



# **Lehigh Valley Healthcare Industry Partnership Strategic Plan 2025 - 2030**





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## LEHIGH VALLEY HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC PLAN DRAFT DESIGN TEAM



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# INTRODUCTION

Northampton Community College has been commissioned to develop a Strategic Plan for the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley's Healthcare Industry Partnership for 2025-2030, incorporating feedback from business and industry to guide its direction and priorities for attraction, training, and retention of the healthcare workforce in Lehigh and Northampton counties.

*“The Workforce Board Lehigh Valley is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that serves employers throughout the Lehigh Valley by:*

- Funding employment and training services to help Lehigh Valley emps access the talent they need to be competitive*
- Establishing relationships with businesses to help better understand their needs*
- Developing effective solutions to enable the Lehigh Valley workforce to find work, and be prepared to work*
- Using PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley to connect employers to workforce talent and career seekers to jobs while maintaining the highest standard and accountability for these investments.*

The work will encompass an in-depth review of the healthcare sector within the Lehigh Valley Workforce Development Area and its partner network, alignment with the 2025–2030 Combined State Plan, and an evidence-based environmental analysis of the regional healthcare sector—supplemented by direct feedback from local businesses and industry leaders—to shape clear strategic priorities and actionable recommendations for the next five years.

**Figure 1** displays a snapshot of the Healthcare Sector, the largest Industry in the Lehigh Valley. Jobs are growing and employees are retiring, making this sector a high priority for strategic planning to address the inevitable workforce shortage. See the environmental scan section of the plan for further analysis on the Lehigh Valley healthcare labor market.

**FIGURE 1.** Workforce Board Lehigh Valley Healthcare Data Dashboard



The Founding Members of the Lehigh Valley Healthcare Industry Partnership began meeting in the spring of 2024. Over the course of five meetings, the group addressed sector-based challenges related to the attraction, training, and retention of healthcare workers. Together, they developed a vision and mission and recommended the creation of a draft strategic plan.

<b>Lehigh Valley Healthcare Industry Partnership Founding Members</b>	
BrightStar Care® of Stroudsburg & Allentown	Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Bethlehem Area Vocational Technical School (BAVTS)	Lutheran Senior Services
Career Institute of Technology (CIT)	LINC
Century Promise	Macungie Ambulance Corps
Cetronia Ambulance Corps	Manufacturers Resource Center (MRC)
Equinox Benefits Consulting	Morningstar Senior Living
Fellowship Community	Muhlenberg College
KidsPeace	Northampton Community College
Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce	Northampton County – Gracedale Nursing Home
Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC)	PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley
Lehigh Career & Technical Institute (LCTI)	Penn State Lehigh Valley
Lehigh County – Cedarbrook Senior Care & Rehab	St. Luke's University Health Network
Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation	TeamLogic IT
Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN)	Valley Health Partners
Workforce Board Lehigh Valley	

## VISION, MISSION, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Lehigh Valley Healthcare Industry Partnership’s vision is to cultivate a future-ready healthcare workforce in the Lehigh Valley for 2025-2030 by uniting employers, educators, and community partners to expand career pathways, strengthen skills training, and ensure a steady pipeline of diverse, highly qualified talent that delivers exceptional care to our region. Our mission is to identify and resolve key challenges related to attracting, training, and retaining workers across the Lehigh Valley healthcare sector through the creation and execution of a strategic action plan. Our guiding principles are as follows:

### 1. Alignment and Partnerships

We value strong, cooperative partnerships between education, healthcare providers, workforce agencies, economic development, and community organizations to build sustainable career pathways in healthcare. We are dedicated to creating meaningful career opportunities that not only strengthen the healthcare workforce but also improve the health and economic vitality of the Lehigh Valley.

## 2. Workforce Readiness

We prioritize the development of a highly skilled, credentialed, and adaptable workforce that meets the current and future demands of the healthcare sector in the Lehigh Valley. We ensure that our programs align with the current and projected needs of local healthcare employers and systems.

## 3. Innovation and Accountability

We embrace and seek innovative strategies in education, workforce development, and clear career pathways to respond to the dynamic nature of healthcare delivery and technology. We uphold high standards of transparency, data-driven decision making, and measurable outcomes in all initiatives and partnerships.

## 4. Community Impact and Lifelong Learning

We are dedicated to creating meaningful career opportunities that strengthen the healthcare workforce and improve the health and economic vitality of our region by promoting a culture of continuous learning that supports career advancement and improves patient care outcomes.

# ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN / LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS

A strong understanding of the current healthcare labor market is essential to crafting a strategic and data-informed response to the workforce challenges in the Lehigh Valley. This environmental scan examines supply and demand trends, demographic patterns, workforce gaps, structural barriers, and broader policy and economic forces impacting the region's healthcare talent pipeline.

The Lehigh Valley is growing! As shown in **Figure 2**, the region's population is projected to increase by approximately 14% over the next decade. This growth will drive greater demand in the healthcare sector—more residents means more patients and a heightened need for services.

**Figure 3** illustrates the significant growth in healthcare employment opportunities in the Lehigh Valley, which surged between 2010 and 2020 and is projected to continue rising through 2050—reaching an estimated 70,000 jobs. With this rapid expansion, the region's healthcare sector faces a range of critical needs, including improving access to primary care, addressing disparities in health outcomes, and supporting underserved populations across the Valley's diverse communities.

To meet these demands, there must be a strong focus on workforce development—specifically the attraction, training, and retention of talent—as well as the integration of new technologies to enhance the quality of care.

