**OHIO HEALTH CARE ASSOCIATION**

**WORKFORCE COMMITTEE**

**January 10, 2022, 1:00 p.m.**

**Zoom Conference Call**

**312-626-6799 Meeting Number 86029392232 Passcode 2021**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Chair John Goodman opened the meeting and welcomed committee members. He pointed to the antitrust, conflict of interest and confidentiality policies located in the online folder. Next he asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the December meeting. Committee members approved the minutes.

Mr. Goodman first invited Mr. Pete Van Runkle to discuss the Public Policy agenda, beginning with the CMS and OSHA rules on Vaccination. On Friday, January 7, the Supreme Court held a hearing for these two contested mandates. While the court has not yet made a decision, many commentators feel that the OSHA mandate will be rejected and the CMS mandate will be upheld. Currently, in the state of Ohio only OSHA is in effect for employers of 100 or more, and CMS is not.

Next, Mr. Van Runkle discussed the updated CDC Return to Work criteria released in late December. The criteria is outlined for conventional, contingency and crisis staffing levels. Guidance varies by staffing levels, described previously, vaccination status of impacted healthcare workers (unvaccinated, vaccinated or boosted) and whether staff impacted were exposed or confirmed positive for COVID-19 infection. The chart referenced in the updated guidance is very helpful in outlining these differences.

Mr. Van Runkle then discussed the COVID staffing in emergencies provided by the R3AP program in Ohio. When a facility is in an emergency, which would be beyond contingency or crisis staffing levels, action is required from the government to keep residents safe. The National Guard option as it exists currently is rarely used and difficult to obtain. Additionally, R3AP was not available during all hours and on holidays; when it would be most impactful. Starting January 3, the R3AP team is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Ohio’s Controlling Board is meeting today to award funds for crisis support staffing provided by the state of Ohio through staffing agencies in the amount of $7 million. Unlike previous state staffing support, there will be no charge to the facilities. OHCA is working with members to suggest a protocol for triaging whether emergency staff is warranted.

Mr. Van Runkle then discussed the challenges providers to experience with staffing agencies. OHCA has received our final draft of our staffing agency legislations, which would require oversight of the agencies. It does not cap prices for staffing, based on feedback from interested parties and legislators.

Mr. Van Runkle asked if there were any questions. Brigitt Mundy inquired about the revised return to work criteria for contingency staffing. She stated that her facility had multiple people test positive past the 10 days of infection. Her local health department advised her to test every day until they test negative. Deanna Hatfield responded that they do not need a negative test, and local health departments have given varying guidance on the topic. Decisions on return to work are made based on the symptoms and updated guidance, not test result. Pete Van Runkle added that he felt the local health department did not interpret the guidance correctly.

Jeremy Monroe added that they have people who are sick and need to be off work, but mostly workers have symptoms of a common cold and would normally be working. He asked if there had been any conversation on a national level regarding reducing the twice weekly testing requirement for unvaccinated health care workers. The strategy, he commented, does not appear to be working. Mr. Van Runkle responded that he had not heard any discussion on this topic and that AHCA feels it is appropriate to test unvaccinated staff frequently, as it keeps asymptomatic positives from working. He noted that nearly all providers are in crisis staffing and the new guidelines should alleviate some of the staffing issues related to asymptomatic positive health care workers.

Chair Goodman invited Ms. Erin Hart to discuss Grant options OHCA continues to research.

Ms. Hart then discussed the CDC Grant for Nursing Home strike force teams. Ohio was awarded a total of $27 million, to be used between SNF and other long term care providers, according to Director Ursel McElroy. Building on our update from last meeting, Ohio Department of Aging did submit $1.1 million in the December Controlling Board meeting for medical director salaries. They were also allocated 11 million (which includes the $1.1 million previously mentioned) in House Bill 169 for support of the R3AP program and Recruitment campaign requested by OHCA. . During the conversation on 12/3, the Director was open to our additional ideas about student loan repayment. This plan would include direct care workers who stay in LTC for 3 years, includes RCF, SNF and ICFs. OHCA is submitting a draft plan, included in committee folder, based on the US office of personnel management for this plan. Staff would be reimbursed directly to the loan entity on a monthly basis over a period of 3 years to incentivize them to continue working in that long term care setting. Employer requirements includes verification of employment, annual verification report for all receiving benefits, and qualifications as an LTC provider. Ms Hart asked committee members to review the plan and let her know if the requirements for the provider seemed too burdensome.

Building on the topic of workforce investment, Ms. Hart discussed the current Build Back Better Act which included Nursing Home Worker Training Grants. The legislation is stalled in Senate after alternative CBO score released with much higher debt impact. Senator Manchin says the legislation needs revised heavily. However, Child Tax Credit expansion takes up a huge amount of the increase in CBO score. Congress has now shifted focus to voting reform, and OHCA will continue to watch the bill as it progresses. OHCA is continuing to research other grant options such as HCBS Workforce Collaboration Fund, which we have not received an update on in some time. Ohio has to submit comments on their plan which was only partially approved

Next Ms. Hart discussed continuing efforts from OHCA on rule revisions related to the State Tested Nursing Assistant (STNA) and Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) education programs. OHCA is meeting with the Ohio Department of Health in February to discuss our proposed changes. Mandy Smith submitted the OHCA comments including allowance for laboratory simulation of clinical portion addition. We are also submitting draft revisions to the rules, currently in progress, by the deadline in late January for review. The Ohio Board of Nursing (OBN) has also offered to allow OHCA to present regulatory changes during March 3 meeting for the LPN nurse faculty to include RN who is enrolled in BSN program to teach, making those faculty members more accessible in the near future. The funding for startup costs is also pending the Ohio HCBS ARPA dollar fund finalization. OHCA will try to use workforce collaboration dollars if that is included in the final version of the funds available.

