

Meeting Minutes

The Council for Allied Health in North Carolina

March 1st, 2006

9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

UNC General Administration Board Room

I. Welcome and Introductions – Kathy Heilig, Chair

II. Approval of the January 4th, 2006 Minutes

Heilig asked the Council members for any corrections or additions to the January 4th minutes. Patrena Majette, Associate Director of the North Carolina Health Careers Access Program, said that she wanted to add Dr. Carolyn Mayo's name to those presenting at the NC ARC Project at the upcoming National AHEC Conference (page 6, line 2 of minutes). The addition was noted by the Council Assistant. Heilig asked if there were further suggestions for revisions; there were none. The January 4th, 2006 Council Minutes were then approved by voice vote.

III. Presentation – Maggie Sauer

A presentation was made by Maggie Sauer, Director, Health Promotion Programs at Duke University Medical Center, entitled "Decreasing Obesity in NC: An Opportunity to Partner." The presentation highlighted the extent of the obesity epidemic that has occurred across the country and in NC in the last decade. Sauer detailed some of the community based programs currently operating in the state that focus on obesity prevention. She outlined some of the roles which allied health professionals could play in preventing obesity. Among these were identifying obesity through screening, providing one on one counseling to obese individuals, offering adapted physical activity and nutritional counseling, and through the training of lay health leaders and community partners. Sauer said that allied health professionals could play a significant role by being part of the interdisciplinary team of health providers combating obesity in their communities. She concluded her presentation by saying that a comprehensive, collaborative approach was needed, and that in this effort allied health professionals should partner with other community entities (e.g. public health, community organizations, etc.) to effectively address the obesity problem.

IV. Business of the Council: Discussion and Action

2006 NC Allied Health Workforce Vacancy Data Collection – Alan Brown

Brown announced that Samir Thaker, a graduate student, who is now collecting data for the next vacancy report. He has been looking at websites and in the

paper for posted vacancies every Sunday for the past four weeks. These are listed in the February Memorandum distributed to the membership and also are in the meeting packet. Brown pointed out that ten professions had been identified to be surveyed. He said that a major difference distinguishing this vacancy reports from past ones is that websites for the professions being studied were being monitored for posted vacancies. Brown said that Erin Fraher, the Report's lead investigator, had informed him that to date 450 ads had been collected. There are a few characteristics have appeared frequently in the data so far. One of these is that many positions have been posted according to the skill required by the position, as opposed to being posted by job title. They ask that applicants be able to operate specific machinery, for example. Additionally, fewer sign-on bonuses have been seen than in the ads collected for the last vacancy report. Brown cautioned that it was too early to label these observations as trends but that they have generally been characteristic of the data collected so far.

The Council's Executive Director, David Yoder, added that data collection had started the 7th of February and will end in April. This collection time period has been set so that a preliminary report will be ready for the Council in May. This will be the Spring Vacancy Report. There will also be a Fall Vacancy Report. Yoder said that if there are other professions that need to be studied they will be added to the Fall Vacancy Report.

The next item of business was to recognize Vickie Whitaker for her 14 years of dedicated service to the Council. She was presented a certificate of recognition by Chair Heilig.

V. Reports

Council Advisory Board Subcommittee meeting 2/26:- Bacon

Bacon said that last week a small Sub-Committee of the Council Advisory Board met at the North Carolina Health Facilities Association. He reported that the primary agenda item was carrying the Council's message to the General Assembly by mobilizing support from the Council's major partner institutions to continue to seek permanent funding for the Council. The short session of the General Assembly begins the first week in May. The Council request (\$350,000) is part of the the 3 and half million dollar AHEC budget, which is included as part of the University request to 2006 General Assembly.

Bacon noted that it is always a challenge in the short session years to get funding when the budget before the Assembly was not acted on in the long session of the previous year. However, Bacon said that there is cautious optimism that the Council will get a favorable hearing for a variety of reasons. The Council continues to have strong support from the Health Care Facilities

Association, the North Carolina Hospital Association and others. In the broader context, the overall AHEC request has strong support from the UNC Campus and hopefully it will have the support of the UNC Board of Governors. Bacon expressed his belief that there is increasing recognition of the severe shortages that exist in the wide array of professions, including allied health. There is also increased recognition of the important role AHEC plays in bringing students to health professions and programs. Bacon concluded by saying that he came away from the Advisory Board meeting with an appreciation of the strong support that the Council has from its partner organizations and their commitment to work with the Council in support of the Council's budget request.