FIGURE 2. Lehigh Valley Population Projections

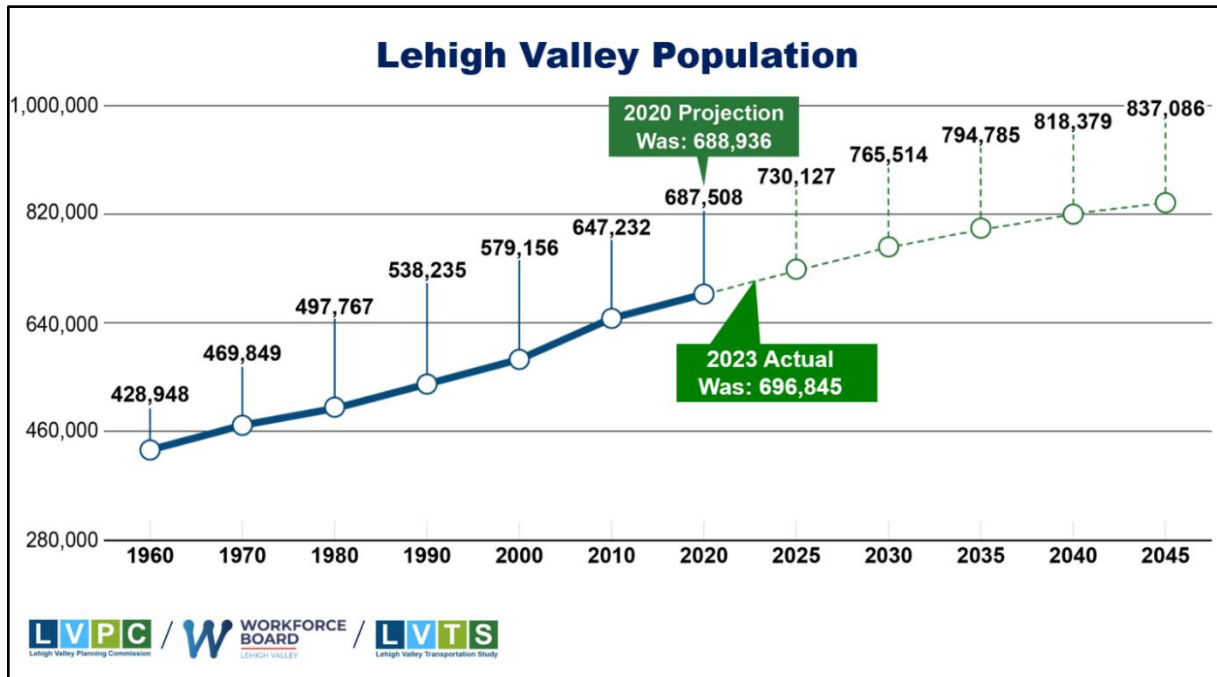
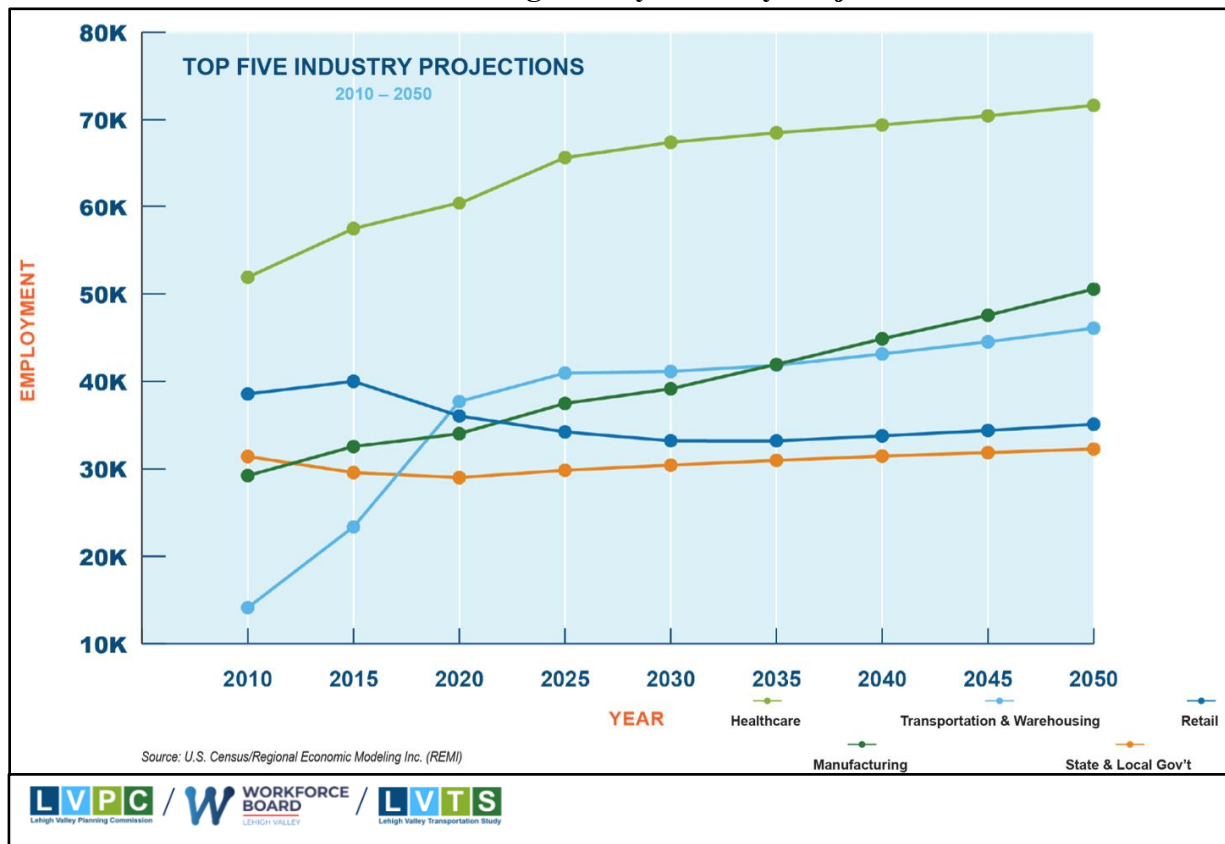


FIGURE 3. Lehigh Valley Industry Projections



## Supply and Demand Trends:

The healthcare and social assistance sector (NAICS 62) remains the largest and fastest-growing industry in the Lehigh Valley, accounting for approximately 20% of the region's total workforce. Multiple data sources project continued growth and increasing workforce demand in this sector. The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis (CWIA) anticipates a 4% increase in healthcare employment by 2032. Additionally, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission's *DATA LV* report projects the creation of 68,483 healthcare jobs over the next decade, a 9% increase.

CWIA labor market data also highlights growing demand across a range of occupations, including registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, medical and dental assistants, behavioral health technicians, and home health aides (see Table 1). These roles are recognized as High Priority Occupations by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry. Key drivers of this growth include an aging population, rising rates of chronic illness, and ongoing impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite strong job growth, the region faces a widening gap between labor supply and demand, particularly in high-need specialties and entry-level positions.

Table 1. 2025 High Priority Occupations and Demand				
SOC Title	Estimated 2022	Projected 2032	Percent Change	Annual Demand
Respiratory Therapists	430	450	4.70%	24
Registered Nurses	9,470	9,770	3.20%	547
Dental Hygienists	540	560	3.70%	37
Clinical Laboratory Techs	1,080	1,110	2.80%	72
Radiologic Technologists & Technicians	740	760	2.70%	41
Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	1,730	1,820	5.20%	143
Medical Records Specialists	260	260	0.00%	18
Nursing Assistants	4,530	4,670	3.10%	665
Occupational Therapy Assistants	130	140	7.70%	20
Physical Therapist Assistants	250	270	8.00%	37
Dental Assistants	730	750	2.70%	103

*Note:* The table shows projected employment growth and annual demand for 11 healthcare occupations. Registered Nurses and Nursing Assistants show high annual demand, 547 and 665 respectively.



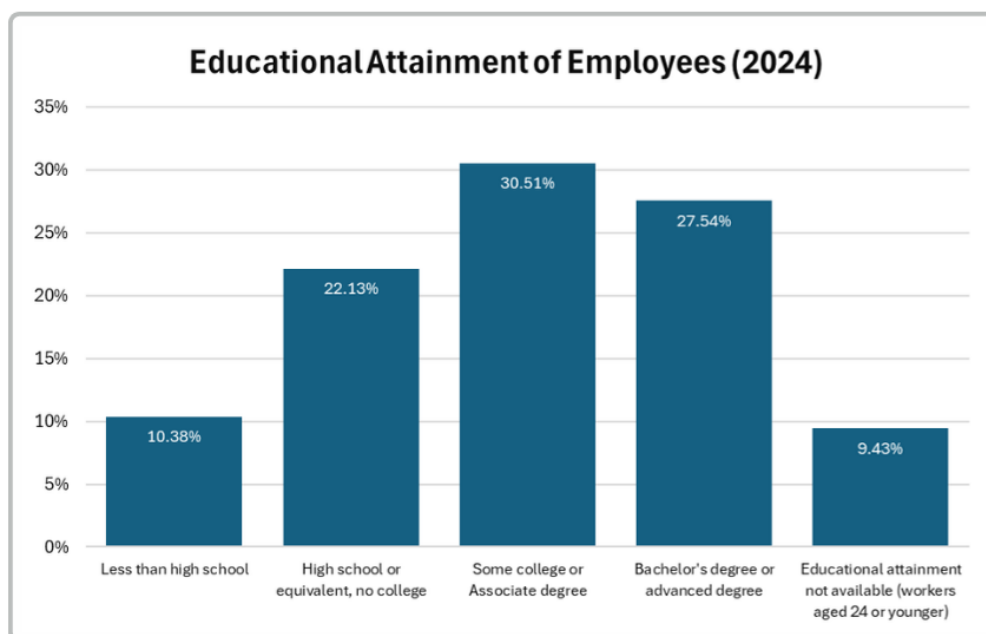
## Regional Workforce Demographics:

The healthcare workforce in the Lehigh Valley is predominantly female, accounting for approximately 78% of total employment (Census QWI explorer, 2024). Also, the healthcare field is becoming increasingly diverse, particularly in support roles such as nursing aides and personal care attendants. However, racial and ethnic diversity is not equally reflected in leadership or advanced clinical roles, which often require higher education or extensive professional experience.

**Figure 4** highlights a critical need for upskilling across the healthcare workforce. Over half of employees have either some college or an associate degree (30.51%) or a high school diploma (22.13%), presenting a clear opportunity for career ladders, stackable credentials, and targeted training to help workers advance into higher-skilled roles. With just 27.54% holding a bachelor's or advanced degree, there may be a shortage of qualified candidates for specialized healthcare positions, emphasizing the importance of degree pathway programs and tuition support.

