



## health careers pipeline initiative

### PURPOSE

The Nebraska Health Careers Pipeline Initiative created a standardized Health Career Pipeline curriculum in grades 3-12 in schools across Nebraska. The goal was to create a pathway so more students are inclined and prepared to select a health focus when they graduate from high school.

### STRATEGY

- Developed a hands-on, health care career exploration curriculum specific to grades 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12.
- Collaborate with schools, hospitals, clinics, and long-term care facilities.
- Work with health care facilities to create engaging, real-life exploration experiences.
- Ensure curriculum is specific to the different demographics across Nebraska.

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## PROJECT OVERVIEW

Nebraska is in the midst of a health care workforce crisis.

According to the Nebraska Center for Nursing, Nebraska will experience a workforce shortage of 5,435 nurses by 2025. Seventy-three of Nebraska's 93 counties have less than the national average ratio of registered nurses to patients. Sixty-six of Nebraska's counties have been deemed medically underserved. Nine counties in Nebraska have no registered nurses.

Recruitment and retention of health professionals has long been a persistent challenge for rural providers. This nursing shortage is representative of a larger shortage of health professionals.

This program will expose students to all the various and unique health professions throughout Nebraska.

## DELIVERABLES

This multi-step project consisted of the following deliverables:

- Develop Health Career Pipeline curriculum, specific to grade levels: primary 3-5, middle school 6-8, high school 9-12, to be used in statewide afterschool programs, and provide curriculum training along with securing statewide usage and placement through existing and new pipelines.
- Conduct background demographic research on services available statewide to stand up and support the Health Career Pipeline exploration curriculum in after-school program.
- Develop intensive Health Career Summer Boot Camp Curriculum, specific to grade levels; primary 3-5, middle school 6-8, high school 9-12, including collateral pieces (lesson plans, objectives, assessments, supply list) and promote the curriculum to secure statewide usage and placement through existing and new academic and business partnerships.
- Conduct training webinar sessions for agencies, schools, hospitals, HOSA, and other organizations who are incorporating the Health Career Pipeline exploration curriculum into their programming.
- Coordinate the revision of Statewide AHEC Careers in Health Care Handbook encompassing articulation agreements between higher education organizations, and educational options.
- Coordinate, facilitate and lead statewide, Health Science Advisory Council, meeting quarterly. This Council will consist of a collective representation of the following: Health Science Deans, Department Heads, Division Chairpersons, HOSA, SkillsUSA Leadership and Academic/Career Counselors.
- Collaborate with Beyond Schools Bell, Collective for Youth, Statewide 4H, Statewide HOSA, and Nebraska Community College Health Deans to disseminate Health Career Pipeline curriculum across the state.
- Design innovative strategies for exploration external of the health facility setting (VR/AR, simulation, distance education).
- Crosswalk all materials developed in coordination with The American School Counselors Association: Mindset & Behaviors for Student Success, The Pipeline Curriculum nurtures a strong working relationship with the National Consortium of Health Science Education and the Nebraska Department of Education.

Facilitated by Norikar & Associates, LLC

## **MEET THE FACULTY**

### **Stacey L. Ocander, EdD**

Dr. Stacey Ocander is the former Dean of Health Careers and College Health Advisory Officer at Metropolitan Community College. She is the current Senior Director, Workforce and Education Initiatives for the Nebraska Hospital Association. She has her doctorate in Education Administration: Adult and Higher Education with a specialty in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of South Dakota, a Master of Science in Exercise Physiology, and a B.S. in Education and Athletic Training from Wayne State College. She started her health care provider journey as a CNA and spent many years working in orthopedic surgery and rehabilitation.

As a Board Officer of the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Programs and Past-President of the National Network of Health Programs in Two-Year Colleges, Stacey believes strongly in the value of the Associate Degree as the entry-level to the career pathway as well as stackable credentials and deliberate partnerships with four-year institutions and workforce organizations. She is a strong advocate for diversity of lived experiences, reducing health disparities, lifelong learning, and professional mentoring, and she believes these are the responsibility of all professionals. Stacey serves on several community boards and volunteers her time to a multitude of different projects involving equity and serving people in need.