

Defining and Measuring Value in the Health Workforce

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**CAROLINA HEALTH WORKFORCE
RESEARCH CENTER**

www.healthworkforce.unc.edu

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Payment is moving toward value but are we getting value from health workforce?

- After nearly decade of experimenting with value-based payment models, health system reaping only modest results (Pham and Ginsberg *NEJM* 2018; McWilliams et al *NEJM* 2016)
- Value-driven healthcare workforce critical to delivering high value care (Fraher and Ricketts *NCMJ* 2016)

The Carolina Health Workforce Research Center conducts and disseminates research on the *emerging health workforce topic* of value in the health workforce

Our work defining and measuring value in the health workforce

The Carolina Health Workforce Research Center's projects focus on 3 areas:

1. Improving our understanding of the **value of different skill mix configurations** in new models of care
2. Investigating and **measuring plasticity**—or flexibility—of workforce to change scopes of service and move between specialties, employment settings
3. **Developing data, metrics and toolkits** that policy makers can use to evaluate the return on investment of public funds spent on health workforce training

The value of different skill mix configurations: the role of social workers in integrated care

- **Mapping National Co-Location Trends Using NPI Data** found high degree of state variability and lower co-location of PCPs, social workers and psychologists in rural and small practices
- **Electronic Health Records: A New Frontier for Health Workforce Research** found that social workers use EHR to communicate with team, coordinate referrals and document behavioral health needs
- **Using EHR to Understand which Professions Are Addressing Patient Social Determinants of Health in Primary Care** investigates which providers screen and address SDOH

Investigating and measuring plasticity: the roles of social workers

- **Social work in Integrated Primary Care: A Systematic Review** identified 3 primary functions for social workers—behavioral health specialists, care managers and referral coordinator/navigator
- **Toward a Better Understanding of Social Workers on Integrated Care Delivery Teams**—survey of 395 BHWET students and field instructors found high degree of plasticity in social worker roles
- **Office-Based Opioid Treatment: Defining the Workforce Treating Opioid Disorder** investigates the skill mix and professions involved in office-based opioid treatment (OBOT)

Investigating and measuring plasticity: between professions and within specialties

Two projects currently underway

- **Examining national primary care staffing characteristics** to identify variation in rural versus urban areas, by practice type and ownership structure
- **Rural-urban differences within primary care scope of practice** examines variation in the breadth and volume of primary care services provided by general internal medicine and family physicians in urban and rural counties. Project focuses on how provider demographic, training characteristics, market- and patient-level factors affect *within specialty plasticity*

Developing data that state and federal policy makers can use to evaluate return on investment of GME investments

- Federal GME reform efforts have stalled but lots of action at state level
- States facing pressure to identify return on investment for public funds spent on UME and GME but need better data. We're trying to address this need:
 - DocFlows app <https://docflows.unc.edu>
 - Assessing outcomes of pediatric GME programs
 - Developing toolkit states can use to develop data and metrics to evaluate residency training investments

Value to Whom? This Work Can Get Tricky



So what?

Our Center's impact

Shaping policy:

Our GME and social work has been used by HRSA, COGME, MedPAC, GAO, the National Academy of Medicine, National Governors Association, states and wide range of policy makers

Developing new methods and tools:

Developed innovative methodologies and data visualizations that have advanced the field of workforce research

Building science of workforce research:

Through manuscripts, policy briefs, webinars, presentations and other dissemination venues, we reach key audiences who use findings

Mentoring the next generation:

Twelve (masters, doctoral, professional) students from different disciplines have worked with our HWRC over past 5 years

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