Proposed B.S. Degree program in Respiratory Therapy – Bill Croft

Croft reported that he had met with persons from Appalachian State University, East Carolina and UNC-Charlotte regarding the possibility of establishing a B.S. program in Respiratory Therapy. He said that the program that has been developed is a kind of hybrid online program; with the core curriculum taught online and with the clinical part onsite in a health care institution. Croft referred the Council and those in attendance to a handout that he had passed out detailing the program. Croft said that the respiratory component of it was 30 hours of post-professional instruction with the first 15 hours being the core classes and the other 15 being primarily the specialty area; either Adult or neonatal/pediatric care. He said the program was focused on immediate care because there was need to raise current practitioners ability to do these procedures. The program will educate students in the basic training to enable them to teach, do research or hold managerial jobs. This is an AS to B.S. completion program.

Referring to the last page of the handout, Croft spoke about what would be required to move the program forward. The program that has been written and developed includes manager surveys, practitioner surveys, a written syllabus, books and schedules. This information has been sent to universities that have requested it including the three already mentioned. Croft said that at the end of March there will be a meeting to develop a bridge program for students to be able to dual track while they are doing respiratory studies so that they can transfer easier to the university system.

Croft stated that he would like the Councils continued support of the program and formally thanked the NC Hospital Association for writing letters in support of the program; recognizing the need to advance the practice of respiratory care. Croft said that he was also seeking letters of support from physicians as well.

Presently funding is the primary issue. Croft said that if money could be obtained one of the three universities will likely agree to sponsor the program. Appalachian State and East Carolina have expressed the strongest interest. Whatever, happens, Croft does not think that one program will be enough. What

he has already seen is interest from 50% of the students currently enrolled in Respiratory Therapy programs. Noting this, Croft said that there would have to be a competitive admissions process. Otherwise the program would be difficult to administer.

Once the commitment has been made (i.e. once it has gained sponsorship), a program coordinator will have to be hired. This person would have to be able to cover the clinical part of the program. Croft said that N.C. Respiratory Therapy Association wants to get the program approved by 2007.

In concluding his remarks, Croft said that he felt strongly that this program was needed because of the need for respiratory therapy educators across the state.

Lee McLean asked Croft if he knew what kind of faculty he would need for the program. Croft responded that at a minimum, qualified faculty would have to hold a masters degree but would preferentially hold a doctoral degree. Croft said that the latest human resources survey has provided information on the kind of people that will be eligible for positions and the required salaries.

McLean followed up by asking "With the five core courses plus the clinical placement will you not need at least two extra new faculty dedicated to this program?"

Croft responded that a program director and one other will be required at very least. In respiratory care you have traditionally had non-paid preceptors. In this instance, Croft did not think this would be completely possible because you would have to monitor the clinical sites.

Elizabeth Rogers asked Croft if he had said that this would be a distance learning program. Croft responded that, yes, it was a distance learning program except for the clinical portion. He said the original design was to do it online because of cost issues.

Rogers commented that students could therefore be from anywhere.

Croft said that by doing it as a distance learning program it would allow the program to draw from the best students in the entire state rather than from just one region. This characteristic reflects the fact that this program is a statewide effort.

Council Financial Statement – Brown, Treasurer

Brown said that the Council had started its third month of the Continuation Grant from the Duke Endowment. This is a two year grant to support the Council until it can establish permanent funding. Brown said that the Council had received all but one of the matching funds that were pledged by partner institutions and

organizations. Brown extended his thanks to these entities on behalf of the Council.

Federal and State Legislative activity affecting Allied Health Professions – Porter

Porter began by commenting on recent activities at the federal level. She said that there have been significant cuts to health care and educational programs. Perhaps the one that will affect the Council and its member organizations most is the just over 40 billion dollar cut over five years to the Medicare and Medicaid programs. These cuts affect those providing services, receiving services, educational programs, the NC Hospital Association and hospitals and the general population. Additionally there has been a reduction in federal share to the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) education program of 17%, which is down from 19.7% two years ago.

