

MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Envisioning an Ideal Health Workforce Data System for California

By Janet M. Coffman, PhD, MPP, and Joanne Spetz, PhD

Healthforce Center at UCSF

Significant updates to California’s health workforce data system are needed to understand and address growing care gaps identified by the California Future Health Workforce Commission. This is the conclusion of a new report from Healthforce Center at UCSF, authored by Janet M. Coffman and Joanne Spetz, which calls for a more centralized point of data collection and more comprehensive datasets for all health occupations to increase accountability and track progress toward closing the state's looming workforce shortfalls.

The Healthforce report picks up where the Commission left off in early 2019, when it made [27 recommendations](#) for improving the supply, distribution, and diversity of the state’s health workforce. At the Commission’s request, Coffman and Spetz assessed California’s current workforce data system—including the state’s Healthcare Workforce Clearinghouse, created in 2007—and have identified three opportunities for upgrading this system to improve monitoring of trends in California’s health workforce and health professions education.

The report estimates these upgrades to the state Clearinghouse will require an expenditure of \$1 million in the first year, with ongoing operations estimated at \$250,000 to \$500,000 to model best practices in other states. Licensing boards, employers, or educational institutions would incur additional costs to collect and transmit data to the upgraded Clearinghouse on an ongoing basis.

Major recommendations - *Envisioning an Ideal Health Workforce Data System for California:*

1. Improve data collection on workforce supply and demand, as well as education pipeline

- Collect data on supply and demand for workers in all health occupations, as well as data on health professions education—two major shortcomings of the existing Healthcare Workforce Clearinghouse.
- Expand information collected for all health occupations to include jobs and wages, as well as vacancies, turnover rates, race/ethnicity, and languages spoken other than English.
- Conduct ongoing, regular surveys similar to those administered by the Board of Registered Nursing for all health professions education programs in California so the data system contains timely, accurate information on health workforce pipelines.

2. Increase the interactivity of the data system

- Develop multiple products and services to allow users to query the system and visualize data, including fact sheets, reports, and a web portal that can generate tables, charts, maps, and public-use datasets.
- Establish mechanisms to allow data personnel to respond to requests from the Legislature, state agencies, colleges, universities, media outlets, and other parties.

3. Host an updated system through a partnership between state, university research center

- Adopt the successful model used by other states by creating a new partnership to manage this system, including all of the state agencies responsible for health workforce data—the California Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD), and Employment Development Department (EDD)—along with a university-based research center with expertise in the health care workforce.