

**CONCEPT PAPER**

**NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION:  
A SYSTEM FOR  
UPGRADING INCUMBENT HEALTH CARE  
WORKERS INTO HIGH-SKILL JOBS**

**By**

**JOHNS HOPKINS HEALTH SYSTEM  
THE JOHNS HOPKINS HOSPITAL**



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## INTRODUCTION

The President's High-Growth Job Training Initiative seeks to encourage new investments and engagements in upgrading the skills of incumbent and future workers in high-growth industries. A vital part of the national strategy is to identify and promote successful examples of training around critical skills required for high demand occupations in the targeted industries for use by both the industries and the public workforce system.

The health care workforce is one of the top priorities for the High-Growth Job Training Initiative. In addition to the ambitious goals of the President's High-Growth Job Training Initiative for health care are two (2) challenges that have contributed to the most troubling skilled workforce-led shortages the health care industry has ever faced.

These challenges are:

1. An immediate, severe shortage of skilled health care workers; and
2. A wide range of evidence that the demand for these workers will increase while the number of individuals enrolled in accredited programs to receive training for the most critical skills is decreasing.

### **JOHNS HOPKINS HEALTH SYSTEM THE JOHNS HOPKINS HOSPITAL**

The Johns Hopkins Hospital has been recognized for the past thirteen (13) years by U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT as the No. 1 hospital in the nation. Encompassing three (3) acute care hospitals in Maryland (The Johns Hopkins Hospital, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, and Howard County General Hospital) and other related facilities, Johns Hopkins Health System has been a leader in developing solutions for health care issues within the State of Maryland as well as the health care industry. In addition, Johns Hopkins Health System has a special commitment to employ residents in the East Baltimore area. This employment opportunity was borne out of a commitment by founder, Johns Hopkins, in his will in 1873. The Johns Hopkins Hospital was opened in 1889 followed by The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in 1893. The medical campus houses the country's first and largest School of Public Health and the new facilities of The Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing. The Johns Hopkins University campuses are located in Baltimore and Washington, D.C., with overseas campuses in Bologna, Italy and Nanjing, China.

In light of the two (2) urgent challenges described above, Johns Hopkins Health System has devoted considerable energy to the recruitment and training of residents from the East Baltimore area, including the development of a range of programs to ensure that these employees will be successful in their first jobs – and then move up the career ladder as rapidly as possible.

Johns Hopkins Health System has had very important success in retention and skills upgrade programs, working on a modest scale with employees with borderline abilities through custom-designed remedial and skills upgrading programs. The results are measurable, with impressive retention and advancement rates from entry level into high-quality health care jobs. In addition, Johns Hopkins Health System has been extremely successful in helping lower- and moderately-skilled employees gain the skills needed to transition to the more skilled and difficult-to-fill higher wage and skilled jobs.

This is all part of the longstanding commitment by Johns Hopkins Health System to “grow its own” employees. That commitment has proven to be a successful business model and is a key ingredient in helping to both develop a high-skilled workforce through a home-grown skilled workforce and to meet its most urgent skill shortages. As higher-level jobs are filled, Johns Hopkins Health System “backfills” the lower-skilled, easier to fill jobs with people from the community. In turn, these entry-level workers are placed in similar career advancement programs.

In addition, Johns Hopkins Health System is associated with the Health Care Workforce Steering Committee of the Governor’s Workforce Investment Board that was forwarded to the U.S. Department of Labor. This initiative focused on expanding the capacity for recruitment and training of future hires.

In keeping with the goals of the President’s High-Growth Job Training Initiative, Johns Hopkins Health System seeks to work with the U.S. Department of Labor and other health care partners (including appropriate health care professional associations and other health care companies) on the other key strategies to meet the critical skills shortages in the health care industry. This will be achieved by:

1. Bringing the successful pilot-tested programs to scale to measure the effectiveness of incumbent worker upgrade training programs as a potential model for the use of the health care industry.
2. Conducting a comprehensive assessment of the aptitudes and interests of targeted categories of high-potential low-skilled health care workers within Johns Hopkins Health System. The proposed assessment would identify the high-potential, low-skilled health care workers who are interested and have the basic skills required to move to higher-skilled positions.