PT/SLP/OT therapy caps and the reinstatement of these caps has been the foremost issue to those involved in these special therapies. These caps have been reemployed despite broad opposition to their imposition and they have affected the delivery and receipt of service of these special therapies.

There has been a hopeful movement to generate exceptions to these therapy caps. Porter expressed her thanks to Rees Jenkins to alerting the Council leadership to submit a letter requesting that the list of conditions eligible for automatic exceptions to the therapy caps be as broad as possible, and consistent with the covered services for those people that receive SSDI. Porter said that Yoder would comment further on this.

Porter continued, saying that the good news is that it looks like petitions have been listened to and the list of disabilities covered under the automatic therapy cap exception is pretty broad. Also a procedure has been instituted for manual exceptions for those not included under the automatic exceptions which makes a huge difference for those people with chronic disabilities and degenerative conditions.

In state government Porter recalled that she has talked a lot about committee meetings in the past; and that Yoder had presented on behalf of the Council to the Joint Committee on Health Care , Subcommittee on Workforce. Porter said that this is where the action was right now in the General Assembly. Health related groups continue to meet, and Porter encouraged all present to follow some of these committee meetings through [HYPERLINK "http://www.ncleg.net"](http://www.ncleg.net) www.ncleg.net.

Executive Director – Yoder

Yoder directed the Council to several items in their information packets. The first

was a letter addressing the therapy caps that Porter had drafted and had alluded to earlier in her remarks. The letter was sent to the major administrators at the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services, as well as to all the members of the North Carolina Congressional Delegation. Yoder said that he had not heard back from any of the members of the delegation but that the Council had made its voice known on this issue. Yoder also directed those present to information that he had pulled off the American Speech and Hearing Association website that outlined what the current caps are. Yoder said that he had heard from some practitioners that dealing with the therapy caps has been quite cumbersome because of the paperwork involved. The automatic exemptions do appear to be quite extensive, however.

Yoder next turned to a handout showing the enrollment numbers for allied health programs at the four year colleges across the state and in the community college system. Yoder said that it was worthy to note that at the four-year institutions there are currently about 3,000 students enrolled in allied health programs. Looking at the community college system, the enrollment number in allied health programs is about 10,000 students.

Yoder directed the Council to an executive summary of the FuturePoint Summit meeting that Dean Peggy Valentine (WSSU) and he had attended last November. He said that it gave some idea as to what they were involved in at the national level in regard to work force issues. Yoder also noted that Valentine is one of the members for the planning committee of the next FuturePoint Summit meeting.

Next he called attention to a letter in the packet written by Diane Groff and Karen Luken entitled "Membership on the Council for Allied Health in NC: What has it done for you lately?" The letter details the Council's recent work and encourages greater involvement from the Council's member organizations.

Turning to his recent activities, Yoder said that he has continued to attend meetings of the HealthCare Works! meetings to represent the Council. He is also serving on the NCHA's workforce advisory council. He said that he attended the State AHEC meeting in Pinehurst two weeks earlier. There he showed the Council's new display and said that he would show it to the Council at the May meeting.

Yoder said that Erin Fraher and he gave testimony to the House Subcommittee on Healthcare Workforce in February. Yoder said that he had also attended another meeting of this sub-committee during the past week. There were various reports given at this meeting and many of the presenters cited positive collaboration that they had had with AHEC. Yoder said that this continually highlighted the AHEC Initiative to legislators at the meeting. Because the Council is part of this initiative, such publicity was good for the Council as well. Yoder will attend the April 23 sub-committee meeting.

Yoder said that the spring meeting of the Schools of Allied Health Professions will be meeting in DC, March 15-17. At this meeting, Fraher and Yoder have been invited to give a workshop. Yoder said that his section will address the topic of how to establish an allied health council while Fraher will speak on how to collect workforce vacancy data. Yoder said that he has also been invited to give the Dean's Memorial Lecture at the meeting.

Additionally, Yoder said that the Council staff will be sending out invitations to the professional association presidents in the coming week inviting them to the May 3 meeting. The invitation involves a request that each organization make a short presentation before the Council on their latest activities and issues of concern.