Additionally, workers with only a high school education or less (32.51%) may lack essential digital and clinical skills needed in today's evolving healthcare environment. The 9.43% of employees under age 25 also represent a key pipeline for future talent, underscoring the value of early career exposure, apprenticeships, and education-to-employment models.

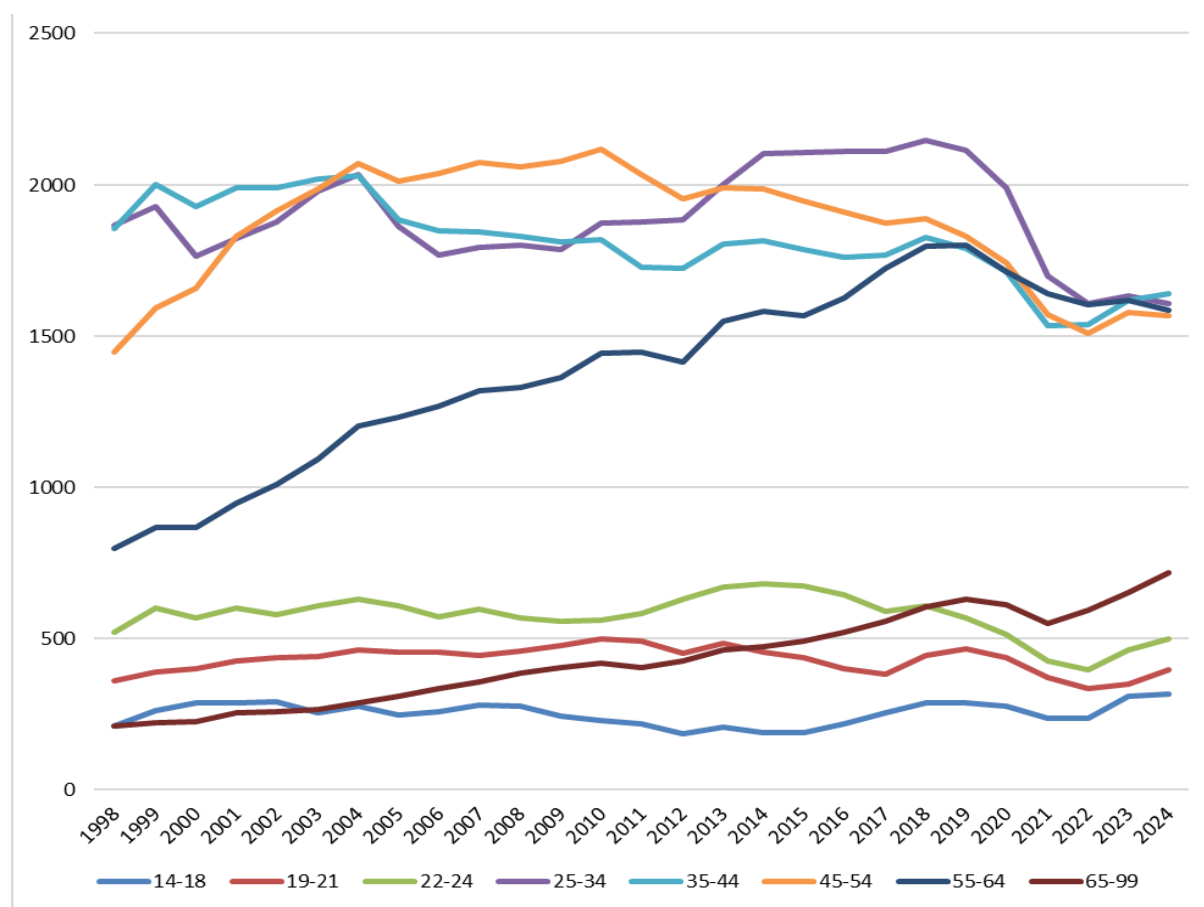
**FIGURE 4. Educational Attainment of Lehigh Valley Healthcare Employees\***



*Note:* \*Figure 4 suggests a strong need for inclusive, scalable upskilling strategies that support advancement, address skill gaps, and ensure equitable access to training, particularly for entry-level workers and underserved populations; data collected from Census QWI explorer

The aging of the current healthcare workforce is also a major concern, as a significant percentage of licensed nurses and physicians approach retirement age. This generational shift heightens the urgent need to recruit and train a new cohort of professionals while ensuring knowledge transfer and mentorship. **Figure 5** illustrates the historical changes of age distribution within Nursing and Residential Care Facilities. Since 2019, there has been a downward trend in employment across most age groups, except for those aged 14–18 and 65–99. Notably, employment among individuals aged 25–34 has declined sharply since 2019. This group had the largest share of employment until 2020 but has since been surpassed by the 45–64 age group, which now represents the largest segment of the workforce in this industry. This shift highlights the aging workforce within the healthcare sector.

**FIGURE 5. Historical Age Distribution: Nursing & Residential Facility\***



*Note: \*data collected from Census QWI explorer*

### Workforce Supply Gaps:

Despite the demand for healthcare industry workers, the supply of trained professionals has not kept pace, particularly in high-need specialties and entry-level roles. Several occupations face

critical shortages across the region. High-vacancies and hard-to-fill roles include direct care workers (e.g., CNAs, HHAs), behavioral health staff, RNs, LPNs, and medical assistants. These shortages are compounded by capacity limitations in local training programs, especially clinical placements and licensed professions. Table 2 below presents the annual average number of healthcare program completions in the Lehigh Valley area. Approximately 816 individuals completed training and education programs below the bachelor's level, accounting for about 65% of all healthcare-related program completions.

Among bachelor's degree programs, completions are highly concentrated in Registered Nursing, with 307 graduates. Although many residents participate in healthcare training programs, the region continues to face a shortage of highly educated and skilled workers—particularly those needed for advanced medical treatment roles (such as medical assistants or specialists) and future leadership positions.

Finally, despite the high number of program participants, growth in the healthcare industry has outpaced the local supply of healthcare workers. For example, while there were 469 program completions in 2022, the annual demand for registered nurses was approximately 658, according to CWIA data (consistent with Table 1).

**Table 2. Average Annual Completions – Healthcare Training Programs (2022)**

Program	non-Cred	Cert	Assoc	Bach	Mast	PhD	Total
Registered Nurse	0	0	162	307	0	0	469
Medical Clinical & Allied Health and Medical Assisting Services	46	192	60	0	0	0	298
Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training	0	165	0	0	0	0	165
Registered Nursing, Nursing Administration, Nursing Research and Clinical Nursing, Other	0	43	0	33	0	0	76
Physician Assistant	0	0	0	0	71	0	71
Rehabilitation Aide	60	0	0	0	0	0	60
Nurse/Nursing Assistant/Aide and Patient Care Assistant	59	0	0	0	0	0	59
Health Services/Allied Health/Health Sciences, General	0	0	29	27	0	0	56

*Source:* 2022 Talent Supply Report, Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation

### **Barriers to Entry and Advancement:**

Structural barriers continue to hinder both entry into and upward mobility within the healthcare field. These include high program costs, limited access to wraparound supports such as transportation and childcare, and the time commitment required for certification or licensure.

These barriers are particularly significant for certain populations who do not have opportunities to participate in programs such as single parent households and individuals from lower household income levels. In Lehigh County, approximately 34% of families with children are headed by single parents, compared to 30% in Northampton County.

Nontraditional students such as adult learners, immigrants, and English language learners often face additional difficulties navigating training systems and credentialing processes. This issue is particularly significant in the Lehigh Valley, where about 12% of residents in Lehigh County report speaking English less than “very well”. This is significantly higher than the Pennsylvania state average of 4.5% (Source: Census American Community Survey). Once employed, many healthcare workers encounter limited opportunities for career path advancement due to a lack of employer-sponsored upskilling opportunities and the effects of wage compression.

### **Policy and Economic Factors:**

Healthcare workforce development in the Lehigh Valley is influenced by a mix of federal, state, and local policy initiatives. The state’s High Priority Occupations (HPO) list, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding framework, and recent investments through initiatives such as the PA PATHS program shape training priorities and funding eligibility. At the same time, broader economic factors—including inflation, population changes, housing insecurity, and wage competition from outside sectors—are impacting the healthcare labor market. Employers are increasingly challenged to offer competitive compensation, flexible scheduling, and supportive work environments to attract and retain talent in a tight labor market.

