



PILLAR

HEALTHCARE & BIOSCIENCE

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ANY DISCUSSION OF A STRENGTHENED, POST-PANDEMIC REGIONAL ECONOMY MUST BEGIN WITH HEALTHCARE. OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, OUR REGIONAL ECOSYSTEM HAS CONTINUED TO ATTRACT MAJOR HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS AND HOSPITAL GROUPS. THE WCA HAS LONG SERVED TO CONNECT THIS ECONOMIC SECTOR WITH THE REST OF THE PROFESSIONAL AND POLITICAL COMMUNITY. THESE ENDURING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS POSITION THE WCA AS A CRITICAL STAKEHOLDER HUB TO ADVOCATE, PROMOTE POLICIES, COMMUNICATE INFORMATION, AND PROVIDE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SERVICES.

Montefiore Medicine, Northwell Health, NewYork-Presbyterian, WMC Health, Memorial Sloan Kettering, Hospital for Special Surgery, Westmed Medical Group, ENT and Allergy Associates as well as other physicians' groups and nonprofit care facilities all have set down strong roots in Westchester. More than just an immense benefit to the people who live here, proximity to world-class health facilities is a key business and talent driver for the region.

These organizations, along with their ancillary services (doctors' offices, laboratories, etc.) also anchor our real estate industry. Illustratively, over the past two years healthcare has been the largest occupier of new building leases in the county by square feet. Moreover, many of our colleges and universities see growth opportunities in sector specific training for nursing and various technical and clinical disciplines. Existing nursing programs are expanding and at least two colleges have announced plans to open new nursing schools within the past year alone.

Bioscience also stands as an emerging sector where entrepreneurship and innovation intersect with established institutions. Westchester County government has appropriately targeted this segment with the aspiration of creating a regional life sciences hub.

The WCA Post Pandemic Working Group's recent survey on the future of business in the County identified healthcare / life sciences as the single most important industry for Westchester's economic future. With an employment roster of greater than 70,000 in Westchester alone, and with an \$18 billion plus impact on the region, this industry sector cannot be overstated.

INITIATIVE 1 :: Advocate for a Strong and Vibrant Healthcare System:

The WCA's Healthcare Consortium, comprising leaders from world-renowned healthcare systems, physician practices, nursing homes, clinics, and related service providers (real estate, banking, law and accounting), will continue to advocate for legislative and regulatory priorities to protect the foundation of this critical economic driver.

PRIORITIES HIGHLIGHTED BY THE PANDEMIC INCLUDE:

- Broaden telehealth coverage from both public and private payers;
- Reign-in oversized market influence of healthcare insurance carriers;
 - maintain reasonable insurance premiums and prevent unfair and oversized profits,
 - require "healthcare reinvestment" by insurers as modeled after the 1977 Community Reinvestment Act for the Banking Industry,
 - increase transparency of patients' insurance plans,
 - place fair limits on insurance denials.
- Institute common-sense medical malpractice reforms;
- Identify coverage reimbursement models which are population health based and ensure fair reimbursement;
- Integrate healthcare with nonprofit community service providers.

INITIATIVE 2 :: Initiate a Healthcare Career Path Workforce Talent Project:

A sustainable pipeline of locally educated and trained talent will be more important than ever to the healthcare sector's future success and to Westchester's economic growth. Healthcare providers are actively assessing their current and future workforce needs. Most notably, there is an ongoing need for more nurses, nurse assistants, respiratory therapists, lab techs and other clinical and non-clinical positions. Long-term forecasts suggest that the need will intensify with elevated numbers of retirements anticipated.

In response to the pandemic, the WCA has initiated a Healthcare Workforce Talent Project, tasked with identifying the greatest hiring needs of the regional healthcare sector. At its outset, an active working committee made up of the region's largest healthcare providers and seventeen colleges, BOCES and career centers held weekly meetings focused on helping fill immediate workforce needs identified by the providers.

To amplify those efforts, the WCA held virtual career chats with providers to let job seekers know about open positions.

The WCA will continue to convene the working committee to connect employers, job trainers, and job seekers and improve pathways to careers in the healthcare sector. In addition, the WCA will bring together high-level stakeholders such as hospital and nursing administrators and college presidents.

FOREMOST FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS ARE:

- (1) aligning curriculums and course offerings with talent needs;
- (2) coordinating and increasing availability of clinical training for nursing students and nurse assistants;
- (3) supporting a residency/fellowship program for nursing and potentially other high demand positions;
- (4) promoting workforce diversity and inclusion; and
- (5) developing new funding streams for training and early career support.

INITIATIVE 3 :: Showcase and Grow the Healthcare / Bioscience Nexus:

Westchester and the surrounding region will need continued opportunities to showcase its considerable assets while also addressing existing challenges in fulfilling its bioscience aspirations. Access to early stage investment and college level engineering programs are top-level focuses. The WCA, through its existing Healthcare Consortium, will engage with County government, our healthcare systems, the real estate industry, and other stakeholders to advance this agenda.