

Partnerships in *Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare*

Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (BACH) (Lead Partner)

The Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (BACH) is a nonprofit work force development consortium that includes seven local hospitals (Good Samaritan Hospital, The Johns Hopkins Hospital, Maryland General Hospital, Mercy Medical Center, Sinai Hospital of Baltimore, St. Agnes Hospital, Union Memorial Hospital, and University of Maryland Medical Center) which was formed to develop and implement long-term strategies to address workforce needs of alliance hospitals. BACH grew out of a national American Assembly called in 2003 to address a shortage of workers for many jobs in healthcare, Baltimore's largest employment sector. From those meetings, a group of foundations, healthcare providers and other key institutions formed the Baltimore Healthcare Coalition, which identified particular job categories that hospitals have had the most trouble filling and developed a long-term strategy for meeting the sector's most pressing workforce demands.

The stated mission of the BACH is to "address unemployment, underemployment, and healthcare workforce shortage issues in Baltimore by identifying healthcare career pathways leading to economic independence and training residents to enter into and advance in them" (Fast Facts, 2006). BACH is a lean organization with two staff persons: Ron Hearn and John Panella and a regular consultant – Barbara Hopkins. Among the three, there is a depth of knowledge and experience across relevant organizational partner types including patient care service and hospitals, community college education and administration and healthcare workforce regulation issues. This experience is augmented by a Board that is composed of high-level representatives of the alliance hospitals, the mayor's office and other relevant community-based organizations. The Board appears to be very involved in the implementation of BACH's Jobs to Careers Project as it is a major project of this relatively new organization. As of the site visit, Good Samaritan Hospital had committed and was well into implementation of the first cohort of participants, while University Specialty Hospital (University of Maryland Medical System) had committed to hosting the next cohort. Johns Hopkins Hospital also appears to be committed to selecting participants though this had not yet been fully worked out at the time of site visit.

Good Samaritan Hospital (Good Sam) (Employer Partner)

Good Samaritan Hospital (Good Sam) is a hospital in Baltimore City that is small in comparison to some of the other Alliance hospital partners. It is, however, a part of a large health system – MedStar Health Systems. Good Sam is a 346-bed adult care community teaching hospital which provides comprehensive services. Good Sam employs about 2000 workers.

Good Sam has a history of career development programs and a "grow your own" culture. This is exemplified by a CEO who is very proud of the fact that he worked his way up through the ranks from frontline staff to his current position. Joanne Eich, recently promoted to Director of Education, has spearheaded many of the career development (pipe-line) programs including part-time, largely on-site LPN programs, LPN-RN bridge programs, RN (Associates and RN-BSN) programs for incumbent (largely full-time) workers. They have several partnerships with educational institutions including CCBC, Morgan State University, Prince Georges, College of Notre Dame and Coppin State University. One of the major obstacles to these development programs has been the need to 'go back' at the start of these programs and do extensive remedial work with students prior to starting these programs. They have been able to address these needs program by program, but the development of some program for systematic assessment of workers in partnership with CCBC or other assessment experts would likely benefit Good Sam's intent to "grow their own" across the hospital. Good Sam, particularly, Joanne Eich, has extensive

experience with cohort-learning and this expertise could be tapped to help BACH develop their current programs.

University Specialty Hospital (USH) (Employer Partner)

University Specialty Hospital (USH) joined the University of Maryland Medical System in 1996. USH is classified as a long term acute care facility with 180 beds. USH serves a group of patients that require complex, interdisciplinary medical care. The facility provides specialized care services to patients who are critically ill, including those who have multiple complications and/or failures that require continuous hospitalization beyond the acute care setting. The Hospital's programs include ventilator care, coma emergencies, traumatic brain injury, and medically complex care.

The administrator interviewed indicated that USH is committed to establishing workplace policies that support work-based learning, career development, and general benefits. USH is currently "an enthusiastic collaborating partner" in the Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare. For USH the key to success of this health care initiative is a commitment to develop incumbent workers rather than bringing in new recruits. USH is a logical home for the next cohort as it uses CNAs, PCTs and LPNs, and has the teaching space available.

The Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC)

CCBC is the third largest health professional school in the State of Maryland. It is working with the Maryland Board of Nursing to develop a curriculum allowing incumbent healthcare workers to improve their skills, increase their earnings, and embark on potential career paths. CCBC has developed a series of assessment tools to determine student needs prior to their entry into any courses. This diagnostic assessment provides information for the faculty of student strengths and weaknesses, allowing identification of content areas students are expected to master. Such information is used to develop the relevant curriculum.

2 History of the Partnership

BACH as an organization represents the partnership in this case. Between the BACH staff and the Board members, there is extensive expertise with workforce development projects in healthcare. Although the Alliance is relatively new, founded in 2005, a number of the organizations have worked cooperatively on past projects. For example, the Mayor's Office of Employment Development has worked with most of the hospitals who are partners in BACH. The Board of Directors for BACH consists of twenty-two representatives from all of the employer partners, unions, the Mayor's Office, and two community colleges, CCBC and BCCC. Under the leadership of BACH staff, various partner organizations meet regularly and work together to implement their programs.

The Mayor's Office of Employment Development is active with the Alliance. This office has been able to support a number of employment initiatives in the city of Baltimore. The initial program was called STEP, which was a three year \$500,000 government grant. For the last two years the Mayor's Office of Employment Development has been working closely with BACH in supporting the new program initiatives. Through annual grants of about \$100,000, the Mayor's office has been able to support individual hospital programs with grants of up to \$25,000. It is also funding the Nurse Extender Training Program. The goal of the Mayor's Office is to increase opportunities for employment, education and promotion for residents of Baltimore because hospitals and health care facilities are such a major

component of the Baltimore economy. Special attention is paid to employees in the healthcare professions.

St. Agnes, like the other alliance hospitals, has had some experience with other educational/work bridge programs. They were a pilot site for a "School at Work" program that combined biweekly distance learning via satellite and biweekly online homework for both remedial development (math, grammar, time management, etc.) and health care occupation basics (clerical, medical terminology, gross anatomy, etc.). They continue to be involved with this program as an on-going program for employees. The career coach that is partially funded by BACH funds works directly with this program. The pilot version of this program was funded by DOL but is now sustained by contracts with several hospitals.

Source: Jennifer Craft Morgan, et al. 2008. BACH Formative Memo (Second). Unpublished evaluation of Jobs to Careers. June 2008. University of North Carolina, Institute on Aging, 11-13.