## **SWOT ANALYSIS**

The following SWOT analysis – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats – offers a concise snapshot of the internal and external forces shaping Lehigh Valley’s healthcare workforce ecosystem. By clearly distinguishing strengths and weaknesses from emerging opportunities and threats, the Lehigh Valley Healthcare Industry Partnership can prioritize investments where they will yield the greatest return. This assessment underpins the strategic goals that follow, ensuring they are both ambitious and achievable. Because workforce conditions evolve rapidly, the analysis should be revisited each year to reflect new market, policy, and community realities. This SWOT analysis specifically indicates previous existing and/or nonexistent collective impact efforts of attraction, training and retention of healthcare workers across the Lehigh Valley.

The **strengths** outlined below highlight the existing healthcare workforce and educational ecosystem in the Lehigh Valley, providing a solid foundation for the Industry Partnership to build upon and leverage.

<b>STRENGTHS</b>		
<b>Attraction</b>	<b>Training</b>	<b>Retention</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healthcare is the leading industry in the Lehigh Valley making up 21% of the workforce; there are a multitude of local opportunities for residents to pursue employment.</li> <li>The Lehigh Valley is growing. Growing population equates to a larger pipeline to draw from.</li> <li>PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley has jobseekers, free job posting platforms, and other no-cost employer recruitment services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two (2) Community Colleges</li> <li>Six (6), Four-Year Colleges &amp; Universities</li> <li>Three (3) Career &amp; Technical Education Schools with high school dual enrollment &amp; adult programs</li> <li>Multiple colleges and universities in close geography to the Lehigh Valley</li> <li>Employer On-the-Job Training opportunities are available through PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley</li> <li>SkillUp™ PA – free online trainings for all PA residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retention of healthcare employees in hospitals is 95.03% (QWI Census Explorer, 2024 Q3)</li> <li>Retention of ambulatory healthcare service professionals is 90.65% (QWI Census Explorer, 2024 Q3)</li> </ul>

The **weaknesses** identified below reveal opportunities for growth that can be addressed through the Partnership’s collective ideas and collaboration.

<b>WEAKNESSES</b>		
<b>Attraction</b>	<b>Training</b>	<b>Retention</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited childcare options, including affordability and hours that accommodate healthcare jobs (i.e. evening / weekend)</li> <li>Limited transportation options for non-vehicle / driver’s license holders</li> <li>Low wages – unable to sustain families with cost of living in the Lehigh Valley</li> <li>Entry-level roles perceived as low paying with long hours and intense work – candidates choosing other industries</li> <li>Lacking specialized recruitment strategies for marginalized populations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No holistic system in place to capture all training opportunities across education providers and employers</li> <li>Not all organizations track post-training job placement or longitudinal career advancement</li> <li>Program capacity constraints – number of students per class; not enough local training opportunities to meet the rate of occupational demand</li> <li>Managing the volume of clinical placements required to meet program needs</li> <li>Lack of federal/state resources and/or lack of knowledge amongst employers on how to access the funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited employee education of career pathway / growth opportunities</li> <li>Limited employee education of benefits, wages, or other employee ‘perks’</li> <li>Retention of nursing and residential care facilities employees is at 82.06% (QWI Census Explorer, 2024 Q3)</li> </ul>

The **opportunities** below highlight ways to enhance the attraction, training, and retention of the healthcare workforce in the Lehigh Valley that the Industry Partnership can pursue and advance.

OPPORTUNITIES		
Attraction	Training	Retention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment of untapped talent (i.e. justice-involved individuals, 55+ community, veterans, ELL)</li> <li>The strategic use of Artificial Intelligence to expedite hiring and onboarding processes</li> <li>Create a candidate hiring pool across participating Industry Partnership employers</li> <li>Offer/expand childcare and transportation services through local partnerships (i.e. churches, community centers)</li> <li>Promote healthcare careers as early as elementary school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an education and training sub-committee of the Healthcare Industry Partnership to focus on training-related objectives</li> <li>Increase opportunities for stackable credentials at local colleges and universities</li> <li>Increase opportunities in pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships</li> <li>Increase opportunities for incumbent worker training</li> <li>Consortium-style training between employers and educational institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create an industry-wide mentorship program with standardized Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)</li> <li>Develop an employee reward system to acknowledge and commend workers in High Priority Occupations in the healthcare sector</li> <li>Develop universal healthcare career pathways / ladders</li> </ul>

The **threats** below represent potential challenges that could hinder initiatives and risk duplicating efforts, rather than advancing a strong, collaborative healthcare workforce strategy in the Lehigh Valley.

THREATS		
Attraction	Training	Retention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legalization of marijuana – i.e. may disqualify a higher percentage of applicants</li> <li>Negative societal perception of healthcare careers and the education system (secondary, career and technical, and higher education)</li> <li>Youth choosing alternative industries with higher entry-level wages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment of educators into healthcare programs due to financial insecurity</li> <li>Duplicated training efforts across the Lehigh Valley; competition over collective impact</li> <li>Reduction of training funds and/or strict eligibility criteria for training funds at the state and federal levels via WIOA or other grant programs</li> <li>Keeping up with the speed and advancement of technologies including Artificial Intelligence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aging population without succession planning / new staff to fill the gap</li> <li>Low wages</li> <li>Employee burnout– physically, mentally, and emotionally</li> </ul>

# CHALLENGES & STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The challenges and strategic objectives outlined below serve as vital components of the Healthcare Industry Partnership’s strategic plan by translating the broader vision and mission into clear, actionable, and measurable goals, enabling teams and departments to understand what the Partnership is aiming to achieve. As the Healthcare Industry Partnership moves forward with its strategic implementation plan, creating and aligning strategic objectives across participating organizations is essential to prevent duplication of effort and to maximize collective impact. Through the establishment of a Lehigh Valley Healthcare Industry Partnership, these objectives focus on the critical areas of attracting, training, and retaining healthcare talent.

## Talent Attraction

Attracting individuals into healthcare careers in the Lehigh Valley remains a persistent challenge. Many students and jobseekers have limited awareness of the full range of healthcare career pathways, often focusing only on high-profile roles such as doctors and nurses. There are also few clear entry points for non-traditional populations, including adult career changers, English language learners, and those from non-clinical backgrounds. In addition, entry-level positions such as direct care workers are often stigmatized as low-paying or transitional, further deterring interest. Compounding these issues is a lack of early exposure to healthcare careers in local schools. The following are recommended strategic objectives to address the above challenges with talent attraction.

## Attraction Objectives

### 1. Launch a Regional “What’s So Hot About Healthcare?” Career Awareness Campaign

To address regional workforce needs and expand the pipeline of new healthcare professionals, the Lehigh Valley Healthcare Industry Partnership will launch the “What’s So Hot About Healthcare?” Campaign — a coordinated career awareness and engagement initiative targeting K–12 students, adult learners, and career changers. The campaign will feature unified messaging, shared visuals, and coordinated outreach across all partner organizations. Digital engagement will center on an interactive Career Exploration Hub that includes gamified career-matching tools, career pathway information, and monthly spotlights on in-demand roles. Social media and digital storytelling — including employee *influencers* on platforms like Instagram and YouTube sharing their healthcare career journeys — will make healthcare opportunities relatable and visible to a wide audience.

Community engagement will take the form of “What’s So Hot About Healthcare?” Career Fairs and Expos, hosted in underserved areas to ensure equitable access to information and resources. These events will bring together healthcare employers, training providers, and education partners for live demonstrations, panel discussions, and hands-on exploration of healthcare careers.

The signature experiential component of the campaign will be the annual “What’s So Hot About Healthcare?” Immersion Week. This week-long initiative will provide participants with firsthand exposure to healthcare environments through job shadowing, simulation labs, facility tours, and interactive Q&A sessions with professionals. Participants will receive a Healthcare Passport to track activities and earn incentives such as mentorship opportunities, internships, or scholarships for training programs.