VII. Round Robin

Diane Groff had a question for David regarding the allied health field numbers. Groff said that the numbers were based on codes and that often times these codes are not reflective of the way in which the degree is identified in the university. Sometimes, therefore, there are programs present but the numbers do not reflect this. Groff cautioned Yoder to be careful with the use of the numbers.

Yoder responded by saying that he was aware of some of the problems with codes and that the numbers were to serve as a snapshot rather than the full picture of current program enrollment status across the state.

Elizabeth Rogers remarked that private institutions were not entirely included in the numbers and that many of these institutions have allied health programs, such as Duke which has a PA program and Wake Forest University.

Tom Connelly of Cabarrus College of Health Sciences announced that on Monday the College's internal approval process gave approval to a bachelors completion program in medical imaging. He said the matter would now go to the College's governing board at the end of April. Hopefully by the 1st of September or the beginning of the first term next year, they will have the bachelor's completion program in medical imaging online and ready to go, Connelly said.

Connelly also announced that the College was in the second cycle of their CT program. Their MRI program will come online in the fall, along with the medical imaging program. He said that the College was working with Central Piedmont Community College to arrange a dental assisting program to become a bachelor's completion program in management. He said they were also trying to figure out what to do with the new provider technology since this is a key

statewide initiative. Connelly remarked that millions and millions of dollars was being invested by Murdock's Corporation to do something in the biotech area and that they are trying to figure out where they will go with that.

Connelly commented that, in regard to occupational shortages, he was constantly amazed at the employer demand for occupational therapy assistants. He said that many of the College's OTA students were leaving school with immediate employment, with many having employment agreements before they finished school.

Wayne Foster said that the NCSHLA has put together a task force on the utilization of speech pathology assistants and how the bachelor's prepared person fits into this. He said that they have an upcoming meeting with people from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), special education directors and speech pathology chairs. He said that they had a good working group to look at how to facilitate bachelor's people to have the type of licensure they need. Currently, additional coursework is available for bachelors' holders to do to get proper licensure, but that it is not available online.

Foster said that he has also contacted individuals at the DPI to get a sense of the needs for OT's and PT's in the public schools. Foster said that this will enable him to have similar information on OT's and PT's in the public schools that he had had for SLP's at an earlier Council meeting.

Foster concluded by saying that the state Speech-Language and Hearing Association had a leadership conference last weekend. One of the major topics discussed was thinking of ways to facilitate high school seniors understanding and awareness of allied health professions. He said that some promising ideas were presented.

Steve Thomas, Dean of Allied Health Sciences at East Carolina University, said that in April and May his department will be moving into its new building. They will be sharing the 303,000 square foot building with nursing and the health sciences library. Allied health will occupy the largest portion of the building. He said that they anticipate a ribbon cutting ceremony sometime in September and that his department is in the process of packing.

Ned Fowler said that he wanted to recognize some of his colleagues at the meeting. He said that the community college allied health deans had scheduled their quarterly meeting that afternoon so that they could attend the Council meeting in the morning. Fowler said that Yoder did a presentation to the allied health deans last fall immediately after the FuturePoint Summit. This presentation produced a lot of interest about the Council among the allied health deans and that hopefully more of them would attend future Council meetings.

Judi Ashbaugh of the NC Dept. of Health and Human Services announced a couple things that were happening in the Office of Rural Health. She said that there is a severe shortage of PA's and nurse practitioners projected statewide. She said that there is a healthy federal lending fee program for physicians, PA's, nurse practitioners and dentists. There is also a state lending fee program. If a site is located in a health profession shortage area they have a sliding fee schedule which is at or below the poverty level that can qualify them for the state lending fee program.

She said that the NC Office of Research, Demonstrations & Rural Health Development provides a cost free recruitment service to community health centers, rural health centers, health departments and even private practices as long as they are operating in a health profession shortage area.

Joshua Smith of the Academy of PAs announced that the PAs had just moved into their new building which is located in RTP. The building makes their PA academy the first in the entire country to have its own free-standing facility. Smith said that it would also function as the Harvey Estes' Conference Center. This aspect was an endeavor to attract outreach societies and groups that want to have a meeting in the RTP. Smith said that if any of the associations present at the Council meeting would like to use the Center that they should contact the NC Academy of PA's. Smith concluded by saying that more information would be sent out about this.