This assessment and career counseling initiative is motivated by internal assessments by the leadership of Johns Hopkins Health System and by many other health care providers who found a significant percentage of health care workers would seek higher-skilled positions if two (2) conditions were met:

- More job-related information was available and they had an understanding of how the skills they currently have would qualify them for higher-skilled jobs.
- A clear understanding of any additional skills that would be needed to satisfy the job requirements of higher-skilled jobs.

3. Providing those targeted workers with the training, development, and support needed to move to higher-skilled jobs.

Assuming the proposed incumbent health care worker upgrade training demonstration is a success, Johns Hopkins Health System will provide information, training modules, teacher guides, research data, competency definitions, and other materials to the health care industry and the public workforce system as directed by the U.S. Department of Labor.

Johns Hopkins Health System is also prepared to serve on any national advisory board or health care industry task force with the U.S. Department of Labor to ensure that the proposed project has the greatest impact in reducing the health care shortages in this country.

### **JOHNS HOPKINS HEALTH SYSTEM'S INCUMBENT WORKER CAREER ACCELERATION PROGRAM (IW-CAP)**

The following is a summary of the career acceleration program initiatives that have shown early success in Johns Hopkins Health System on a pilot-test basis. It is proposed that appropriate components of these initiatives be offered to 5% of The Johns Hopkins Hospital workforce with high potential for retention or moving up to more critical skills positions.

#### **INITIATIVE #1: Retention and Growth of At-Risk Workers**

This initiative will build on the early successes of Johns Hopkins Health System that have proven effective in retaining workers identified as at-risk of termination due to lack of basic life and employability skills but who appear to have high potential for ultimate success in the workforce.

Over the eighteen (18) months envisioned for this project, approximately 100 to 150 of the targeted workers will participate in Johns Hopkins Health System Work Life and Skills Enhancement Program. The curriculum provides for two to six weeks of intensive work life and employability skills training to satisfy the minimum requirements for continued employment at Johns Hopkins Health System. It is projected that an 80% success rate in employee retention for those workers who participate in this program is realistic.

#### **INITIATIVE #2: GED and Diploma Preparation Program**

There is published evidence from multiple sources that completing requirements for a GED or high school diploma will result in a dramatic increase in retention and advancement opportunities. The GED or diploma serves as a prerequisite for the pursuit of licensure for the most critical jobs in the health care industry.

Approximately fifty (50) incumbent workers will likely participate in this program. It is believed that a goal of a 70% retention rate will be achieved among those receiving a GED or a diploma through the efforts of Johns Hopkins Health System. Of those who are successful, it is expected that at least 50% will go on to further skills training and higher-skilled positions at the completion of a GED or a diploma.

### **INITIATIVE #3: Retraining of Employees in Declining Jobs for Emerging Jobs**

There are a number of health care jobs that technology will replace in the near future. Two (2) of the categories with the greatest number of workers are radiology film and medical records clerks and medical transcribers.

It is projected that approximately one hundred and twenty-five (125) workers must transition into other jobs in 12 to 18 months in The Johns Hopkins Hospital alone or they will no longer have jobs available.

Likewise, there are emerging new jobs that must be filled. It is believed that short-term training can provide the skills required for those incumbent workers in declining jobs to move to emerging jobs, which include medical coders and digital film and image record clerks.

This part of Johns Hopkins Health System Initiative is both a layoff avoidance strategy and a means of effectively responding to rapidly emerging new jobs and skills throughout the health care industry.

Under this project, it is envisioned that seventy-five (75) workers will be assessed, counseled, and provided skills-based training for emerging new jobs.

### **INITIATIVE #4: High-Potential Worker Assessment and Skills Training Program**

Surveys and interviews of employees of Johns Hopkins Health System found that incumbent workers are interested in higher wage, skilled jobs but there exists a broad lack of knowledge of such jobs and how their skills compared to the requirements of higher wage, skilled jobs. Johns Hopkins Health System's experience is similar to reports from hospitals across the country as well as the health care industry in general. Yet, the current health care workforce offers the best short-term opportunity to move large numbers of people into those jobs with severe shortages of skilled workers.