All campaign activities will be supported by a dedicated microsite, registration platform (e.g., Whova), and a shared marketing toolkit that partner organizations can use to promote events, manage engagement, and maintain consistent messaging. By consolidating outreach, digital tools, and hands-on experiences under the “What’s So Hot About Healthcare?” brand, the Partnership will raise awareness of diverse healthcare career pathways, strengthen talent pipelines, and inspire the next generation of healthcare workers with clear direction and motivation.

## **2. Foster Equity and Sustainability in Healthcare Talent Development**

Recruiting individuals who are justice-impacted and participating in a pre-adjudication diversion program presents a strategic opportunity that benefits both the participant and the employer. Creating healthcare career pathway programs for this demographic offers a critical step toward meaningful employment, helping to break cycles of recidivism by providing structure, purpose, and economic stability. Employment in a healthcare setting can instill a sense of pride, offer valuable job training, and create access to career advancement opportunities in a high-demand industry. For the employer partners, this approach addresses ongoing workforce shortages by tapping into a motivated, underutilized talent pool. Many participants in diversion programs are actively engaged in job readiness and soft skills training, making them eager and prepared to succeed in the workplace. Overall, integrating justice-impacted individuals into the healthcare workforce is a strategic move that fosters community well-being, strengthens the labor force, and demonstrates a commitment to inclusive and restorative hiring practices.

In the Lehigh Valley, several other populations remain underrepresented in the healthcare workforce, as well. This underrepresentation stems from systemic barriers, educational disparities, and limited access to career development resources. Despite comprising a significant portion of the Lehigh Valley's population, Hispanic and Latino individuals are underrepresented in healthcare roles—16.5% of Lehigh Valley healthcare workers identify as Hispanic or Latino (Census QWI explorer, 2024). Barriers such as language proficiency, limited access to education, and socioeconomic challenges also contribute to this disparity. In addition, economic constraints and lack of exposure to healthcare careers hinder low-income and first-generation students from pursuing opportunities in the field. Both St. Luke’s University Health Network and Lehigh Valley Health Network have developed successful programs reaching out to underrepresented



populations, and their programs can be used as a foundation for building a scalable program for the Partnership to be implemented at each site.

To further advance this objective, expanding partnerships with non-traditional agencies such as County Probation and Parole, Catholic Charities, Project Child, the Salvation Army, The Impact Project, Inc., Lehigh Valley Reentry, Treatment, & Diversion Programs, Bloom and/or Casa Guadalupe Center to educate those who may be interested in healthcare careers, but fear of the unknown keeps them from seeking information.

Emphasis will also be placed on outreach efforts targeted toward specific demographic markets to address workforce gaps and community needs. This includes bilingual and multicultural candidates, particularly those fluent in Spanish, Arabic, ASL, and other languages critical to serving diverse populations. Additionally, veterans and individuals transitioning from military service will be prioritized through connections with the Veterans Health Administration, Department of Defense contractors, and military hospitals. Youth and early career entrants represent another key focus area, with targeted pathways into entry-level healthcare roles such as certified nursing assistants (CNAs), medical assistants, and EMTs, many of whom may also benefit from access to GED programs to complete their secondary education and enter the healthcare pipeline.

This objective ensures that the healthcare sector is widely recognized as a viable and rewarding career choice, particularly among populations traditionally underrepresented in healthcare.

### **3. Increase Job Attractiveness of Healthcare Positions**

To attract more interest in essential yet often undervalued healthcare occupations (i.e., home health aides, dietary aides, and patient transporters) HR departments in partner organizations should focus on reframing these jobs as low-wage, under-valued to steppingstones to a brighter future, and consider launching a “Purpose + Pathways” career opportunity campaign. The key is to reframe these roles not as low-wage, physically demanding jobs, but as meaningful career starting points with real human impact and growth potential. This campaign would highlight the purpose behind the work by sharing authentic employee stories and testimonials that showcase how these roles directly contribute to patient dignity, comfort, and healing. Messaging might include lines like, “Every Act of Care Counts,” to emphasize compassion over credentials.

To combat the perception of these jobs as dead ends, HR teams can visually outline career progression paths (home health aide to CNA to LPN to RN) and highlight an employees’ access to tuition reimbursement, paid training, and “learn and earn” opportunities. Internally, these roles should be recognized and celebrated in monthly newsletters, staff meetings, and employee appreciation events to elevate their visibility and value.

## Training the Healthcare Workforce

Training new healthcare professionals in the region is hindered by several systemic issues. One of the most significant is the limited availability of clinical placement sites and qualified preceptors, which constrains the capacity of local training programs. Financial barriers also impact access—many prospective students struggle to afford tuition and related costs while juggling work and family responsibilities. Furthermore, some training programs do not fully align with current industry needs, particularly in emerging skill areas such as digital literacy, soft skills, and behavioral health. The shortage of qualified instructors, especially in nursing and allied health fields, limits the ability to expand training cohorts. Inconsistent access to wraparound support services—such as transportation, childcare, and academic or career advising—further impacts student persistence and completion rates. The following are recommended strategic objectives to address the above challenges with training:

### Training Objectives

#### **1. Create A Training & Education Subcommittee for the Industry Partnership**

To strengthen alignment between education providers and employers, the Partnership will establish a Training & Education Subcommittee dedicated to advancing workforce development strategies across the region. This subcommittee will convene a minimum of two education advisory roundtables per year, engaging a diverse mix of stakeholders—select Partnership members, K-12 school districts, Career and Technical Education (CTE) program providers, community colleges, universities, and workforce development organizations.

The Subcommittee's core purpose is to ensure that education and training programs are directly aligned with real-time industry needs and evolving labor market demands. Through data-driven discussions and collaboration, the group will work to develop seamless career pathways that connect classroom learning to employment opportunities. This includes mapping existing programs to career ladders, identifying gaps in current offerings, and recommending curriculum enhancements or new program development where needed.

To maintain relevance and responsiveness, the Subcommittee will regularly evaluate workforce data, analyze emerging job trends, and gather feedback from frontline supervisors and hiring managers. Insights from these conversations will guide recommendations to education partners regarding curriculum design, credentialing, and work-based learning opportunities such as internships, clinical placements, apprenticeships, and job shadowing.

By fostering continuous communication between educators and employers, the Subcommittee will help reduce skill mismatches, improve job readiness among graduates, and create sustainable talent pipelines into high-demand occupations. Ultimately, this collaborative structure will position the Partnership as a regional leader in aligning education with workforce priorities and ensuring that talent development efforts directly support employer success and economic growth.

## **2. Collaborative, Consortium-Style Training Programs**

An initiative for strengthening and diversifying the healthcare workforce in the Lehigh Valley would be the creation of a regional healthcare training consortium that brings together community colleges, career and technical schools, four-year institutions, other providers, and employers to deliver entry-level healthcare training and ongoing employee upskilling. This consortium would be designed to create an equitable and sustainable workforce pipeline by leveraging each partner's unique strengths and positioning them as the lead training provider within their specialization.

For example, community colleges could serve as the hub for foundational certifications and stackable credentials in roles like certified nursing assistants, phlebotomists, and medical assistants. Career and technical schools could offer hands-on training and dual enrollment options for high school students and adult learners pursuing entry into the healthcare field. Four-year institutions would focus on bridge programs that enable students to transition from associate-level certifications into bachelor's degrees in nursing, public health, or health administration. Meanwhile, healthcare providers would serve as critical training sites, offering clinical rotations, job shadowing, and on-the-job learning, while also informing curriculum development to ensure real-world readiness. Although this work is currently being done in a siloed fashion to meet short-term needs, this would be an agreed-upon strategic plan to align regional efforts, streamline workforce development, and create a coordinated, long-term pipeline of diverse, qualified healthcare professionals. By uniting educational institutions, healthcare providers, and community partners under a shared vision, the plan aims to reduce duplication, close training gaps, and ensure that every participant has a clear, supported path into meaningful healthcare careers that meet both current and future industry demands.

