having done work across the state, health care is an economic driver in a number of our communities.

So, we know that education is the foundation of any workforce continuum. The right education will build the talent that you need. The talent will drive the economic development, in that the person is able to earn more at a higher level of skills and capacity. If you have strong pipeline of talent, this will attract new business, new opportunities and community. When you have that happening, you'll have job growth and jobs that pay well, that provide a living wage, and you'll end up with boosting the prosperity of the region. That's the premise of our workforce development conversation.

To be successful, you have to change everything all at once. And we are just crazy enough to believe that we can do that!

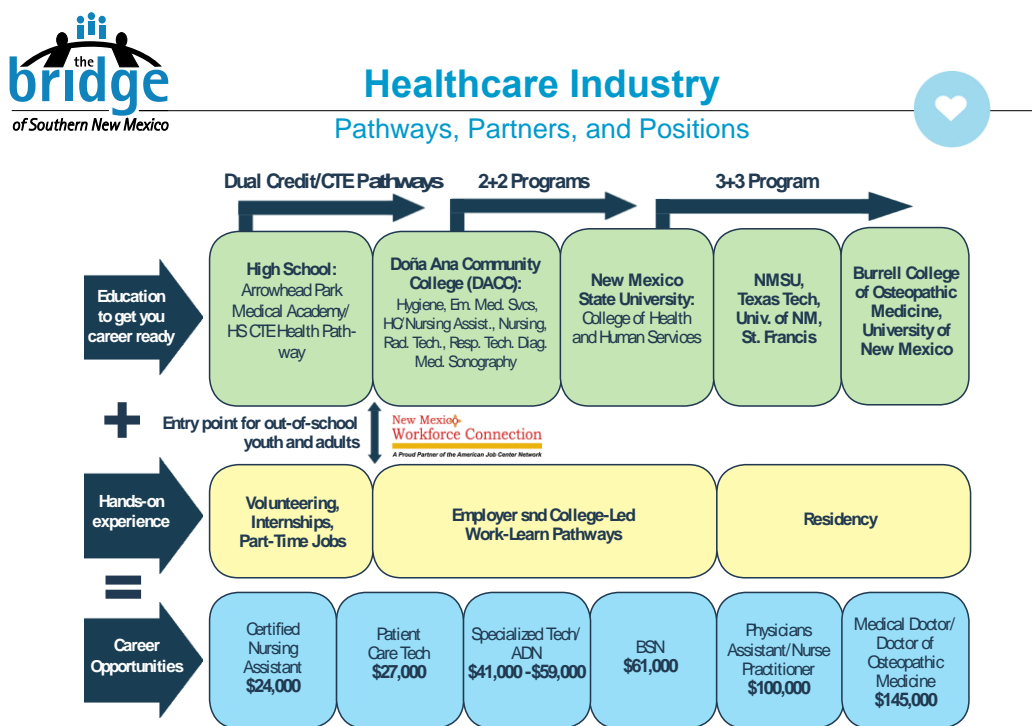
The framework of comprehensive workforce development is built on policy. It's built on the business community being very engaged in the building of their talent. Add efficiencies in science, technology, engineering and math, and you can throw in the arts, because everybody needs to communicate.

You mobilize people through the educational continuum to earn not just a high school diploma and then go to work, but to some level of college: a career certification, two year degree, a four year degree, a masters degree. Mobilize the workforce connection system to serve people who are out of work, who are under-skilled, who could get skilled, and your opportunity youth, the 16 to 24 year-olds who are not at school and not working. If you're pointing all of this in the direction of an industry, you've got a comprehensive approach to workforce development and you change culture. What we mean by that is a culture of lifelong learning, a culture of completion and a culture of high expectations about what's possible here. It changes the story about what it means to grow up in Doña Ana County.

So we built a map for a healthcare workforce pipeline (Figure 3). Healthcare is our number one employer here. We've mapped career opportunities, and there are a million jobs in healthcare. If I want to touch a patient, what does that continuum look like? Yes, there's business offices, there's maintenance, there's billing, there's all of that. But if I want to touch a patient, what does that look like?

At the beginning is certified nursing assistant, with minimum qualification and a salary that goes with that. Hospitals prefer a patient care tech with a little higher level of care, little higher salary. But then you get into that two-year degree specialized tech, associate degree nurses. You go up to the bachelor degree nurses, and you can see an income progression with a skill and degree progression. Then you have your graduate level programs and becoming a doctor. Well, if you look at the Doña Ana County, we have every academic asset we need in order to make that workforce real.

Figure 3 Healthcare Pathway



Starting with our career and technical education in high school, we have a healthcare early college high school that is the finest facility you would imagine. Please come visit it: Arrowhead Park Medical Academy. So we've got a way to get students through high school thinking about their health and their healthcare. We've got a relationship with the community college so that those high school students can start to earn college credit through dual credit courses through career and technical education courses. We've got the University and the Community College, which are in the same system, so you leverage the things you have to get from one educational point to the next. And of course, we have the Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine that is very committed to culturally relevant medicine. We have programs in our state that provide that graduate level. So we've essentially said we can do that here.



We have our workforce connections folks to help people who might be thinking about a career in health care to get connected to education into employment. And the business community, the healthcare community, has a role to play in providing these hands-on experiences. But essentially, if I'm an educator, if I'm in the workforce system, if I'm in the healthcare community, I know what my role is in the pathway. But if I'm a young person who doesn't know the pathway, this is the map to get me where I'm trying to go. It shows me how far in my education I have to go to earn what I want to earn and to become what I want to become. The opportunities and behavioral health as well built on the same set of principles. I think about it as an ecosystem of opportunity.

The last piece of the puzzle for us is that we've got the pathway, but awareness gaps plague the workforce development of any community. Young people don't know what the opportunities are if they haven't seen them. They may not know they're there. The business community may not know how to use the workforce connections system to grow its workforce. The college may or may not know what the real needs of businesses are. So we created [NewMexicoTrueTalent.org](https://www.NewMexicoTrueTalent.org). It is a one stop shop of information about education and employment and connecting the dots. It's available in English and Spanish. We laid it out in roadmaps, and there's a whole section for resources for students and resources for parents, because maybe the parent is thinking about their own career. So whether I want to be a great co-navigator with my child thinking about their future, or if I am thinking about my own, there are free links to free information within the workforce connections system.

We made a video in partnership with our PBS channel about the different careers in healthcare, because a lot of students know they want to be a doctor, they want to be a nurse, but they may not know about a diagnostic medical center geographer. This is just a video about some of those mid-level careers they could prepare for here and.

So we've really just sought to holistically build our workforce talent pipeline by creating opportunities for the very people who are here. That's what The Bridge of Southern New Mexico has been up to.



Tracey Bryan is President and CEO of The Bridge of Southern New Mexico, President of the State Workforce Board, and a New Mexico First Board member. Contact Tracey at: