

Council for Allied Health  
Workforce Assessment Study Follow-up Guidelines September 9, 2002

Following the first two workforce reports on Physical Therapy (2000) and Speech-Language Pathology (2001) the Council's data committee recommended that written guidelines be established to assist the Council, the Sheps Center, along with the professions being studied, to determine the value and cost effectiveness of the workforce model being used.. The following guidelines reflect lessons learned from these first two studies.

First, professions should be targeted based on an immediate need or workforce "crisis". Without this sense of urgency, motivation for follow-up of the recommendations will be difficult to sustain.

Secondly, including key representatives from the professional associations to serve as expert panelists will be necessary to ensure effective follow-up. While the most effective panel would be neutral, giving an objective assessment of the workforce, consideration should also be given to including panel members who will play a crucial role in the implementation stages. Establishing buy-in from the professional associations early in the panel process appears to be necessary to ensure successful follow-up and implementation of the recommendations.

Based on the relative success of the SLP follow-up process it is recommended that, as a report nears completion, the representative and data committee should identify potential members of the profession being studied for a group to make implementation recommendations. This group should be reflective of key leaders/stakeholders (employers, practitioners, educators, professional associations, etc...), who are able to formalize the recommendations presented and promote them within their respective organizations and associations.

Holding the initial meeting of this follow-up group immediately following the distribution of the report (while interest is high) will help establish long-term commitment. Bringing these leaders to the table and fostering their ownership of the recommendations is of primary importance.

Finally, the profession's representative (or designated leader) will be crucial in facilitating the follow-up process. Current representatives point out that serving on a follow-up committee can be costly in both time and money, yet a respected, experienced leader from the discipline being studied is needed to move the follow-up process along. One suggestion is for the profession to use the work force report as part of a long range planning exercise; determine which recommendations can be accomplished immediately, in 6 months, and in a year and which ones may have no relevance.

While the Council can play a supportive role in facilitating the follow-up process, consensus was that it does not have the authority, nor is it in a position, to assume responsibility for implementation of the workforce recommendations. The data committee will keep the Council updated on the overall status of the workforce studies, and representatives should be expected to make an annual progress report to the Council as long as follow-up efforts continue.