Martha Taylor of the NC State Board of Dental Examiners said that she had reported last time that they were going to institute a required exam for dental hygiene candidates. This year they are going to offer the regular Board exam and the CETA exam and that candidates will have a choice of which exam they will take. One cost \$170 and the other \$700.

Bill Croft brought the Carolina Sleep Society to the Council's attention. The Society is a group of individuals, technologists and doctors that meet on a regular basis to discuss health practices that improve sleep wellness. Croft said that the group now has a statewide presence.

Yoder said that if the Carolina Sleep Society was interested in Council membership, they should write the Council, and provide a mission statement that spells out who they are and why they would like to be a part of the Council membership.

Fowler said that there are new health disciplines developing all the time and that many of these new disciplines, as they evolve, may not be aware of the Council and the networking opportunities that it has to offer. Fowler encouraged the Council to periodically do a search similar to the one Karen Luken did last year and invite several new disciplines to be part of the Council. Fowler said that the Council needs to continue to look for new disciplines that are

developing and extend an invitation to these groups as they come along.

Luken agreed with Fowler, saying that invitations could perhaps be extended annually. Doing an organized outreach on an annual basis would create regularity and organize Council efforts. Groups could still apply for membership individually, she said.

Seeing no further announcements, Chair Heilig reminded everyone of the next Council meeting scheduled for May 3rd, 2006 at the Friday Center. The meeting adjourned at 12:15pm.

In Attendance

Members, Staff and Consultants:

Judi Ashbaugh, Dept. Health & Human Services, Office of Research, Demo., & Rural Health Dev.
Thomas Bacon, Immediate Past Chair, Director, NC AHEC Program
Kathy Baars, Department of Public Instruction, Exceptional Children
Alan Brown, Treasurer, Data Committee Chair; NC AHEC Program
Bill Croft, NC Society for Respiratory Care, Sandhills Community College
Wayne Foster, Allied Health Professional Rep. Group 2, NC Speech, Hearing and Language Association
Ned Fowler, Community College Allied Health Programs Rep., Asheville-Buncombe Tech. Community College
Chastity Glover, NC Association of Health Care Recruiters
Diane Groff, Allied Health Professional Rep. Group 1, Dept. of Recreation and Leisure Studies
Elizabeth Haile, NC AHEC Allied Health Representative, Greensboro AHEC
Karen Luken, Vice Chair, NC Office on Disability and Health
Patrena Majette, Associate Director, North Carolina Health Careers Access Program
Kristy Osterhout, NC State Lab, NC Dept. of Health & Human Services
Patricia Porter, Government Liason, UNC Speech & Hearing Sciences
Elizabeth Rogers, Independent Colleges and Universities of NC Representative
James Sadler, UNC Systems Representative
Martha Taylor, Allied Health Prof. Rep. Group 5, NC Dental Hygiene Association
Steve Thomas, UNC Systems of Allied Health Programs Representative

Guests:

Cindy Archie, Wayne Community College
Angela Ballantine, Vance-Granville Community College
Terry Barber, NC Association of EMS Administrators
Allison Bordeaux, Wake AHEC
Tom Connelly, Cabarrus College of Health Sciences
Julie Cooper, Charlotte AHEC
Naomi East, UVCC
Nancy Easterling, Carolinas Chapter of the Americal Horticulture Therapy Association

John B. Frank, Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust
Nancy Porter, NC Deans Association, Gaston College
Dawn Grant, Eastern AHEC
Nomia Kehrberg, Western Carolina University
Sarah Lee, NC Deans Association, SPCC
Lee McLean, Professor and Chair, UNC Allied Health Sciences
Brenda Mitchell, Clinical Asst. Professor, UNC Dept. of Allied Health Sciences
Debbie Ramey, Eastern AHEC
Margaret Skulnik, Durham Technical Community College
Josh Smith, NC Academy of Physicians Assistants
Chris Thompson, Wilson County EMS
Vickie Whitaker, Dept. of Health and Human Services
Ken Whitehurst, NC Community College System Office