Each partner would take the lead in delivering specific types of training, whether academic, technical, or clinical, creating a comprehensive, multi-entry and multi-exit system that supports career mobility. The consortium could also integrate an apprenticeship-style “earn while you learn” model, allowing participants to work part-time in healthcare the healthcare environment where qualified while completing their studies. All participating partners would need to agree to a shared credit articulation framework to ensure students can smoothly transfer from one institution to the next or obtain credit for work-based learning as they progress in their careers.

In addition, this subcommittee would need to recognize and address the shortage of qualified healthcare trainers and the limited availability of instructional space, in order to reach desired employment goals. This group will develop and propose innovative, collaborative solutions to address these issues. One approach could be to implement a shared employee/faculty model where experienced clinicians employed by partner healthcare organizations also work as instructors and the cost of employment is shared by the organizations, allowing training facilities

to leverage healthcare expertise without pulling instructors entirely from patient care. Another possibility involves rotating the use of lab facilities and utilizing off-shift hours to create a more flexible, scalable training infrastructure that meets the evolving needs of the healthcare workforce.

Ultimately, this collaborative model would not only help meet immediate workforce needs but also create a long-term, community-rooted solution to staffing shortages.

## Retaining the Healthcare Workforce

Retaining healthcare workers, especially in entry-level positions, is an ongoing concern in the Lehigh Valley. Roles such as certified nursing assistants, home health aides, and medical assistants experience high turnover due to physically and emotionally demanding work environments, limited advancement opportunities, and insufficient compensation. Burnout and moral injury remain widespread, with many frontline workers still coping with the aftereffects of the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with inadequate mental health support and recognition from employers. Wage compression and the absence of transparent career pathways often discourage long-term commitment to the field. Additionally, workplace culture, including inconsistent communication, inflexible scheduling, and a perceived lack of appreciation—can contribute to job dissatisfaction. Many employers also face challenges in providing continued education, upskilling, or leadership development opportunities, all of which are critical to retaining talent and supporting career growth. The following are recommended strategic objectives to address the above challenges with retention:

### Retention Objectives

**1. Create an Industry-Wide Mentorship and Peer Coaching Program** To support early-career healthcare professionals and improve job satisfaction, the Partnership will design a shared mentorship framework and structure for staff allocation to support the programs' management at each of their organizations. This mentorship will match seasoned professionals with newly hired employees within their first 30 days of employment to provide guidance, emotional support, and career navigation over their first 12–18 months (details: Appendix B).

Retention research shows that structured mentorship improves engagement and decreases turnover, particularly in high-stress fields like healthcare. The Partnership will track retention metrics and satisfaction ratings to evaluate success annually.

**2. Develop and Implement a Shared Employee Recognition and Retention Toolkit**

Member organizations will co-create and adopt a shared toolkit of best practices for employee recognition, career progression, and well-being. This toolkit will include retention models, mental health resources, advancement checklists, and standardized “stay interview” protocols. By establishing consistent approaches across the Partnership, healthcare employees will

experience a more cohesive and supportive work culture, regardless of their employer, ultimately increasing longevity in the field and within the region.

## ACTION PLAN

In strategic planning, a clear vision is only the beginning—real progress depends on execution. Strategic objectives define the “what” and “why,” but without an action plan outlining the “how,” even the most inspiring strategies risk remaining unrealized. A strong action plan breaks down high-level goals into manageable, trackable steps, ensuring accountability and enabling agility in a changing environment. The following 5-point action plan identifies key initiatives designed to activate the strategy and drive the Partnership forward with purpose, precision, and sustained momentum.

### **1. Appoint a Healthcare Industry Partnership Strategic Liaison**

To strengthen industry alignment and support targeted growth, the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley will appoint a Strategic Liaison dedicated to the healthcare sector. This role may be filled through PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley, a One-Stop Partner, or from within the Industry Partnership. The Liaison will lead collaboration with healthcare employers, educators, and community partners to ensure training and career pathways align with current workforce needs. Key duties include executing the strategic plan, managing Partnership subcommittees, identifying partnership opportunities, co-developing training programs, and representing the organization at sector events and coalitions.

This position requires strong industry knowledge and relationship-building skills, with a focus on turning employer feedback into workforce solutions. The Liaison will also develop and manage a healthcare engagement strategy that includes quarterly partnership meetings, site visits, coordinated outreach, and a bi-annual workforce summit—serving as a vital link between stakeholders and the region’s healthcare workforce priorities.

### **2. Diversifying the Healthcare Industry Partnership Membership**

The formation of the Lehigh Valley Healthcare Industry Partnership reflects a shared commitment to strengthening and diversifying the healthcare workforce. To ensure the Partnership remains diverse and representative across all sectors of the healthcare industry, it is recommended that the following sectors have representation:

- **Hospitals & Health Systems**
  - Acute care hospitals
  - Trauma centers
  - Community hospitals.
- **Long-Term Care Facilities**

- Nursing homes
- Personal care homes
- Assisted living centers
- Rehabilitation centers
- **Primary Care & Outpatient Clinics**
  - Family medicine
  - Pediatrics
  - Urgent care
  - Specialty outpatient clinics
- **Home Health & Hospice Agencies**
- **Behavioral & Mental Health Providers**
- **Public Health & Community Health Organizations**
  - Local health departments
  - School health
  - Mobile clinics
  - Nonprofits.
- **Telehealth Providers**

Simultaneously, academic and workforce leaders from local community colleges, universities, and technical schools should be brought in to ensure academic perspectives are included in curriculum and training discussions. Invitations should highlight the value of participation, such as the opportunity to shape training pipelines, build brand visibility, and improve access to qualified candidates. Further membership criteria should be discussed with the Partnership under the mediation of the Healthcare Industry Partnership Liaison.

### **3. Strengthen Organizational Capacity and Internal Processes**

As the Partnership begins to expand and diversify, it will be critical to manage the size and functionality of the group. In addition to the training and education subcommittee, other subcommittees or workgroups may be formed to address specific focus areas, such as those focused on funding, policy, or data and outcomes. These structures will support targeted collaboration and ensure the Partnership remains agile and responsive to the evolving demands of the healthcare workforce landscape.

Structuring Partnership meetings also ensure efficiencies and progress. Partnership meetings should focus on key topics of attraction, training, and retention including, but not limited to, workforce projections, emerging job roles, challenges in recruitment and retention, and evolving skill requirements. These discussions would then be to directly inform the design, content, and delivery methods of the regional training programs, as discussed in subcommittee meetings. For example, if employers indicate a growing need for cross-trained professionals in both clinical

and administrative functions, the Partnership and its education partners can co-develop hybrid training modules or short-term credential programs.

The Healthcare Industry Partnership Liaison will be responsible for developing full-Partnership meeting agendas and approving subcommittee agendas, ensuring that there was input from business, industry, education, and community members.

#### **4. Develop or Update Healthcare Industry Career Pathway Maps**

To effectively promote career opportunities in healthcare, this group will develop clear, well-defined career pathway maps that guide individuals from entry-level roles to advanced professional positions. These pathways should outline the necessary skills, certifications, and education required at each stage, providing a transparent roadmap for job seekers interested in healthcare careers. By mapping out progression opportunities, from roles such as nursing assistants and phlebotomy technicians to specialized nursing and healthcare professions, the organization can help individuals understand how to build their careers step-by-step within the industry. This structured approach not only empowers job seekers with actionable goals but also helps employers visualize the talent pipeline and plan for future workforce needs.

To strengthen these career pathway maps, the Partnership should encourage stakeholders to collaborate on building bridge programs that connect education and employment more seamlessly. One effective approach is the development of job shadowing, internships, and apprenticeship opportunities that allow participants to gain direct experience and insights into healthcare roles that are traditionally difficult to fill. These bridge programs serve as a critical link between classroom learning and real-world practice, helping participants build confidence, develop practical skills, and form professional relationships within healthcare organizations.

This 4-Point Action Plan will help launch the Healthcare Industry Partnership into a functional work group and ultimately drive success in accomplishing the outlined Strategic Objectives.

