

The Health Care Workforce Transformation Fund supports training programs that address workforce skill needs identified by health care providers as they work to improve patient care and reduce costs. Commonwealth Corporation administers this fund on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.

The Massachusetts Senior Care Association (MSCA) represents a diverse set of organizations that deliver a broad spectrum of services to meet the needs of older adults and people with disabilities. Their members include more than 500 nursing and rehabilitation facilities, assisted living residences, residential care facilities and continuing care retirement communities providing services to more than 120,000 people a year.



Workforce Challenge:

In three of MSCA's membership regions (Pittsfield, Lowell and Milton), the proportion of residents over 65 is higher than the state's average and so is the rate of readmission. There is a need to provide coordinated care across multiple settings (e.g. from hospital to long term care), but proper care transitions are a challenge due to a lack of communication between providers, or limited understanding of how other settings contribute to the continuum of care. Nurses need adequate training in the skills and competencies required to effectively lead transitions, including understanding the continuum of care and the challenges inherent to each setting, effective communications, accountability, and teamwork.

“ Our participation in CTEP was an eye opening experience for staff to see how other organizations, especially our referral sources, function and the challenges they face, so we can collectively strategize ways we can best meet our patients' needs during care transitions.”

-Nurse Educator, Lowell Demonstration Site

Training Strategy and Expected Outcomes:

Working with nine diverse health care providers across those three regions, MSCA implemented an innovative frontline workforce development strategy that gave nurses the foundational knowledge and skills needed to understand their critical role in reducing avoidable hospital readmissions and improving patient-centered care transitions. Their program brought together nurses from different care settings to work as a team; MSCA trained leaders in each of the participating facilities to become trainers and ensure the sustainability of these efforts.

Through this initiative, one of MSCA's participating health care providers experienced a reduction in Medicare re-hospitalizations from 14.4% (baseline period) to 11.3%, which is estimated to translate into annual savings of approximately \$1.9 million. As context, all-payer readmission rates for Massachusetts acute care hospitals rose from 15.3% in 2014 to 15.8% in 2015. All partners have reported marked improvements in communication, mutual respect and collaboration among nurses.