It is proposed that a battery of skill, aptitude, and career assessments be administered to 5% (approximately 400 workers) of the 8,000-person workforce at The Johns Hopkins Hospital who are considered by supervisors to possess "high potential" for advancement into higher-skilled jobs. After assessment, it is projected that more than two hundred (200) workers will enter either remedial education or various skills-based training programs leading to the staffing of more critical skilled positions.

## **INITIATIVE #5: Upgrade Training of Incumbent Workers into Critical Skills Shortage Positions**

The final initiative of the Johns Hopkins Health System's Incumbent Worker Career Acceleration Program (IW-CAP) is comprised of a series of internal and external skills based training programs focused on the most critical skilled positions.

Many positions require enrollment in courses at the community college or university level combined with clinical time and/or other supervised on-the-job training. Still others require specific certifications offered by a number of public- and private-sector training facilities, often combined with on-the-job supervised training opportunities. These are also the most costly, both for the education and training and the paid released time cost to Johns Hopkins Health System during training.

As part of the expansion envisioned in this project, Johns Hopkins Health System plans to double the number of its workers engaged in training for the more critical skilled occupations.

The IW-CAP targets occupations requiring up to an associate degree. This initiative focuses on critical skills shortage occupations including but not limited to:

- Surgical Technicians
- Radiology Technicians (i.e. X-Ray, MRI and others)
- Pharmacy Technicians
- Medical Laboratory Technicians
- Radiation Therapists
- Respiratory Therapists
- Nurses (i.e. Registered Nurses and Advanced Specialty Nurses)
- Nurse Extenders (i.e. Clinical Associates and Patient Care Technician)

Additionally, as part of the Incumbent Worker Career Acceleration Program (IW-CAP), each worker will be assigned a case manager. The successes enjoyed by Johns Hopkins are due in large part to the six (6) essential activities of a case manager—assessment, coordination, planning, monitoring, implementation and evaluation.

Each initiative appears to hold great promise for not only Johns Hopkins Health System but also for the larger health care industry and for meeting the goals of the President's High-Growth Job Training Initiative.

## **BUDGET**

As part of its commitment to the High-Growth Job Training Initiative, Johns Hopkins Health System is prepared to commit its previous investment and a significant match toward the \$3.5 million needed to implement the proposed Incumbent Worker Career Acceleration Program. The total of over \$8 million in projected costs over 18 months to put the full program in place includes anticipated costs for providing the training

programs, assessment strategies, and train-the-trainer sessions for others in the industry at an industry-wide meeting approved by the U.S. Department of Labor.

### **IN SUMMARY**

The early successes of Johns Hopkins Health System tested initiatives provide potential national solutions for the health care industry to enhance the skills of the existing workforce as well as the public workforce system. Such initiatives focus on retention of current health care workers and on upgrading the skills of incumbent workers. Proper testing of these successful pilot programs at scale will greatly accelerate and expand the range of education and training activities to transition incumbent health care workers into higher-skilled, higher-wage jobs both for Johns Hopkins Health System and as a model for others in the health care industry and the workforce system.