Ms. Mandy Smith opened up the discussion on technology solutions for workforce. She asked committee members to share creative ways that they are using technology to assist with workforce challenges. Steve Boymel asked if there were any housekeeping robots available on the market. Jill Herron added that hospitals were using telehealth/robotic assistance to conducts patient one-on-ones. She also mentioned a new technology introduced during a recent Care Conference called “wick-away” that would wick away urine overnight and reduce the need for changing residents overnight. Debbie Jenkins mentioned that the Department of Developmental Disabilities was piloting a robot called Timi with an interactive video screen for communication. She stated she would get more information before the next meeting. Ms. Hart mentioned that some hospices have robot greeters at entries, Steve Boymel added that these are very expensive. Diane Dietz added that she was working with the Bureau of Workers Compensation on available Grant options on innovative solutions for lifts and safe patient transfers or handling. John Jones stated that he would follow up with contacts at Case Western. Mandy Smith suggested portable parallel bar systems for residents in quarantine. OHCA would continue to research these suggestions for future conversations.

Ms. Hart then discussed Expedited Employment Authorization Document (EAD) processing. Earlier in December, AHCA sent a coalition letter to the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on workforce supply related issues. In the letter, the Coalition noted that the U.S. currently has a labor shortage in many sectors, not the least of which is the health care industry. One issue is the significant delay in USCIS processing Employment Authorization Document (EAD) renewals. Some employees have had to stop working due to USCIS not timely processing the EAD renewals, while others are at risk of soon losing work authorization due to the delays. On December 28th, USCIS came out with an announcement noting that “Effective immediately, if you are a healthcare worker who has a pending Employment Authorization Document (EAD) renewal application (Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization) and your EAD expires in 30 days or less or has already expired, you can request expedited processing of your EAD application. A request to expedite can be made by the applicant or his/her attorney by calling USCIS Contact Center at 800-375-5283 (TTY 800-767-1833).

Diane Dietz then reviewed the Educational Foundation of OHCA (EFOHCA) Scholarship application process. OHCA has $218K available for workers continuing their education, and we encourage our workforce committee to submit nominations for these scholarships.

Ms. Kathy Chapman reminded committee members of the upcoming Workforce Summit on January 24 and 25 in Columbus, Ohio. She noted that we had over 80 registered and we hoped to see our workforce committee members there.

After asking if there was any other business, and hearing none, Chair Goodman then moved to adjourn the meeting.

Next meeting:

February 14, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

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| **First Name** | **Last Name** | **10-Jan** |
| Amy | Allen |  |
| Andrew | Austin |  |
| Erin | Hart | P |
| Allyson | Bakewell |  |
| Brandi | Body |  |
| Tammy | Bonifas |  |
| Steve | Boymel | P |
| Nicole | Breving |  |
| Jamie | Brose | P |
| Nathan | Carder | P |
| Kathy | Chapman | P |
| Joe | Chesney |  |
| Tiffaney | Closson |  |
| Angena | Collier |  |
| Pam | Cooke |  |
| Melissa | Courtock |  |
| Diane | Dietz | P |
| Nancy | Erwin | P |
| Cayleigh | Esterly |  |
| Ken | Fetterman | P |
| John | Goodman | P |
| Alana | Griffin |  |
| Deanna | Hatfield | P |
| Jill | Herron | P |
| Brenda | Honigford | P |
| Joan | Howard |  |
| Judy | Howell |  |
| Eric | Hutchins |  |
| Debbie | Jenkins | P |
| Brandi | Johnson | P |
| John | Jones | P |
| Gina | Kerman | P |
| Eileen | Kilbane | P |
| Renee | Kinder |  |
| Brian | Kinzer | P |
| Karen | Knavel |  |
| Kelsey | Knisley |  |
| Eitan | Laghaie | P |
| Joan | Longhin-Howard |  |
| Heidi | McCoy | P |
| Brenda | Milanczuk | P |
| Greg | Miller | P |
| Steve | Miller | P |
| Jeremy | Monroe | P |
| Bridgett | Mundy | P |
| Shelly | Orlowski |  |
| Rob | Pivonka | P |
| Tom | Rickels | P |
| Melanie | Rittenour | P |
| Mark | Schlater | P |
| Ginger | Schuerger-Davison | P |
| Carol | Slight |  |
| Mandy | Smith | P |
| Nicole | Sprenger |  |
| Michael | Tenenbaum |  |
| Pete | Van Runkle | P |
| Aubrey | Varner |  |