

Physician Recruitment and Retention Working Group

Tuesday, May 20, 2025 | 7:30-8:30am

Meeting Minutes

Members present: Anton Alerte, Jill Banatoski, Emily Byrne, Kathryn Cullinan, Khuram Ghuman, Mariam Hakim-Zargar, Stephen Huot, Amy Kohn, Andrew Lim, Krishnan Narasimhan, William Petit.

Members absent: Steven Angus, Liz Mahan, Traci Marquis-Eydman, Remy Serkin.

DPH: Melia Allan, Margaret Gradie, Justin Hamrick, Commissioner Manisha Juthani, Tom St. Louis.

Convene Meeting, Approval of Minutes

- Margaret Gradie called the meeting to order at 7:32am.
- Margaret motioned to add Approval of the Minutes to the agenda.
- Anton Alerte motioned to approve the April 8 minutes and Jill Banatoski seconded; the minutes passed without discussion.

Introductions

- Krishnan Narasimhan, family medicine physician at Stamford health, introduced himself as chair of the group.
- Members who were not present for the April meeting introduced themselves.

Schedule of Meetings

- Krishnan proposed shifting the meeting schedule to the third Tuesday of every month, rather than the second Tuesday.
- The group agreed to shift the meeting schedule to the third Tuesday.

Working Group Processes

- Krishnan reviewed the report from the previous iteration of the report, and shared intentions to focus on key topic areas, in order to make a big impact.
- Krishnan shared a proposed timeline for the upcoming meetings. He envisions the structure of each meeting to begin with a 15-to-20-minute presentation, followed by a discussion led by an internal member.
- Bill Petit brought up the suggestion of getting buy-in from legislators and the governor's office to get funding for the group's recommendations.
- The group shared disagreements on recommending expansions to the Medicaid fee schedule, versus making recommendations that are more conscious about the state's limited resources.
- Emily Byrne suggested revising the timeline of topics to incorporate the likelihood of a special session of the CT General Assembly after the federal budget is passed. She also suggested that the group focus on retention of physicians.

Meeting Topics and Open Discussion

- Group members shared the sentiment that instead of rehashing topics that were included in the 2023 report, they would like to focus on issues more directly related to the current charge in the legislation.
- Margaret highlighted that this group's report is directed to the Public Health Committee of the legislature. Action on report recommendations are up to the committee.
- Commissioner Juthani shared some background on the top three recommendations from the previous iteration of the group, and what DPH is working on to address physician recruitment and retention.
 - She shared that there are multiple groups advocating for an increased Medicaid rate reimbursement. There is also a bill going through the legislature to create a structure for a student loan repayment program (SLRP) within available appropriations. In the past, she highlighted that the SLRP money specifically set aside for physicians was underutilized. She offered to have DPH staff present on the physician piece of DPH's student loan repayment program at a future meeting.
 - In terms of creating a pipeline, DPH researched what it would take to have positions or a residency program specifically on primary care at certain institutions.
 - Lastly, DPH has a bill moving through the legislature that would create a retired physicians license, which would create a reduced licensure fee for retired physicians who want to volunteer in certain settings.
- Krishnan floated the idea of tracking recommendations that have been implemented and worked on in the realm of physician recruitment and retention, to better study the barriers to implementing certain issues.
- Stephen Huot shared the idea of looking into focus groups or surveys of residents in training in CT who take primary care jobs in other states. Krishnan echoed this idea, suggesting that the group speak to graduating residents who are making decisions to stay in-state or go somewhere else.
- Group members emphasized examining data from previous programs and from other states, to see if there has been an impact on primary care recruitment and retention. Katie Cullinan mentioned that at Nuvance Health, they track all the reasons for turnover. She offered to share some of this data if the committee would find this valuable.

Next Steps

- Krishnan requested that members who would like to volunteer to lead the discussion reach out to him. If no one volunteers, he will reach out to certain members to help out.

Closing

- The meeting adjourned at 8:32am. The next meeting is scheduled for June 17, 2025 at 7:30am.