## **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)**

As part of the shared commitment to strengthening the region's healthcare workforce, it is essential to establish clear, measurable indicators that track the effectiveness of all activities undertaken. The Lehigh Valley Healthcare Industry Partnership will monitor Key Performance Indicators under the following subcategories: (1) talent pipeline enrollment, (2) employer partners, and (3) employer stakeholder engagement. The definition of a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is a quantifiable measure that helps an organization track its progress toward specific strategic goals and objectives over time. In simpler terms, KPIs are like a report card for

a business, team, or even an individual; they will be used to assess the overall effectiveness of the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan.

Here are the characteristics of a KPI:

- **Key:** It focuses on what is most critical to the success of an objective. Not all metrics are KPIs; only those that are directly tied to strategic outcomes.
- **Performance:** It measures how well an activity, process, or organization is doing.
- **Indicator:** It provides a clear signal of progress (or lack thereof) and helps inform decision-making.

Why are KPIs important?:

- They provide a clear understanding of what needs to be achieved and help teams focus their efforts.
- They offer a quantifiable way to assess progress over time and see if goals are being met.
- KPIs enable data-driven decision by highlighting successes and areas for improvement.
- They create a sense of ownership and help individuals and teams understand their contribution to overall success.
- They ensure that everyone in the organization is working towards the same strategic objectives.

## Key Performance Indicators for Talent Pipeline Enrollment in Healthcare Training Programs

The following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are designed to provide a data-informed view of how well programs are building and sustaining a strong talent pipeline. These metrics will help assess enrollment trends, program completion, credentialing efficiency, and the development of new training initiatives in alignment with industry needs. This data's value is most pronounced when compared against baseline or historical data.

**KPI:** Number of individuals enrolled in accredited healthcare training programs (e.g., nursing, allied health, medical technology) each academic term.

### Key Data Points:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • Program name and type (e.g., RN, CNA, Radiologic Tech) | • Enrollment status (new vs. returning students)                      |
| • Institution/provider                                   | • Demographic breakdown (age, race/ethnicity, gender, veteran status) |
| • Enrollment start date                                  |   |



**KPI:** Percentage of students who complete healthcare training programs and earn industry-recognized certifications or licenses within 12 months of enrollment.

**Key Data Points:**

- Number of students who complete programs
- Number of students who pass certification/licensure exams
- Credential type and issuing body
- Time from enrollment to completion
- Demographics of graduates

**KPI:** Median number of weeks from program completion to receipt of required professional credentials.

**Key Data Points:**

- Program completion date
- Credential/licensure application date
- Credential/licensure issue date
- Credentialing body
- Delay reasons (if any)

**KPI:** Number of new healthcare training programs or partnership-based initiatives launched annually in collaboration with academic institutions or healthcare employers.

**Key Data Points:**

- Program or partnership launch date
- Partner organizations involved
- Program type and focus area (e.g., behavioral health, telemedicine)
- Number of students served in the first year
- Program outcomes and feedback from stakeholders

## Key Performance Indicators for Employer Partners

To effectively respond to the evolving needs of the Lehigh Valley’s healthcare sector, it is critical that employer partners regularly monitor key workforce metrics. These Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) offer a comprehensive view of the region’s healthcare talent pipeline, hiring outcomes, and workforce sustainability.

**KPI:** Number of new hires by healthcare sector (e.g., home health, CCRC independent/assisted living, personal care, long-term care, hospitals, laboratories, education, behavioral health, etc.) tracked quarterly.

**Key Data Points:**

- Sector of employment
- Number of new hires per sector
- Job title/role
- Employment type (full-time, part-time, contract)
- Geographic location of placement
- Funding source if applicable (e.g., grants, workforce program)

**KPI:** Percentage of healthcare training program graduates who are employed in a healthcare-related role within 6–12 months of graduation.

**Key Data Points:**

- Number of graduates per program
- Number placed in healthcare jobs
- Employer name and sector
- Time from graduation to placement
- Job alignment with field of study

**KPI:** Demographic composition of new hires across healthcare organizations in the region, reported semi-annually.

**Key Data Points:**

- Race/ethnicity
- Gender identity
- Veteran status
- Disability status
- Age group
- Language fluency

**KPI:** Average number of days from job posting to hire for critical healthcare roles.

**Key Data Points:**

- Job title
- Posting date
- Offer acceptance date
- Sector
- Position level (entry, mid, senior)
- Any hiring delays or barriers noted

**KPI:** Percentage of healthcare employees retained at 1-year and 5-year intervals.

**Key Data Points:**

- Hire date
- Separation date (if applicable)
- Reason for separation (voluntary/involuntary)
- Position and department
- Length of employment

**KPI:** Number and percentage of employees participating in approved upskilling or reskilling programs annually.

**Key Data Points:**

- Program name and provider
- Number of participants
- Completion status
- Training type (clinical, leadership, compliance, etc.)
- Impact on job performance or role readiness (if measured)

**KPI:** Rate of internal promotions or role advancements within healthcare organizations each year.

**Key Data Points:**

- Number of promotions
- Previous and current job titles
- Time in previous role before promotion
- Department or unit
- Demographics of promoted staff

**KPI:** Average employee satisfaction and engagement score based on survey results, reported at least annually.

**Key Data Points:**

- Overall satisfaction score (e.g., Likert scale)
- Scores by category (management support, workload, growth opportunities, etc.)
- Participation rate in surveys
- Comments or themes from open-ended responses
- Comparison to previous survey cycles

## Key Performance Indicators for Employer and Stakeholder Engagement

Strong employer and stakeholder engagement is essential to building a responsive, aligned healthcare partnership initiative. Monitoring engagement-related Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will allow this group to assess the effectiveness of the collaborative and the impact of their involvement on talent development.

**KPI:** Number of formal, ongoing partnerships with healthcare employers, educational providers, and community-based organizations, reviewed quarterly.

**Key Data Points:**

- Name and type of partner (employer, educational, nonprofit, etc.)
- Date partnership initiated
- Scope of collaboration (e.g., hiring pipeline, curriculum input, funding, training)
- Level of engagement (advisory, sponsorship, active recruitment, etc.)
- Renewal status or duration of agreement

**KPI:** Percentage of employer partners reporting satisfaction with workforce quality, preparedness, and collaboration efforts, based on annual or bi-annual surveys.

**Key Data Points:**

- Overall satisfaction rating (Likert scale or Net Promoter Score)
- Satisfaction with specific areas: candidate readiness, training

- alignment, responsiveness of partners
- Comments on areas for improvement
- Survey response rate
- Change in satisfaction compared to previous years

**KPI:** Number of collaborative workforce development initiatives launched or maintained annually (e.g., internships, apprenticeships, advisory councils, joint grant programs).

**Key Data Points:**

- Type of initiative
- Launch or renewal date
- Partner organizations involved
- Number of participants or beneficiaries
- Program outcomes (e.g., hire rate from internships, apprenticeships completed, policy changes influenced)

## ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

Achieving the strategic objectives outlined in our 2025-2030 plan requires more than just vision, it demands a collective commitment of time, talent, and financial support from partner organizations that believe in driving transformation in the healthcare industry. By offering in-kind contributions, partners are expected to play a pivotal role in propelling this initiative forward, creating lasting impact while reaping mutual benefits.

Organizations may contribute their time by engaging employees in volunteer efforts, participating in planning committees, and supporting program delivery. This not only amplifies the Industry Partnership's capacity to serve more individuals and complete key milestones but also fosters a culture of service and purpose within participating companies. When employees see their workplace championing meaningful causes, engagement, morale, and retention significantly increase.

Organizations may also donate talent from skilled professionals in healthcare areas but also areas such as technology, marketing, strategic planning, and mental health to help deliver high-quality programming and operational excellence without the high costs typically associated with such expertise. These contributions ensure that we can maintain professional standards while stewarding resources wisely. At the same time, they offer volunteers the opportunity to expand their skills, gain purpose-driven experience, and strengthen their professional networks.

And lastly, organizations may contribute financial resources, whether through sponsorships, grants, or operational support, to enable the Industry Partnership to scale efforts, invest in infrastructure, and create sustainable programming. For organizations, this investment is more than charitable giving. By aligning their philanthropic goals with the Partnership's objectives, they have invested in strengthening their employment pipelines and enhanced their social responsibility footprint by creating inclusive, thriving communities.

The Workforce Board Lehigh Valley will serve as the fiscal agent for monetary contributions and will continuously seek out grants and funding streams to support objectives listed in this strategic plan.