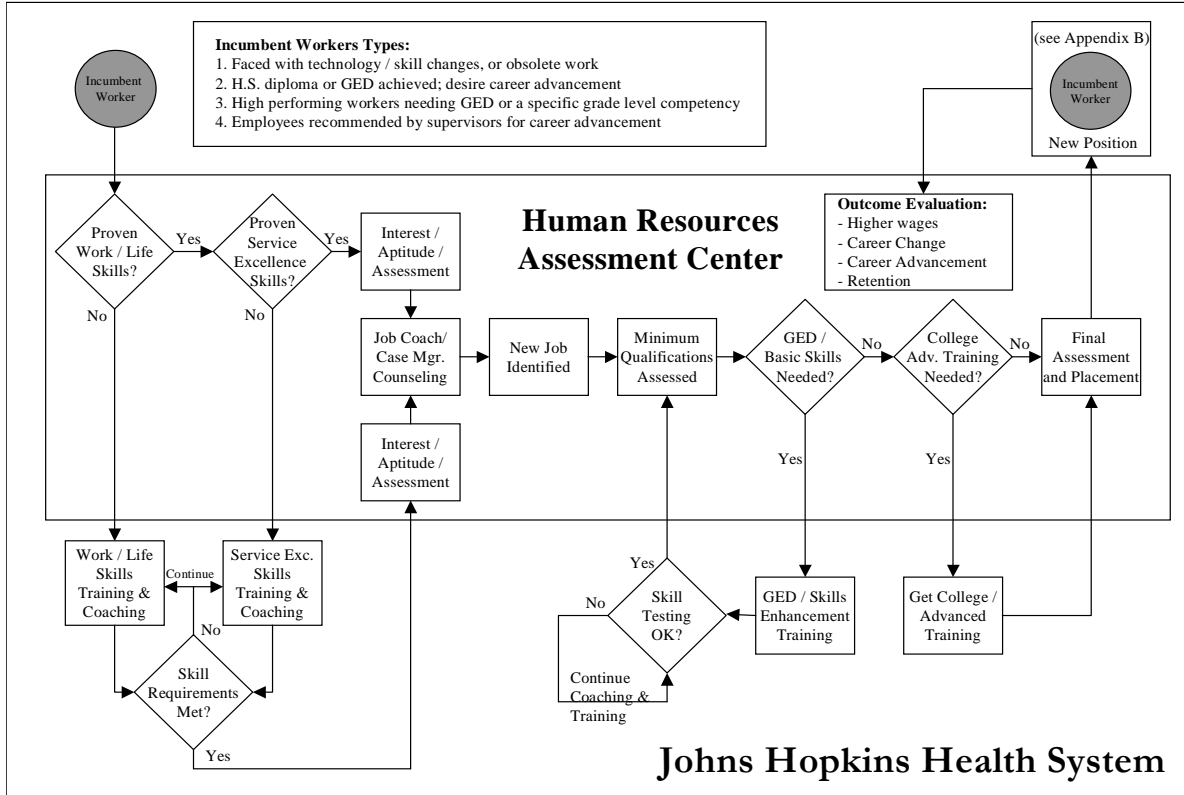
There exists a strong commitment to share all initiatives of Johns Hopkins Health System's Incumbent Worker Career Acceleration Program (IW-CAP) with the health care industry and the public workforce system in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor as part of the goals of the President's High-Growth Job Training Initiative.



# JOHNS HOPKINS HEALTH SYSTEM'S INCUMBENT WORKER CAREER ACCELERATION PROGRAM (IW-CAP)

## APPENDIX A FLOW CHART

### Demonstration Project: Developing People, Careers, and Family Income



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# INCUMBENT WORKER CAREER ACCELERATION PROGRAM (IW-CAP)

## APPENDIX B TARGETED OCCUPATIONS REQUIRING UP TO AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE

Demonstration Project: Developing People, Careers, and Family Income

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### Professional, and Clerical / Technical Positions Requiring A.A. Degree or Less

Support Service	Patient Care	Technical	Financial/Computer	Clerical
Pharmacy	Nursing	Central Sterile	Payroll	Admissions
Pharmacy Technician	Certified Nurse Assistant Clinical Associate Clinical Technician Surgical Technician Registered Nurse	Sterile Processor Customer Service Rep. Group Leader	Payroll Clerk	Admission Service Coordinators I, II, III
Mail	Rehab. Medicine	Radiology	Accounting	Registration
Mail Clerk	Therapy Aide Activity Specialist Therapy Associate Physical Therapist Occupational Therapist	Radiology Aide Radiology Technologist	Accounting Bookkeeper Billing Clerk Accounts/Payable Clerk	Patient Services Coordinator I, II, III
		Laboratory Medicine	Information Services	Clerical / Secretary
		Phlebotomist Laboratory Technician I & II Medical Laboratory Technician	Computer Operator Data Entry Operator	Clerical Associate Staff Assistant Administrative Secretary
		Oncology		
		Radiation Therapist		
		Anesthesia		
		Respiratory Therapist		

The following healthcare occupations (not above) also have significant gaps in supply and demand in Maryland per a recent study by the Maryland Higher Education Commission on top demand healthcare occupations: Med Records/Health Info Tech, Home Health Aide, Pharmacist, Dental Asst, Speech Pathologist, EMT/Paramedic, Sonographer, Licensed Practical Nurse, Medical Technologist