

NJ Funder's Summit: Investing in the Frontline of NJ's Health Care - Nov. 19, 2010
Summary of the Commissioner's powerpoint delivered

Health Care Workforce Challenges

The United States' health care landscape has changed dramatically over the past century with longer life spans and greater prevalence of chronic illnesses. The baby boomer population continues to age and by 2020 seniors will account for over 20% of the overall population. It is expected that by 2023, incidence of chronic disease is expected to rise dramatically. Without change, the United States will experience more than 50% growth in cancer cases, mental disorders and diabetes and more than 40% growth in heart disease.

Physician Shortage

In order to meet demands of an aging and sicker population a sufficient supply of physicians will be necessary. It is estimated that by 2020, New Jersey will need 2,800 more physicians than it currently projects to be practicing at that time. The Association of American Medical Colleges, Center for Workforce Studies has released new physician shortage estimates that, beginning in 2015, are 50 percent worse than originally anticipated prior to health care reform. I look forward to working with the physician community to develop initiatives to grow the physician supply and improve the environment of practice in our state.

Nursing Shortage

The nation and our state also faces the challenge of an aging nursing workforce. In New Jersey more than half of Registered Nurses are between 46-60, this means nearly one third will hit retirement age in next decade. The Health Resources Service Administration stated that the U.S. must graduate 90% more nurses from nursing programs to meet the growing need. It is estimated that by 2020 the national nurse shortage will increase to more than 1 million full-time nurse positions. Building and maintaining a high-value nursing workforce will require strategies to produce a sufficient supply of qualified RNs, to create work environments that support their practice, and to deploy their skills effectively.

Investing in a robust health care workforce is essential for a healthy population, higher quality care, expanded health care access and for research, innovation and scientific breakthroughs.