## CONCLUSION

The 2025–2030 Lehigh Valley Healthcare Industry Partnership Strategic Plan represents a unified commitment to strengthening the region’s healthcare talent pipeline through collaboration, innovation, and shared accountability. By aligning employers, educators, workforce organizations, and community stakeholders, this plan creates a clear roadmap for attracting new talent, developing existing workers, and retaining a skilled, diverse healthcare workforce. The strategies outlined — from coordinated career awareness efforts to immersive learning experiences, data-driven training investments, and system-wide communication — are designed to meet both immediate workforce needs and long-term sector growth.

Moving forward, success will depend on continued partnership, transparent measurement, and collective action. As the Lehigh Valley’s healthcare landscape evolves, this strategic plan provides a flexible framework that can adapt to emerging challenges, new technologies, and changing community needs. Together, the Healthcare Industry Partnership will not only address workforce shortages, but also improve access to care, strengthen economic mobility, and expand opportunity for individuals across the region. With shared vision and sustained engagement, the Lehigh Valley is poised to build a resilient healthcare workforce that supports healthier communities today and for years to come.

# APPENDIX A: Lehigh Valley Healthcare Industry Partnership Strategic Plan Survey\*

\*Survey submissions were received from Partnership members in July 2025. Feedback was then incorporated into the final version with further input from the Strategic Plan volunteer workgroup, culminating in the final publication released in December 2025.

<https://forms.office.com/r/9W6bjyM6G9>

- Do you agree with our Vision Statement? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If no, what are your suggestions?
- Do you agree with our Mission Statement? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If no, what are your suggestions?
- Do you agree with the Guiding Principles listed? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If no, what are your suggestions?
- Do you agree with our financial, personnel, and data ideas? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If no, what are your suggestions?
- Do you agree with our marketing ideas? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If no, what are your suggestions?
- Do you agree with the strengths? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If no, what are your suggestions?
- Have you noticed any weaknesses other than the ones we listed? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If yes, please explain.
- Have you noticed any opportunities other than the ones we listed? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If yes, please explain.
- Have you noticed any threats other than the ones we listed? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If yes, please explain.
- Were you content with the market expansion suggestions? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If no, please explain. If you have other suggestions, please list.

- How do you feel about the Strategic Objectives listed?
  - Please comment
  
- What other ideas do you have related to strengthening the Healthcare industry Partnership?
 

☐ Yes      ☐ No
  
- Are there other areas that we should list as Key Performance Indicators? ☐ Yes      ☐ No  
 If yes, please list.
  
- Do you have any additional suggestions for the target markets? ☐ Yes      ☐ No  
 If yes, please list.
  
- Do you have any additional ideas to list as a competitive advantage? ☐ Yes      ☐ No  
 If yes, please list.

Other comments in general  
 Please list

Please provide contact email if you would like to talk separately or remain anonymous

# APPENDIX B: Mentorship Outline (Gemini 6.17.2025)

A well-structured mentorship program provides a clear roadmap for both mentors and mentees, ensuring a productive and rewarding experience. This outline covers the key phases and components of a typical mentorship program.

## I. Program Overview & Goals

- **Program Name:** (e.g., [Organization Name] Mentorship Program, Professional Growth Mentorship)
- **Mission Statement:** A concise statement outlining the program's purpose (e.g., "To foster professional development and knowledge transfer through supportive relationships.")
- **Overall Goals:**
  - To facilitate skill development and career advancement.
  - To provide guidance and support for career challenges.
  - To enhance leadership capabilities and critical thinking.
  - To promote networking and professional relationships.
  - To encourage knowledge sharing and best practices.
- **Target Audience:** (e.g., Early career professionals, mid-level managers, employees transitioning roles, specific departments)
- **Program Duration:** (e.g., 6 months, 12 months, ongoing)
- **Key Program Administrator(s):** (Point of contact for questions and support)

## II. Roles and Responsibilities

### A. Mentors

- **Qualities of an Ideal Mentor:** Experienced, knowledgeable, good listener, empathetic, patient, committed to mentee's growth, willing to share insights and provide constructive feedback.
- **Responsibilities:**
  - Act as a guide and sounding board.
  - Share personal experiences and lessons learned.
  - Offer advice and perspectives on career challenges.
  - Help set and achieve professional goals.
  - Provide constructive feedback and encouragement.
  - Maintain confidentiality.
  - Commit to scheduled meetings and check-ins.

### B. Mentees

- **Qualities of an Ideal Mentee:** Proactive, eager to learn, open to feedback, respectful of mentor's time, willing to take initiative, committed to personal and professional development.
- **Responsibilities:**
  - Clearly define learning goals and expectations.
  - Prepare for and actively participate in meetings.
  - Take ownership of their development.
  - Be receptive to feedback and advice.
  - Follow through on agreed-upon actions.



- Communicate openly and honestly with their mentor.
- Respect the mentor's time and confidentiality.

### III. Program Phases

#### A. Onboarding and Matching

- **Application Process:**
  - Mentor application form (experience, areas of expertise, availability).
  - Mentee application form (goals, areas for development, expectations).
- **Orientation Sessions:**
  - **For Mentors:** Program overview, mentor guidelines, effective mentoring techniques, setting boundaries, resources available.
  - **For Mentees:** Program overview, mentee guidelines, how to maximize the mentorship, setting goals, resources available.
- **Matching Process:**
  - Criteria for matching (skills, experience, goals, personality traits, industry).
  - Methods (manual matching by administrator, self-matching events, online platform algorithms).
  - **Initial Introduction:** Facilitated initial meeting or communication.

#### B. Relationship Building & Development

- **Initial Meeting Agenda (Suggested):**
  - Get to know each other personally and professionally.
  - Discuss expectations for the mentorship.
  - Establish communication preferences and frequency (e.g., monthly 1-hour meetings, bi-weekly emails).
  - Set initial goals for the mentorship period.
  - Discuss confidentiality and boundaries.
- **Goal Setting and Action Planning:**
  - SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).
  - Developing an action plan with steps and timelines.
- **Ongoing Communication:**
  - Regular scheduled meetings (in-person, virtual, phone).
  - Ad-hoc communication for quick questions or updates.
  - Topics for discussion: career advice, skill development, networking strategies, challenges, work-life balance.

#### C. Evaluation and Closure

- **Mid-Program Check-in (Optional but Recommended):**
  - Review progress on goals.
  - Address any challenges in the mentorship relationship.
  - Opportunity to refine goals or adjust strategies.
- **Program Evaluation:**
  - **Surveys:** Anonymous feedback from both mentors and mentees on program effectiveness, impact, and areas for improvement.
  - **Interviews/Focus Groups:** Deeper insights into experiences.

- **Success Metrics:** (e.g., mentee skill improvement, career advancement, mentor satisfaction).
- **Program Closure/Transition:**
  - **Formal Closing Meeting:** Review achievements, discuss future plans (e.g., continuing informally, seeking new mentorships).
  - **Recognition:** Acknowledge and appreciate mentors for their time and contributions (e.g., certificates, recognition events).
  - **Networking:** Opportunities for all program participants to connect and share experiences.

#### IV. Resources and Support

- **Program Handbook/Guidebook:** Comprehensive document outlining all program details, guidelines, and resources.
- **Training Materials:** Workshops or online modules on effective communication, active listening, giving/receiving feedback, goal setting.
- **Resource Library:** Curated articles, books, videos on career development, leadership, and specific skill sets.
- **Program Administrator Support:** Dedicated contact person for questions, troubleshooting, and ongoing guidance.
- **Networking Events:** Opportunities for mentors and mentees to connect with peers and other program participants.

#### V. Success Measurement

- **Quantitative Metrics:**
  - Number of participants (mentors and mentees).
  - Retention rates of mentors and mentees.
  - Percentage of mentees achieving stated goals.
  - Promotion rates or career progression of mentees.
  - Satisfaction scores from surveys.
- **Qualitative Metrics:**
  - Testimonials and success stories.
  - Improved confidence and communication skills reported by mentees.
  - Enhanced leadership qualities observed by supervisors.
  - Increased engagement and morale within the organization.