Greater Wichita Partnership
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By Emily Younger-Barnwell

On Aug. 1, the future of healthcare and its workforce in Wichita took center stage at the Partnership's second of three talent workshops.

Partnership President Jeff Fluhr welcomed the crowd of approximately 90 local healthcare and education leaders before they took part in a productive conversation regarding industry trends, insights and demands.

"Your energy and your engagement in today's discussion is an important part of our Talent Roadmap. At the core is how we bring industry and education together and continue to position the Wichita region on the global scale" said Partnership President Jeff Fluhr. "Do not be bashful. We need you to lean in, talk to us about what you are seeing as opportunities and what we need to do as a community to adapt to what you are seeing in the future."

Gregory A. Hand, Ph.D. and dean of the College of Health Professions at Wichita State University, followed Fluhr's future-of-work thoughts with a keynote highlighting the emerging trends within the healthcare industry and how they relate to Wichita's proposed Biomedical Campus.

"This is a big project (Biomed). When I say big, I mean big," emphasized Hand. "We are talking about moving two institutions and 25 programs into one building. It is simply not done (elsewhere)."

The Biomedical Campus, a combined venture by Wichita State University, KU School of Medicine-Wichita, KU School of Pharmacy-Wichita and WSU Tech, is forecasted to transform healthcare and healthcare education in Kansas.

Hand explained the project will synergize common missions of education, research, clinical practice and community outreach to improve patient outcomes and enhance community wellness.

"The whole biomedical district will be a magnet for growth in healthcare," Hand said.

The biomedical discussion seamlessly moved into a healthcare leadership panel moderated by Keith Lawing of Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas. The panel included:

- Kathleen Jagger, Ph.D., MPH, Newman University
- Lindsey Lankford, Keycentrix
- Chela Love, DNP, Nomad Medical
- Lynn Loveland, Health Sciences WSU Tech
- Tiffany Masson, Psy.D, Kansas Health Science Center
- Laura Tatpati, M.D., University of Kansas Medical Center
- Kevin Strecker, Ascension/Via Christi

The panelists discussed market opportunities, challenges and the alignment of workforce priorities between education and training programs.

Ascension Via Christi President and CEO Kevin Strecker explained the Wichita region is experiencing a growing demand for healthcare services, however, the labor participation rate is decreasing.

He, as did many of the other panelists, emphasized the importance of educating the region's young people about the robust offerings of healthcare opportunities.

President of Newman University, Kathleen Jagger, Ph.D., reemphasized the call to action, "From the very beginning we need to help our workforce see all the future possibilities they could have. This goes for students and people in entry-level

positions. We need to show them the integrated, radiant and dynamic future for health professionals."

The panelists agreed the future for health professionals includes the continued integration of evolving technology, automation, artificial intelligence and data collection.

"Technology is running our world. You must have technology to be successful. You must think futuristic and to attract the talent you want you have to meet them where they are and spark their interest," said Lindsey Lankford, director of human resources for Keycentrix.

"We are always thinking about where technology and healthcare come together and how we can best prepare for the future," said Tiffany Masson, president of the Kansas Health Science Center.

"AI Is very integrated into our healthcare system already. Making sure our students understand how it is coming and where it may go is important," explained Laura Tatpati, associate dean for undergraduate medical education at the University of Kansas Medical Center.

Accelerating the Workforce in Wichita

Following the expert panel, Deloitte, a global consulting firm that helped the Partnership develop the Talent Roadmap, presented a summary of market dynamics and how they relate to the future of health drivers.

By 2040 the healthcare industry will shift from "health care" to "health" with a focus on helping consumers more effectively sustain their well-being, according to Deloitte's findings.

Three distinct, interconnected categories must be activated and fully functioning to bring the future of health to life.

- Data and platforms: the foundational infrastructure that forms the backbone of tomorrow's health ecosystem.
- Well-being and care delivery: the virtual and physical care facilities and health communities that will provide consumer-centric delivery of products, care, wellness and well-being.
- Care enablement: the connectors, financers and regulators that help make the "engine" run.

Deloitte found while Wichita is currently navigating a very low supply of healthcare talent, making hiring "difficult," there is an opportunity to focus on equitable access of opportunity. This is becoming increasingly important as more workers make career decisions that align with their values.

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Following Deloitte's future-of-work presentation, workshop participants engaged in roundtable discussions, answering the following questions:

1. How can we come together across the healthcare industry to address changing workforce needs?

2. What new approach/tactic can we try to prepare the community for future talent demands?

An overwhelming consensus among participants was the need for enhanced collaboration.

Resonating deeply with those in attendance, one participant stated, "We must figure out a way where everybody in Wichita wins. We need to get together more regularly and stop being afraid of losing talent to each other."